

there, entirely oblivious to the scorn of the suburban windows and the ridicule of the passerby, they did not know.

Suddenly Riley came to himself. "God bless my soul!" said Mr. Pebbles. "I must be going. I have a call to make." They were plastered an inch thick and great patches of mud were all over his trousers. It was impossible for him to look at his watch without soiling his immaculate white vest.

"Oh! no, no! Don't go!" cried the children, in unison. "You take us home; take me piggy back!" commanded the little girl.

"No, you selfish!" yelled the boy. "The children wrangled as to how Mr. Pebbles was to carry them home. At last it was decided that they should ride one on each of his broad shoulders.

With great contentment in his heart and with no more thought of meeting the widow, he bent down, took up the children and put one arm round each. Yelling with joy, they formed a merry picture.

"There!" cried the lad, "there is our house, and look, Floss, there is mamma in the window. Won't she be surprised?"

When Riley Pebbles came in front of the pretty little cottage he saw at a glance that it was dainty and refined. He suddenly remembered that he was only a stranger, who might almost be accused of kidnapping the two children whom he had never seen before.

"Mummy!" cried Flossie, "he is the bulkiest player you ever saw; I am not going to get down"—she proceeded to kick him on the chest—"till you have promised to come again."

"Excuse me, madam," said Mr. Pebbles, in an attempt at grandeur of manner; "I saw your little children on the street, and unwittingly spoiled their game. I do not suppose you know me. My name is Pebbles—Riley Pebbles, of the old firm of Pebbles & Stream."

The little lady looked up at the great, honest face. "Oh! she gasped, "are you Riley Pebbles?" Then her face turned suddenly white. "You ought to know me," continued in a trembling tone. "I am Mrs. Winfield—Florence, the wife of your old friend, I hope you are not sorry to see me. Won't you come in?"

Dressed in white, standing in the open door with outstretched hands, with a beautiful smile of welcome upon her lips, she seemed to Riley Pebbles the sweetest sight he had ever seen. The evening sun shone straight upon her hair and glorified her face. Riley held out his hands and would have clasped hers if he had not felt the crunching of the hardened clay between his fingers. He became also aware of the children, each of whom had appropriated one of his legs and was trying to tug him into the house.

"It is all dirt," he said, blushing apologetically. "Oh!" laughed the widow, "it is good honest dirt, and I am used to that."

They clasped hands, and to Riley Pebbles' excited mind it seemed as if her warm palm slid—it would be more precise to say grated—with a little reluctance from his muddy grasp.

Laughing, shouting, boisterous, the children danced and howled when they found that their new playmate was their mother's old friend. They led the caller in triumph into the house. Of course, Riley had to be washed like the rest of the children, and that occasioned such an amount of confusion and merriment as to make him feel more at home in ten minutes than he might otherwise have felt in ten years.

"Won't you stay to tea?" pleaded the widow. "No!" I am so sorry. I suppose your sister needs you. How soon will you come again? The children will miss you very much, and besides that I might—I should like to tell you about my business affairs, although you are the last man in the world I ought to trouble. You see—you see—" Her eyes flared, and Riley fled down the porch stairs, fearing lest he might be betrayed into unmanly emotion.

At the corner he looked back. The golden light of the sunset burnished the little piazza. The clematis could not wholly hide the pretty picture, and there, leaning toward him the wife of his dead friend stood. With each hand she held back a struggling child eager to caper after this new playmate. Riley felt a great sob arise in his throat. It was the throes of a heart that had experienced the bitterness of homelessness until middle life had snared him unwares.

Three months after that, when the snow lay deep upon the ground, and the cold winds whistled down the little street, making it seem more impossible to live in than ever before. Roxana stood at the window awaiting her brother. Determination sat grimly upon her face. Indeed, her features had a cold, easterly expression that betokened the beginning of a long winter of discontent.

Roxana had reason for her suspicions. Since she had implanted the spirit of revenge in her brother's heart he had steadily gone down hill. There was no doubt about that. He brooked no reference to that unfortunate mortgage and would allow no aspersions to be cast upon the widow of the man who had ruined him. He had become silent, uncommunicative, mysterious. The woman whom she had all her life been able to twist round her finger for the first time began to evade her authority. What did this mean? What did this independence portend?

Moreover, and worse than all this, Riley Pebbles was irregular at his meals. Sometimes he did not come to dinner at all and sometimes he stole out after dinner and did not return till 11 or 12. She could not acknowledge herself that she looked dissipated, although she felt that he was so. There seemed to have come over his face a new expression which might almost be taken for happiness. But where could he get his happiness, except from his sister? Altogether Riley's conduct had excited in Roxana the keen-

est apprehension. She feared for his future yet she feared more lest her curiosity might not be gratified. The man who had incontinently babbed everything into her eager ears had now become a male sphinx, a creature far more incomprehensible than the Egyptian deity of old.

That night Roxana intended to have a reckoning with her brother. She had finished her sewing and made up her mind that the storm was bound ultimately to break, and it might as well break now. For the first time in her life she felt a little doubtful as to its outcome, and for this reason she rushed with a stiff neck to her fate.

Six o'clock struck. Riley did not come. This dinner hour, once so dear to his sister's heart because it brought with it her brother and a fresh breeze from the outside world, was accentuated to-night by the shrill, unsympathetic blasts of factory whistles. It seemed as if the fact of its being 6 o'clock would never cease being dinned into her ears. Still Riley had not arrived. Roxana had made up her mind that night to give her brother a cold dinner. The time for tact (which consists mostly in warm slippers, hot meals and a smile) had passed. It was now war to the hilt, for that morning the real estate agent had repossessed Roxana's soul.

With bony, cramped hands she sat there at the window, her gray eyes glued upon the cars that now whizzed past more and more infrequently as the evening lengthened into night. The table, the dinner reposed upon, throbbed, as congealed as the spider's heart. There she sat, an angular and unhappy picture of solitude. For she had cast love out of her nature and therefore she had no home. Only God knows the number of homeless in the midst of warmth and furniture and plenty—homeless because their hearts are atrophied.

Ten—11—12 o'clock struck with ominous precision. Presently Roxana, whose stomach was empty and whose temper was only in a thread leash, noticed in the glare of the electric lights a huge figure lumbering down the street. Yes, it was her brother Riley, a-twirling his cane and along the crisp, silent air was borne the sound of a song.

Where had the abandoned man been? Could it be that he was intoxicated? She earnestly hoped that he was. But Riley tripped down the street as if he weighed only a hundred and ten pounds and had nothing to conceal. He crunched on the creaking wooden steps and pugnauciously inserted the key into his own front door. He did not sneak in that night as he usually did. For the first time he had the air of a man who was master of his own fate. As he stepped into the dimly lighted hall, the haggard and threatening figure of his sister confronted him.

"Riley!" she said, icily, "your dinner has been waiting for you six hours. I will not ask you where you have been."

"Oh, thank you, sister," he said, easily. "I have had my dinner. You needn't have said so." Although he was looking at Roxana he did not see her, for his soul's vision was fixed upon a tiny little dining room in which children seemed to swarm about his neck and upon the dearest little woman in the world, who had all love and all clinging and who—God bless her soul!

"Riley!" Roxana interrupted like a pistol shot. "I have not eaten a mouthful since breakfast. Do you want to know the reason why?"

"No, dear," answered Riley, pleasantly. "I'm going to bed."

But Roxana Pebbles was not a woman to be easily thwarted. With a leap she landed between Riley and the stairs and stood upon the lower step on a level with her big, good-natured brother. Into his face she peered long and searchingly. His eyes and skin were clear—he looked undisturbed and radiant. Indeed, he stood up straight like a man and did not seem at all flustered, but smiled into her excited face.

"Well," he said, cheerfully, "what is it now?—Have it out and you'll sleep better. And—er—Rock, old girl, don't look so cross, it isn't becoming."

A cold seized her heart. This easy, bantering, secure independence portended something terrible. What was the secret of her brother's emancipation?

"Riley," she said, severely—she knew that she was about to fire the last shot in her possession and if that failed to devastate, nothing was left to her but the commonplace exhibitions of a petty woman's temper—"Riley, answer me this. Why have you allowed that mortgage to go unpaid since October? Don't speak until I am through! You haven't the spirit of an oyster. I said oyster, but now I say you have not the courage of a clam. Why have you not turned that woman out of your own house? Where is your revenge?"

Now a unique thing occurred in the Pebbles household. Heretofore it had happened, through the custom of long years of experience, that Roxana had dominated that family in matters both great and small, and that when she snapped her tongue Riley danced. But to-night the wonder took place. Change! always a miracle to those who do not expect it.

Riley looked straight into his sister's eyes unflinchingly and smiled like a happy boy.

"Rock," he said, in his cheerfulest manner, "you haven't said much tonight about your revenge. But I saw it brooding in your eye. I didn't take on at first, but now I'm going to take on, my dear. I've got sort of accustomed to the thought. You shall have your revenge. I'm going to turn Mrs. Winfield out of her house—"

"When?"

"Perhaps you did not know," said Riley, slowly and with a tender look in his great, heavy face that made it fine and strong, "that she has two little children who will have to be turned out, too?"

Roxana's eyes dropped beneath her brother's steady look. A flush of shame came and moistened her parched cheeks. For the first time it occurred to her that she had been unkind, perhaps unwomanly.

"Oh!" she gasped, "I did not know."

"I presume not," he went on, pleasantly, without a vestige of a taunt in tone. "They seldom do. Well, I have decided to turn the whole family out the first of next month."

He did not go on with his explanation, for before he knew it Roxana, the sister of his youth, the companion of his manhood and she who was to be the solace of his old age, burst into a flood of tears and flung herself into his arms.

"Oh! Oh!" she sobbed, "what have I done? What have I done?"

"God bless my soul!" ejaculated Riley, wiping his eyes with a disengaged hand. His arms hadn't been so empty during his estrangement from his sister as they might have been and he held her with even greater tenderness than before. But even Riley Pebbles in spite of his recent experiences, for knew little of a woman's nature. For suddenly Roxana wrenched herself from his brotherly embrace and stood before him blushing.

"How could you? You cold-hearted wretch you! Turn the widow and the fatherless out into the cold world the first of February? I am ashamed of you!"

Even then, in the fury of her onslaught, Riley did not cringe. He smiled.

"Don't you see Rock, dear? I—"

Then for the first time he stumbled. "Well?"

"I'm going to turn her out of her house, but—er—I'm going to take her into mine. The matter of it is, we're going to be married."

He heaved a stentorian sigh of relief and steeled his eyes so as not to waver from his sister's.

For a long time they stood opposite to each other without blinking and without speech. The clock struck cheerfully. But the man who had himself disintegrating, almost fainting. Visions of the past coursed like blood through her memory. Ah, she, too, had given up love and happiness for her only brother in the dim years ago, and now—now—expression after expression chased each other over her withered features, each making them softer, tenderer, more womanly. At some time to each unmarried woman comes the delicate thought of all the unborn happiness that she has passed. And now her eyes filled, her lips quivered, and this time she melted into her brother's arms like a tired child. She seemed suddenly to have lost all her angularity.

"Oh, Riley," she whispered, "I'll try to congratulate you—and be happy in it; but—why do you turn her out? Can't you live there, too? And—oh! isn't there a little room big enough for your own sister, who loves you and who hasn't any body else in the world but you, and who would like to help a little with the children's mending—and—"

"God bless my soul, Rock!" Riley couldn't even see the hall light, it was so blurred.

He couldn't speak. He bent and kissed his sister on the lips. Then he stood to his greatest height, his face glorified with joy. For he had taken his revenge, and he felt that it was complete.—Herbert D. Ward in the Independent.

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS.

Continued from Page Seven.

time in my life. It was at Florence, where I was studying art, for in those days I painted a little, dilettante fashion, and I came across the family of Harrison, who, as I tell you, were half English, half Italian, though to all intents and purposes Harrison was thoroughly Italianized, for he had been brought up in Italy, married there, and hardly spoke his own language decently. Their only child was Annuziata, a lovely girl, and their home was at Fiesole, among the olives. Mr. Harrison had no religion at all, and so he used to practise all the fooleries her religion dictate. Your dear mother returned my affection, was quite happy in marrying me, and made no difficulties about my being a Protestant. In those days I was not as enlightened as I am now concerning the errors of Popery, and though I was dead against it I did not care what your mother's faith was. For I knew her sweet docile nature all too well to have any doubts about influencing her after we were married. The question of the faith of our children was not discussed between us. Anne—for I called her that, as she liked it—was much too shy, and so I should be as she would, promised it through her mother's promise, and that by the time any appeared she would be as staunch a Protestant as myself. Just then I was so madly in love I promised anything—anything to get my sweet Anne. At the last the last mother made a fuss about her being married in a church, while I, to our going to England and being married there, but the Signora would not hear of it. So we were married by a very old priest, and then away we went, Anne and I, to Leghorn, where we started on a yachting tour which occupied some months, and during which time, excepting when we put into port, she had no chance of going to her church.

"Then, a couple of months before you were born, we went to Avarside, a house in Scotland which I had taken for a few months, and which I knew was far distant from any Popish place of worship."

"For a few weeks before your birth she seemed very depressed and not like her usual self, and I was anxious about her, especially as her mother had told me that her heart was not very strong. One day she told me that there was something she wanted to ask me to promise her, and you can imagine my astonishment when she said it was that our child should be brought up a Catholic, and that she herself wished to resume the practice of her religion, and she begged me to take her to London, where this house was shut up and in the hands of caretakers, because there, she said, she could find churches and

Italian priests. You can imagine my feelings after all the trouble I had taken to explain the errors of her faith to her! When I talked to her I found I had made but very little real progress towards unsettling her, and during our long honeymoon she had really taken it all in very little, and I am afraid we were so deeply in love with each other that I had taken a great deal for granted, my wish being father to the thought that she really had renounced her religion. She was not a reader, and never read the books I had taken on board for her to read.

"Of course I told her I could not take her to London just then, and as for our child being brought up a Catholic I put her off and would say nothing definite. It seemed she had heard from her mother, who had brought up the subject most unwisely.

"It was the first disagreeable word we had had since our marriage. She was extremely stubborn, and either could not or would not argue. At last I told her I would like her to see a Protestant minister, and I got Mr. Dering, who lived some miles off, to come and talk to her.

"His visits did not seem to do her much good, for all she repeated was that she wanted to practise her religion, and that she believed in it frantically. Then Mr. Dering led suddenly, and before I could get to know his successor, and ask him to try and bring Anne to a different frame of mind, you were born.

"Of course I did not, nor do I now, believe in baptismal regeneration and break the sabbath, but I had every intention of taking you to a church at some time or other to be christened, but as you were delicate, it was put off and not done, in fact, until a year after your dear mother died."

"But how did her religion cause my mother's death?" inquired Ida, who had listened to this story with the deepest interest.

"I am coming to that," said Mr. Vanderman. "Ah, God only knows of the grief it was to me to lose her and how much I felt her death! She was such a sweet little darling. You remind me of her in some ways," and Mr. Vanderman glanced at his daughter's face seen in the bright fire-light.

"It is on her account that you are so fond of Italian, I suppose," said Ida, feeling she must say something to break the silence, which succeeded her father's last words. The words seemed cold and inappropriate, but she felt so strangely moved by her father's story that she spoke without thought.

Mr. Vanderman nodded, and his voice was husky as he continued. "Yes, I knew it fairly well before I went to Italy and then I always spoke it with her. Well—to return to this 'business,'" and Mr. Vanderman sighed. "One day some weeks after your birth she was sitting in the hall with the dogs, and I had come in from from shooting. She was looking lovely in a blue gown—I remember it so well—and you in her arms. The hall was a favorite place for her to sit in, and she made a pretty picture. Her complexion came out quickly—you resemble her in that, Ida—she began to speak about religion, and she told me she had been very unhappy about it, and that she had not, as I had fondly hoped, lost faith in it at all, and she repeated what she had said before, that she wanted to practise her religion and to bring you up a Catholic. Her mother had written to her and told her that I had promised that she should be free about that. I told her I was very sorry to hurt her, but that if I had promised it then, that now I found I could not keep the promise, and that no child of mine should ever be a Papist. She accused me of deceiving her mother, and I shrugged my shoulders and said all was fair in love and war. When she remonstrated, I told her that I had learnt more of the evils of Popery even since my marriage and that it was useless pleading with me, and that she must rest content in her husband's religion. Surely I knew better than she did!

"She answered that she could not argue, but that all she knew was, that she was very unhappy, and she began to cry."

"I am being punished," she said. "It is a 'castigo,' chastisement, and I deserve it."

"What for?" I inquired, somewhat astonished at her tone.

"For marrying one not of my faith, and of not making more sure that you would let me practise my religion."

"I can't say you seemed very unhappy about it when we were yachting," she remarked, for she never had seemed to care very much.

"I didn't care then, my head was turned, I thought of you only, but lately I have thought over things and read my prayer-book and my *Imitation*, and I do want you to do as I ask. I believe it all as firmly as I ever did."

"At this juncture I rang for the nurse to take you up to your nursery."

"The woman stared at Anne's flushed and tearful face, and when she was out of the room your mother burst into a passionate fit of crying, and she became very much excited indeed. She begged and implored me to swear I would leave her free, and let you be a Catholic, and when I did not reply, she rose and knelt to me. You can imagine from that the powerful hold that early superstition had upon her! Of course I would not swear any such thing, then—"

Mr. Vanderman paused and pressed his hand to his eyes. After a moment's pause, which seemed much longer to Ida, Mr. Vanderman said shortly: "I suppose the excitement was too much for her heart for she gave a short scream and fell back—she was gone."

Ida could not speak. She had pictured the scene to herself very vividly and she was feeling keenly for both her parents. Among the contents of the trunks she had found a soft Italian silk dress of pale blue—it may have been the one worn by her mother on that memorable day, and Ida mentally decided that it should not be used for the tableaux—it was too sacred as associated with that tragic occasion.

"Father, it must have been dreadful for you," said Ida at length. "You must be so sorry—and reproach yourself, though I suppose that you acted for the best."

TALK TO YOUR CHILDREN.

Almost all parents expect that their children will know right from wrong without any instruction from them. They leave the whole moral training of their boys and girls to the teacher and the priest. They do not consider it their bounden duty to educate their offspring ethically, to impart to them sound principles, and to form their conscience.

Formerly parents used to give up at least a part of every Sunday afternoon to the moral training of their young. They heard a Catechism lesson. They read to them a chapter from the Bible or from the Life of a Saint, or from some book of moral instruction. They talked to them of their school tasks or their stints at work, if they had gone out to be employed, and they admonished them to be docile within the scope of the authority of the teacher or the employer to command. They invited the confidence of their children. They welcomed questions concerning duty. They helped them to understand the meaning of life and the way to put it to good use.

But in the rush and stress of existence nowadays, fathers and mothers seem to have no time and no inclination to instruct their children. They do not even inquire how they are getting on in the routine study of religion. They expect the teacher and the pastor to do everything that is necessary to instill the faith into their little ones. But this is not right. They cannot shift their own responsibility. They should see to it personally that their sons and daughters know not simply the Catechism by rote but also the full meaning of the rudiments of religion therein contained. They should talk to them regularly and systematically on this subject so as to open their intellect to the full force of the will to the apprehension and the love of the truth—Catholic Columbian.

MARY'S PREDESTINATION.

When we consider the Word's desire to assume a created nature, when we ponder His choice of a human nature, when we reflect on His further choice of His soul and body, and add to all these considerations the remembrance of His immense love, we can see how His goodness would exult in the choice of His Mother, whom to love exceeding is to become one of His chiefest graces, one of the greatest of all human perfections. All possible creatures were before Him, out of which to choose the creature that was to come nearest Him, the creature that was to love Him, and to have a natural right to love Him, best of all, and the creature whom duty as well as preference was to bind him to love with the intensest love. Then, out of all He chose Mary. What could He be said? She fulfilled His idea, or rather she did not so much suit His idea, but she was herself His idea, and His idea of her was the cause of her creation. The whole theology of Mary lies in this eternal and efficacious choice of her in the bosom of the Father.—Father Faber.

Dare to say no. To refuse to do a bad thing is to do a good one.—George Herbert.

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