

enclosed address at once: I'm going abroad with Kenneth. I shall come back some day; God bless you, darling, and don't fret. Your affectionate brother

"Let everything be sent," said the Major, "and never let me hear his name mentioned again."

II.

Months passed, and no tidings came of Bob. May went by Mrs. Kenneth's house once, but it was empty, and a bill up announcing that it was to let, and so she could only wonder in silence how things went on. The Major's face became a little careworn, and he grew kinder to May, indulging all her little whims and fancies, excepting when she tried to say a word in favor of her brother. A letter came from Bob at last. He and George Kenneth were in Australia, and he had obtained a good situation in a merchant's office, and was doing well. There was no mention of his father, and Major Carr's face got a little harder as he noticed the omission.

A year went by and there was a dreary Christmas in Wonderland-place; the second spring came after Bob's departure, and the summer slipped by; autumn sobbed itself away, the snow fell, and the frost sent a death-chill into the heart of the last sensitive plant that had not departed the desolate earth, and then once more Christmas Eve came round again.

"Two years," thought poor little May, sadly, "since Bob and I put up the holly." There was no holly in Wonderland-place that year—nothing to mark Christmas for May and her father, as they sat gravely one on each side of the fireplace that evening, each thinking silently of the wanderer far away. Suddenly May remembered some little direction she had forgotten to give to the servant, so she rose and went downstairs. Perhaps it was a relief to speak to some of her own sex, for she lingered a few moments longer than was necessary, and suddenly there was a little sound outside, and some one softly descended the area steps, and looked in at the uncurtained kitchen window. May looked up, half-frightened, then with a little scream of joy and surprise rushed out, exclaiming, "Oh, Bob!—oh, dear Bob!" was folded in her brother's arms all in the area and right in front of the kitchen window.

It was not a very picturesque place to meet in, but Truth has sometimes but little mercy on Romance.

"Oh, Bob!" she sobbed, as, laughing and crying together, she dragged him into the kitchen, made him sit down, and kneeling before him, looked up into his face, and thought how handsome he had grown. "Oh, dear Bob! to think you've come back!"

Jane discreetly vanished, and the brother and sister were once more alone together. Then May eagerly asked Bob all sorts of questions, and Bob told her how he had been in Australia, and had got a situation in a merchant's office, where he had given so much satisfaction that his employers had sent him over as manager of an English branch. The debts were paid, he informed her, for he had worked hard and earned money after office hours, and they had all trusted him, and Grace Kenneth had been true as steel, and he was going down to Clifton, where she now lived with her mother, to see her as soon as he had settled matters in town. "I am obliged to stay till Tuesday," he went on; "so I went to Mary Taylor's on my arrival, and found she had her two small, shabby drawing-rooms to let, which I took for a week, after she had received me with a scream of astonishment."

(Mary Taylor was an old servant who was married, and lived a mile off, in Northland-place, and turned an honest penny by letting some of her rooms.) "Then I thought I'd come and look at the house, noticed the kitchen blind was up, and looking down saw the top of your lovely head; the result was the affecting tableau in the area. There, you have my history complete, May; and now," he continued, "I would give anything to make it up with the old man. It's Christmas-time; don't you think we can get him round? He behaved very sternly to me, you know."

"Oh, yes," answered May, "we'll try. Let us go up softly, and take him by surprise." Then she added doubtfully, "How is George Kenneth?"

"Very well, but he didn't succeed out yonder. Just in the spot we were there was a doctor who killed the people so blandly they liked it—a great fellow with two even rows of big white teeth, giving one the idea that he carried about tiny models of the tombstone of all his defunct patients, inside his mouth. So George didn't do. However, his Uncle Thomas has—died—lucky fellow to have an uncle, eh?—and left him enough money to console him. You lost a good chance; May, though I'm certain he's spoony on you still; I never thought you were going to snub him so."

"I didn't," said May, in astonishment; "you told me he liked some one else."

"I!" he exclaimed: "why, you little goose, you surely never believed my chaff! It was you he told me he liked."

"Oh, Bob!" exclaimed May, sorrowfully, "I snubbed him dreadfully, and I've never liked any one else."

"Oh, haven't you?" he replied; "I'll tell him so."

May could not answer, for she was dragging him softly up the kitchen stairs to the dining-room. They went on tiptoe to the door, which was a little way open, and saw the Major with his back towards them.

"Father," said May, putting her hand on his shoulder, "here is Bob come back again."

Her father rose to his feet in a moment, and turning round faced his children, but not a muscle of his stern, hard face relaxed. "I thought I had forbidden you ever to enter my house again," he said to his son.

"Won't you forget the past, father?" Bob said, holding out his hand; "I have done my best to atone for it. Won't you be friends, now, father?"

"No, sir," he answered angrily (and at the sound of his voice May's heart sank with fear and dismay), "I will not. A man who gets into debt again and again, and then tries to marry a girl with the certainty of nothing but debt and poverty and misery before them, shall be no son of mine; and it would take a little longer than two years to make me believe in any reformation of yours. No," and he shook off May's entreating hand, "I will not be friends, sir. I never spoke to my father as you did to me. I forbade you my house then, and forbid it to you again now."

"Father, let me, speak—"

"No, sir, I will not; you have no business here, and I have nothing more to say. Your presence in this house is an intrusion."

Then Bob pulled his cap out of his pocket. "I will never enter it again until you ask me, father," he said; and without another word walked out of the room and out of the house.

"Oh, father!" gasped May, as they stood blankly staring at each other; "oh, father, you might have forgiven him."

Then they sat down and looked at the fire again, till the neighboring clock struck ten.

"We will read the prayers and then go to bed," Major Carr said; but his voice was dreary, almost sad, it seemed to May.

He rose and brought the Bible and prayer-book from the shelf, as was his custom. He opened the former and read a chapter, but May could not listen, she was thinking of Bob in his lodging, not a mile off. Surely it would be more thorough religion to tell Bob the past was forgotten, she thought, than to sit there reading God's Word, telling of His goodness and mercy, and yet feeling hard and cold and relentless.

Then they knelt down, father and daughter together, the Major's even voice sounding clear and distinct in the dull stillness of the room, and his daughter hiding her face in her hands. Suddenly the words "Our Father, which art in heaven," fell on her ear. All other prayers may be sometimes said with the lips only, but surely that one has power to drive all worldly thoughts away; so May joined her hands, and followed her father, heart and voice. On he went, slowly and distinctly, and softly echoed May's sweet voice the holy words our Lord has taught us, till they came to—"As we forgive them that trespass against us."

Then, forgetting all else she broke forth, "Oh, father, you have not forgiven Bob!" and moving close to his side, and still kneeling, she put her arms round his neck and bursting into tears, "Oh, father!" she said, "you must not say those words, for you have not forgiven Bob."

"What is the matter, May? How dare you interrupt me in this way? Go back to your place."

"Oh, no—no!" she pleaded; "how can we go on? It is asking God not to forgive us, if we say that prayer while we are angry with any one. 'Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us—'"

"How dare you interrupt me?" he said again.

"Oh, but, dear father, it is a mockery," she said gently; "you cannot go on until you have taken Bob back." It seemed to May as if she were pleading for two things—Bob's pardon on earth and her father in heaven. "Oh, forgive him—forgive him now, father, and let to-night end it. It will make to-morrow such a blessed Christmas Day; and remember, as we forgive so shall we be forgiven. You would not spend to-morrow a single mile away from Bob, and yet so very far apart. Listen to me, oh! dear father, pray do!" and then she told him how Bob had paid his debts, and worked his way on, and had won the confidence of his employers, and how he was alone in Mary Taylor's little drawing-rooms in Northland-place.

Major Carr had resumed his seat, and listened to his daughter in silence, but gave no sign of relenting. She was silent at last, and waited for what he might say, still kneeling and looking up to him with beseeching face and tearful eyes. Then, after a moment or two, she turned sadly away from him. "I would give all the world if Bob were here to-night," she said. "Don't you remember how we decked the rooms with holly two years ago, and how happy we were?" Then her eye caught the open book upon the table, and she closed it quietly. "It is no use praying any more till Bob is forgiven," she said slowly. "Father," she added, "won't you forgive Bob, as you some day hope to be forgiven?"

"I never treated my father as he treated his," he repeated; but his face had softened a little, and half-absently, half-tenderly, he smoothed May's ruffled hair.

"But we have all sinned against our heavenly Father," she said, almost hopelessly, for she was beginning to fear it was in vain to plead longer. Then there was a silence, a long silence it seemed to May, and it was broken at last by the Major, and his tone had lost its dogged sternness.

"Where do you say Bob is?"

"Not a mile off—at Mary Taylor's." She looked up and she answered, and he saw the expression of eager hope and surprise which had come into her face with his question.

"You are very fond of him, May," he said.

"Yes, father," she answered, "am very,

very fond of Bob, and so are you in your heart, and I and you both know it."

"Perhaps," he said very slowly, "I will let him come here to-morrow and dine."

"Will you?" she cried excitedly. "Come to him to-night father; oh! you darling—you dear kind father! oh! pray do!" she said; "come, oh! do come! it is but just a little way," and she rose and began kissing him, beseeching and crying at the same time.

"Why, you silly child," he said, "you have gone out of your senses. How can I go to-night?"

"No, I am quite in my senses—I am indeed. Come to-night; he will not have gone to bed, and we can do as we like at Mary Taylor's. Let me come with you—oh! do; and I'll knock at the door, and then you shall come in afterwards." She almost pulled him up from his seat. "Oh! you dear, kind father!" she said, "I never loved you so much in my whole life, as now that you are going to forgive Bob."

"Nonsense," he said, "we cannot go now; I'll write to him in the morning."

"No, come now," she persisted, and, carried away by her excitement, he allowed himself to be half dragged into the hall, where, almost without knowing it, he put on his coat and hat, and waited while May wrapped a shawl round her and tied on her garden bonnet, and then they set off under the clear, starry, frosty sky for Bob's lodging. May clung to her father's arm and almost pushed him along, when now and then he hesitated, and once or twice she lovingly stroked the coat-sleeve on which her hand rested, and looked up at the handsome, stern face. The hard lines in it seemed softened, and it was a grand face, she thought; and to-night it looked as if one of God's angels had brought down a little love from heaven and dropped it into his heart, so that it shone out of his clear, unflinching eyes. Oh! she would always love her father dearly in future.

"We are nearly there," she said. "Hark! there are the waits in Bob's street."

"Well," asked her father, "what am I to do next? You should have brought Bob to me, I think, not taken me to him."

"Hush!" said May, softly, for suddenly on the still air rose the voices of a wandering church choir which had taken to carol-singing on that Christmas night. They stood still and listened while the wondrous story was told again, under the stars and outside Bob's lodging, by the singers of the neighboring church. They seemed like God's messengers, May thought. They waited till the third verse:

"To you in David's town this day
Is born of David's line
A Saviour, who is Christ the Lord,
And this shall be the sign."

"Father," whispered May, "He came that we might be forgiven."

Major Carr turned his head away, then suddenly stooping down he kissed his daughter. "Go and tell your brother first, if you like; prepare the way as you wish, my dear. You are a good little girl." So from that night there seemed a bond between the father and daughter.

The drawing-room window of the house was wide open, but the blind was down. Bob, too, had evidently been listening to the Christmas song.

May knocked at the door half tremblingly; she did not know who might answer it, or what she should say. Major Carr walked on a few paces, wondering if he was awake or asleep, thinking suddenly that he had placed May in a very strange position in allowing her to seek even for her own brother at that time of night.

Mrs. Taylor answered May's knock, and Bob, who had evidently been at the top of the stairs, came down in astonishment. "May!" he exclaimed, "and at this time of night! Whatever is the matter?"

"Let me come up and I will tell you," she said. It was odd, but May thought she heard footsteps as she went up, but Bob's sitting-room was empty. "Bob," she said, "what would you say if father asked you to come home to-morrow?"

"Nonsense, May; you have gone out of your senses—besides, I should not think of entering the house again. Tell me why you have come."

"Wait here one moment," she said, gently and gravely, for she felt almost choking, "I am going to surprise you, dear; wait till I come back." Then she went down, but returned in a minute or two. He heard her coming upstairs, and, bewildered, heard other footsteps besides hers. Clearly May was dazed that night, he thought. The next moment she re-entered the room. "Bob," she said, "here is father, and he has come to forgive you." Then she saw through blinding tears Bob bound forward and clasp his father's hand, but that was all, for she escaped under the window-blind, threw the open case out into the little balcony, and knelt down, half crying with gladness, half praying with gratitude, and listened to the voices of the slugs again. She did not feel the cold, frosty air in her excitement, she only knew that her father had forgiven Bob, and that they were together in the room behind her. Fainter and fainter in the distance grew the sound of the Christmas hymns, yet still she did not move, till she heard the door of the drawing-room open and shut, and Bob say hurriedly, as if anxious to get rid of some one. "Go into the balcony, Kenneth." She drew her shawl closer around her, and turned her face more decidedly in the direction of the waits. The next moment the blind was lifted and George Kenneth was standing by her side.

"May," he said, "haven't you a welcome for me after all this time?" She raised her head so suddenly that her bonnet fell back a little way, and he saw the fair face again in the starlight—a face which had lost none of its old sweetness, though it was a woman's face rather than a girl's now.

"Yes," she answered, putting her hands into his extended ones, "I am very glad to see you back, George."

He thought he would settle matters while he had a chance. "Bob told me of the mistake," he said abruptly: "you don't know how it has worried me."

"Bob was a great stupid," she answered, rapidly recovering her composure and looking out in the direction of the vanished singers, "and now I will not forgive him."

"Yes, you will," he said.

"No, I won't," she answered decidedly.

"But you'll forgive me?"

"No, I won't."

"But you don't know what I want to be forgiven for yet," he said.

"Oh, no, no more I do," she suddenly recollected; "but I won't, nevertheless."

"Well, never mind," he said, "we'll do without the forgiveness. You are glad to see me back, May?"

"Yes, very," she said. She felt matters had come to a crisis, and thought it wasn't worth while to dilly-dally any longer.

"And you haven't forgotten me all this time?" he said, and he felt May shake her golden head. Somehow he had got very close to May—you see the balcony was small. "And you will never make any more mistakes?"

"Never," she said: and that settled the business.

"Mary!" called her father; "why, we'd forgotten May."

"I'm glad of it," she thought, as she made her appearance, and took care not to see Bob shaking his fist and turning up his eyes in mock horror at her.

There was a very happy Christmas party in Wonderland-place the next day, and a still happier one on New Year's Day, when Mrs. Kenneth and Grace were included in it.

Two or three months later there was a little performance at the church close by. It was not a christening, nor a confirmation, nor a burial. Now, guess what it was!

LANDSEER AS A JUDGE OF DOGS.

Our sporting readers will be happy to hear that during the next spring many of the works of the late Sir Edwin Landseer will be offered for sale; and here we are reminded of an anecdote which may not prove uninteresting to his admirers. It is now some twenty years ago that a large party were assembled at one of the ducal ancestral homes of England, and among the guests expected was Sir Edwin. During the day the question turned upon which was the handsomest of two dogs, one a King Charles spaniel, called "Dash," belonging to the lady of the mansion, and a terrier, the property of a

gallant officer in the navy, now an admiral. After describing the merits of the two dogs, an Englishman's argument, a wager, was resorted to; the duchess, if winner, to receive a certain number of Houbigant's best gloves from Paris, the captain to receive the beautiful hunt waistcoat of buff silk, ornamented with gold frogs, should his terrier "Tyke" carry off the prize. An understanding was then come to that Landseer should be the judge, but that not a hint or remark was to be given or made to him. For an hour before dinner, and during the entire evening, Dash was moving about the room, or stretching himself upon the rug before a blazing fire. Next morning a visit to the stable was made by all the guests, headed by the host and hostess. While admiring one of the duke's hunters, "Tyke" made his appearance. "What a beauty!" said Sir Edwin. The captain gave a look at the hostess, who immediately replied, "Fairly won; and within a week he appeared at table in the hunt waistcoat. During the visit a sketch was made of Tyke, who afterwards appeared as "Impudence" in that splendid work of art, "Dignity and Impudence." Fifteen years elapsed, when one day the captain found himself in a railway carriage bound for Chatham to join his ship, when who should enter the compartment but Landseer. For some time he looked at the gallant sailor, and appeared anxious and perplexed; at last, as if in despair in not remembering the name of his companion, blurted out, "Tyke." A recognition followed, and a talk about old times whiled away the time until they reached Chatham, where they parted. Poor Tyke met with a sad end; he was bitten by a mad dog and destroyed.

COMPULSORY "CONTRIBUTION."—A correspondent tells this singular story: "Washington churches outrage decency in their begging operations. I was witness a year ago to one of these 'scenes.' General Grant was invited to be present, and not dreaming of what was coming, after the sermon he was compelled to remain two hours in his pew, while three or four professional beggars coaxed, whined, threatened, and denounced the audience. Those present were beseeched to give \$500 apiece, and \$250, and finally \$100 each. It came almost to calling those present by name. I was glad to see that the President refused to surrender to this highwayman's style of begging. There he sat motionless for nearly two hours and suchred the great 'begging feat.'"