

PRETTY MISS NEVILLE

BY B. M. CROCKER

CHAPTER XXI

COLONEL KEITH'S LITTLE TEA

"What wicked extravagance, Nora! Your new habit for a jungle ride! You are taking it quite into everyday use! I declare, it is well for you that you are going to marry a rich man." Such was Mrs. Vane's friendly expostulation as she and I awaited our horses one afternoon in the porch.

"There's no one coming excepting Dicky and Ellen," she added, reassuringly; "do run and change it."

I could not reasonably explain to her that Maurice had more than once informed me that nothing I possessed suited me as a quarter so well as my dark blue habit, and that I was wearing it to look my best in his eyes—I did not admit this to myself, much less, need I say, to my companion. No, I mendaciously assured her "that number two was really so shabby that it was scarcely decent, and would soon make a grand scare-crow."

"Shabby!" she echoed. "I'll trouble you for mine," holding out a very threadbare elbow and pointing to a large patch on the skirt, "but it's quite good enough for scrambling about among the ruins." Then, as if struck by a sudden thought, she turned sharply round, and added, suspiciously.

"Captain Beresford is not coming, is he?"

"I believe he is; he said something about it," I answered, carelessly, without raising my eyes, and continuing to draw a pattern in the sand with my riding cane with increasing zeal and finish.

"Now I understand why we have put on our best habit. Why did we not say so at once?" she demanded, sarcastically. "And what are you blushing about, eh? Take care, Nora! We sighed, we grieved, we wept, we never blushed before," she quoted, impressively.

"Who never blushed before? and who is blushing now?" inquired a well-known voice, and Maurice, who had ridden up unnoticed on the sandy avenue, joined us.

"Oh, Nora, of course!"

"Never mind, Nora, you need not be ashamed. Darwin declares a blush to be the most human of all emotions. Who ever saw a dog, a cat, or a monkey blush? Your blushes proclaim that you belong to the most superior order of humanity. I am only sorry that I cannot keep you in countenance."

"Nevertheless, I have seen you acquit yourself nobly," observed Mrs. Vane, condescendingly.

"As, for instance, at that dinner-party at the Dryers, when a conversation from a loud buzz, suddenly subsided to a dead silence, and a certain young lady was heard saying, 'You are exactly my style, Captain Beresford; I adore the Artillery!'"

"Come, Mrs. Vane, that is a very, very old story. Your memory is too good. Well, what about this ride to the city? We ought to make a start soon. Who is coming?"

"Colonel Neville, Nora, Dicky, Campbell, Ellen Fox, you and I, and Boyse Towers," returned Mrs. Vane, counting on her fingers.

"Boyse Towers?" he echoed, in a tone of amazed approbation.

"Yes; Colonel Keith said he might come, and you know it is his party; he is to drive down to the ruins, and have tea awaiting us in some picturesque locality, and we can ride home by moonlight."

inary goat. Nevertheless our host was established when we arrived, and gave us a loud and hearty welcome as we successively scrambled to his feet. Tea was ready; in a remote corner the kettle was boiling; on a table-cloth were spread various dainty comestibles, on which I saw Boyse already feasting his appreciative eye. We were soon seated round the tea-maker (Mrs. Vane) doing ample justice to the refreshments set before us, especially Boyse, whose voracity on these occasions was a matter of well-deserved notoriety.

It was a lovely afternoon; a little balmy breeze barely made itself felt, as we reclined in a variety of luxurious attitudes around the table cloth. Mrs. Vane sat at the head, with Maurice on one side of her and uncle at the other; I came next to uncle, Dicky Campbell next to me. Maurice was favored with the immediate society of Boyse; and Colonel Keith, too stout to recline on one elbow, like the rest of the company, or to sit tailor-fashion, had found a nice large flat stone, upon which he sat enthroned at the head of the feast.

Beneath us lay the plain—upon which long, long shadows commenced to stretch themselves—the nondescript nameless ruins, and herds of half-tame black buck, who were leisurely sauntering about in blissful ignorance of our neighborhood.

"This tea has only just been introduced to the hot water, good people," said Mrs. Vane, "so you must all bide a wee and exercise your patience."

"I'm sure this old city must be a jolly place for ghosts," remarked Dicky, with startling abruptness.

"And snakes," added Maurice, impressively.

"Snakes there may be," I answered, coiling my habit tightly round me, and glancing apprehensively at a neighboring pile of stones, "but ghosts I don't believe in; there are no ghosts in India."

"There you are mistaken, my dear young lady," replied Colonel Keith, blandly; "India is the original headquarters, the family abode, of ghosts; those in Europe are only colonists. Why, we could give twenty well-authenticated stories out here for one you would hear at home."

"Twenty ghost stories!" cried Boyse, eagerly pausing in the act of buttering a piece of seed cake; "oh, do tell us one."

"Oh, yes, do," echoed Mrs. Vane; "it is broad daylight, and we all can sit close together, and I, looking fitly behind her, have a wall at my back."

"Commence, commence without further delay. Once upon a time," we clamored.

"But you are all rank unbelievers," objected Colonel Keith, with superb commiseration.

"Never mind that; who knows but you may have the glory of converting us," replied Maurice, encouragingly, turning round on his elbow, and preparing to give our host his undivided attention.

"I want no converts; seeing is believing, and I have no time for a long winded tale. However, I'll just give you a few ideas for your imagination to work upon, if you like."

"Ahem! attention. Are you all ready?" said Maurice, glancing round.

"Well," resumed Colonel Keith, having lit a cheroot, "what I am going to tell you is not fiction, but a fact," looking at Mrs. Vane, with an impressive nod. "There is a house in Cheetapore—a large, two storied, slate colored bungalow—standing in the middle of a mangotope, and once most popular; but now empty, and universally shunned. It is haunted by a very extraordinary thing—a man's head. This head is that of a native, and wears a large green turban, and is to be seen, only too constantly, peeping through doorways, jumping about the floor, looking over your shoulder when you are shaving at the glass, and always disappearing and vanishing in a most surprising and unlooked for manner. It has frightened nervous ladies by the score, and many strong, able-bodied men have seen and objected to it. Sometimes it gaily rolls downstairs before you; sometimes it peeps in at a window; sometimes it grins; sometimes it makes the most truly diabolical faces. Its mood is variable; only one thing about it is certain—its unfailing appearance after nightfall."

"Egh, how horrid!" ejaculated Boyse.

"How are you feeling now, Mrs. Vane?" inquired Maurice, cheerfully. "Don't you think you would be a very desirable tenant for the slate colored bungalow?"

"Not for the gold of Ophir," she answered, with a shudder.

"I have heard of a somewhat similar story," said uncle, sociably; "the only difference was, that my house was haunted by a hand—a small, white, woman's hand—that became a downright nuisance. It beckoned at doors, it tapped at windows, it leaned unexpectedly on your shoulders, and it awoke you by passing its icy-cold fingers across your face."

"Don't! You are giving me a series of cold thrills!" cried Mrs. Vane; "do change the subject, let us talk of something more cheerful. I do not know which was worst, the head or the hand."

"I think I should prefer a whole ghost, not piecemeal apparitions," said Maurice; "what do you say, Mr. Tuppence?"

"I don't know," said Tuppence, now thrust his ugly, intelligent head over his master's shoulder.

"Now, Captain Beresford, it's your turn; tell us some nice, amusing anecdote, that will drive away these hideous recollections," said Mrs. Vane; "Come, we are not going to let you off, Commence."

"Well, I'll tell a story Tuppence told me, about a friend of his—about a very nice person—a little rough-haired terrier, and he begs me to impress upon you," dragging Tuppence to the front and making him sit on his haunches, "that this is a true story," glancing mischievously at Colonel Keith, not fiction, but a fact. Attention! Mr. Tuppence's story, as translated and brought down to human intelligence by his master:

Once upon a time, a certain little dog, called Jock, was travelling to Bombay in the same carriage as his master, and at one of the intermediate stations a day's rail from their destination, master and dog descended for refreshment; and by some extraordinary misfortune, the train went off with the master and left the dog behind. He has since confessed that he was inveigled from the platform by a long legged refreshment-room cat, with whom he wished to have a few words—but he that as it may, Jock was left on the platform, a stray dog. Thanks to his personal appearance, a railway peon took possession of him, and carried, or rather led, him by his all-useful red handkerchief to his home in a village two miles away, where Jock became the prey and the sport of a large, unmannerly family of young peons, and lived as best he could on rice and ghee, keeping himself entirely to himself, and repudiating the advances of various mangy village pariahs, with an all-withering and blighting scorn. Every day at 2 o'clock (the hour when this train came in) did he travel down to the railway, and await his master on the platform. You might get your watch by that little red dog; to the very second he was to be seen travelling along the dusty white road, and arriving punctually to a minute. For a month his trouble was unrewarded, nearly a year elapsed, still he persevered, through monsoon torrents, through scorching heat. At last, one day—oh joy!—his master descended from the train. Simultaneous and affecting was the recognition. Many were the exclamations of the man, the transports of the dog, who, needless to say, got into the first-class carriage with all speed, and was borne away forever from the peon's disconsolate family.

"Hurray! well done! well done, indeed, Mr. Tuppence!" And we all laughed and clapped and applauded; Tuppence making his acknowledgments by vociferous barking and running wild circles round the table-cloth.

"But seriously, Maurice, that is not a true story?" I inquired incredulously.

"As true as gospel! I myself have seen the dog coming down to the train, waiting for it, and going away bitterly disappointed, poor brute!"

"Well, Boyse, what do you think of that tale?" inquired Colonel Keith. An approving nod was his only reply. "By the way, young man, you are to be one of the most important people at Miss Gill's wedding next week. You are to be the page, I hear."

"Boyse again assented with an nod, as his mouth was otherwise engaged. "I hope they have ordered an extra large cake," muttered Maurice.

"How do you like the notion, Boyse?" continued Colonel Keith.

"Oh, well enough," he returned, with a would-be bashful simper. "I've been reading over the marriage service."

"Indeed! A youth of an inquiring mind! Nothing like taking time by the forelock."

"I suppose you are thinking of getting married yourself—oh, Boyse?" said Maurice, looking greatly diverted.

"No, I'm not," retorted Boyse, peevishly; "but I just wanted to see if I had anything to say."

"You!" with contemptuous amazement.

"Well, I haven't," he continued, complacently; "but, turning with sudden animation to Mrs. Vane, and poking her with his stick, "tell me, Mrs. Vane, what does M. or N. mean?"

"Why don't you ask me, Boyse?" interrupted my cousin.

"Because you've never been married," he replied, scornfully. Mrs. Vane, who was leaning back in her chair, and looking at the two boys, said, "What does M. or N. mean?" reiterated Boyse, impatiently, and again applying his cane.

"Oh, it stands for their Christian names, you horrid, rude little wretch—Mary and Nehemiah, Maria and Nicholas—anything you like."

"Oh, I see; or— or— with a cunning look over at me, "or Maurice and Nora."

"You are getting quite smart, my young friend," said Maurice, rewarding him with a huge piece of cake, and surveying the imp with benign toleration. Naturally I became *couteur de rose*, and Mrs. Vane looked not only uneasy but seriously annoyed, and said, very sharply:

"Captain Beresford, I really wonder at you! You will make the boy quite ill. His death will be at your door; it will indeed."

"Talking of ghosts," interrupted uncle, who had been lighting his cheroot at our kitchen fire, "there's an old mosque here, untenable after nightfall; they say a lot of people were massacred in it, and that, after dark, cries and groans and all kinds of horrible noises are heard in its neighborhood."

"Suppose we go and see it," I said, starting up with alacrity; "we shall certainly get the cramp if we stay here much longer. Let us adjourn."

"My suggestion was most favorably entertained, and soon we had all descended and were following a narrow, beaten footpath that led in the desired direction. I walked beside Ellen, Dicky with Maurice, and Colonel Keith had annexed himself to Mrs. Vane, and was pouring a series of blood curdling ghost stories into her reluctant ear. 'It was almost dusk when we reached the mosque; the lady moon had not showed any symptoms of rising; the place looked dark and uninviting, and Maurice, Boyse, and I were the only volunteers prepared to venture in. Mrs. Vane hastily endeavored to dissuade me. 'Nothing to be seen; keep with me; don't go breaking up the party,' she whispered eagerly."

"I'll not be a minute," was my answer—"not two seconds," as, urged by curiosity, I followed my pioneers. The interior of the building was decidedly gloomy, and the outer portion was evidently the night stable of some cattle, as straw and fodder were strewn about. Truly there was not much to be seen; we explored further and found another building and a deep, black cavity (presumably a well), down which Boyse and Maurice, flung numerous stones, for the childish pleasure of hearing them reach the bottom. At last there was nothing further to detain us, and we returned to the entrance, and found, to our amazement, that all the others had departed; we were left behind.

"Oh, do hurry, and let us get home, Maurice," I exclaimed impatiently. "We shall be so late. Where are the horses? Why did they not bring them here?"

"I'll go and look after them. I suppose those stupid syces are waiting above at the far entrance. You stay here, and I'll be back in ten minutes." So saying, he started off at a run.

Boyse and I sat on the steps, side by side in the gathering darkness; no moon, not a star to be seen. Visions of snakes, horrible apprehensions of the head or the lily-white hand floated through my excited brain.

"I say, Nora, Nora!" said Boyse, suddenly, shifting himself exceedingly close to me. "This is rather creepy, is it not?" A pause. "I don't think I'll stay here any longer. I'll go and get my pony and be off; I'm not sure that I like this," confidently. "I shall hook it!"

"You mustn't go—you shan't leave me," I urged, endeavoring to detain him. Boyse's company was better than none. "Wait a little while," entreatingly.

"Dear Boyse, indeed," he sneered; "because you are in a twitter about ghosts. I'm rather in a funk myself, so good by. I'm off." And, wrenching himself from my persuasive hand, he jumped up, clattered down the steps, and vanished in the darkness. Here was a pretty situation in which to find myself—sitting alone on the threshold of the haunted mosque. If there were any ghosts, I was offering them a rash temptation. I peered into the gathering gloom—nothing to be seen; not a sound to be heard, but the bark of a fox, the howling of owls, and the rattle of a country cart along the distant high road. But what was that? A moan, a groan! issuing from the mosque behind me. My heart beat so loudly I could hear it most distinctly. Another hollow, agonizing moan! My hair felt as if it were actually standing on end. Oh, would Maurice never, never come! I endeavored to rise, but a firm, detaining hand laid heavily on my shoulders resisted the attempt. I made one more frantic effort, started to my feet, and fled down the steps like one possessed, and behold, oh joy! a lantern twinkling toward me, and heard voices—oh, how welcome!—it was Maurice, by the way, and the horses. Breathlessly I stammered out my tale, and had barely concluded when a loud, rude laugh indicated Boyse—Boyse, who had played upon my fears, Boyse, who had groaned, Boyse, who had enjoyed the joke with intense glee and satisfaction. By the light of the lantern Maurice calmly surveyed my ghastly face and trembling, demoralized appearance.

"Boyse, my friend, you are a first class young raganuffin, and I should heartily enjoy giving you a very sound thrashing," he said sternly.

"However, we will postpone it just for the present." Then, having assisted me to mount, and placed the reins in my still shaking hands, "Here," he added, imperiously, "get on your pony, and come home; and don't stand grinning there."

"I'm going home," replied Boyse, mounting very deliberately; "but I'm not such a fool as to go with you and Nora. Lord, what a fright I gave her!" cackling complacently. "No, no! I'm not such an ass as to spoil sport. Two is company, and three—"

The last word was lost in a vicious lash bestowed on the skewbald, and in another second Boyse had galloped away into the darkness, leaving us alone.

TO BE CONTINUED

ABE GOT HIS JUST DESERTS

It cost Abe Goldman \$100 fine to borrow the name "Mike Hogan" on Desplaines street corner, Chicago. Judge Mahoney was astonished when Goldman responded to the name "Mike Hogan."

"Mike Hogan!" thundered the court, "how did you ever come to take that name?"

"Because, your honor, it is a good name," replied the culprit.

"It's an outrage," retorted Judge Mahoney. "Stealing Irish names is one crime I intend to abolish. You are fined \$100 for contempt of court. Call the next case."—Syracuse Sun.

DOROTHY

"She is the most artless little flirt I ever saw," said Miss Annie, severely.

"Perhaps just now," answered her brother breaking an egg with unmoved calm. "She will outgrow it."

"I don't believe it," replied the lady, with the positive Puritan out look on such girlish frivolities. "It is something innate. I never flirted, I know."

"It shows a vain, shallow, trifling nature," continued Miss Annie. "Dorothy has no more heart or conscience than a butterfly." One of those bright-winged wanderers fluttering on the roses without the window aided the speaker to unworried simile.

"I am rather an advocate for butterfly days," said her brother.

"You, Leigh!" exclaimed Miss Annie, in amazement. "You never wasted a day in your life."

"Perhaps it would have been wiser if I had," he said. "The question is, what is a wasted day, Annie?"

"That," replied the lady with prompt decision as she pointed through the rose vines to the hammock swinging on the followed porch, where, poised lightly as her bright-winged prototype, Dorothy Dean was holding her morning court, dispensing her royal favors with laughing grace to the half dozen young men who were pleading for walks, dances, or drives with the belle of the "Mountain Inn," where Miss Annie was reluctantly chaperoning her brother's debutante ward for a summer holiday.

"That is all she does or cares to do. I can't keep her quiet long enough to mend her own silk stockings. As for reading anything solid or sensible, writing anything but picture postcards, thinking of anything but dress and dancing, I don't believe she is capable of it."

"Don't be too sure of that," said the gentleman quietly. "Let her have her butterfly days out, Annie. They pass all too soon, my dear, as you and I know."

"I don't know," answered the lady compressing her lips into a line. "Thank heaven I never gave my days to such vanity and foolishness, young or old, I should think after six years in a convent she would have come out something better than the butterfly she is. My teaching would have made her very different, I know."

"No doubt it would my dear Annie," he said. "And I may have been mistaken but though poor Dick Deane dropped off too suddenly to give any orders, I know that Dorothy's mother had been a Catholic and would wish her to be brought up in her faith. And that you could not do."

"Never," said Miss Annie firmly. "My conscience would not have permitted it. How yours did, I cannot say. After all we had been taught of the errors and falsehoods of Rome. As it is," added the lady venomously, "you see the result."

It was a very charming result. Miss Dorothy's guardian was forced to confess, as that young lady, having slipped from the hammock, passed at the window of Miss Grantley's private sitting room, and pressing a sweet winsome face through the climbing roses, kissed her pretty finger tips to the pair at the breakfast table, and tripped off through the dewy grass to the tennis court below the lawn.

And that fair young face smiling at him through the roses was the picture that Leigh Grantley carried with him as, a little later, he made his way to the station, his brief holiday broken by a telegram summoning him back to the city.

"A butterfly, as Annie had said, she thought, with a wistful smile, "only a butterfly," but the one gleam of brightness in his two-score years. Years of dull, slow, plodding at first, later of stress and strain and eager, breathless watching of stock market and ticker, years in which there had been no youth, no joy, no light, no love; for his brotherly affection for Annie scarcely could bear that name. His one short respite had been that enforced holiday seven years ago, when his doctor had peremptorily ordered him to Europe, and where he had run across his old college chum, Dick Deane, going the pace that kills in the despair of recent widowhood. Grantley had lured him away from Paris and Monte Carlo to quieter scenes, but one day when mountain-climbing in Switzerland Deane had dropped suddenly with a heart attack that had only given him time to dictate the brief will that left his twelve year old girl and her little fortune to his old friend's keeping.

"You'll do the right thing by her, Grantley, I know."

And Grantley had taken those short, panting words as a sacred trust and done the right thing as far as he knew. And he was doing it still. The little fortune that Dick had left the twelve year old Dorothy had doubled and trebled under the guardian's handling. His pretty butterfly would have free-winged flight, though not thought or care. And wise, later of stress and strain and eager, breathless watching of stock market and ticker, years in which there had been no youth, no joy, no light, no love; for his brotherly affection for Annie scarcely could bear that name. His one short respite had been that enforced holiday seven years ago, when his doctor had peremptorily ordered him to Europe, and where he had run across his old college chum, Dick Deane, going the pace that kills in the despair of recent widowhood. Grantley had lured him away from Paris and Monte Carlo to quieter scenes, but one day when mountain-climbing in Switzerland Deane had dropped suddenly with a heart attack that had only given him time to dictate the brief will that left his twelve year old girl and her little fortune to his old friend's keeping.

music he had never known, must never know. But he would give her up to no light, foolish claim. "It must be a man, indeed, strong and wise and tender to whom he would entrust his butterfly, one who would never break her light wings, check her joyous flight."

She would marry soon, of course. It was inevitable, nay, desirable. That good-looking Bryson, perhaps, Annie had declared. His prospects and position in the tennis world whose father was worth \$1,000,000. She could have her choice of half a dozen, as his sister had told him, with a touch of feminine satisfaction that no Puritan rigor could altogether subdue in the triumphant bellehood of her charge. She would marry, of course, and then—and then—Ah, well, he must bear the pang, the loss, the dreary void and darkness as best he could.

She must never know, must never guess. The shriek of the steam whistle broke harshly upon his dream, and he hurried away to meet the train that rushed him to the city to find the stock market pulsing with the fierce fever of a world-wide financial battle. He plunged into his old field of triumph, boldly, recklessly. It was all that life offered to him. For three hours he stood his ground, fighting against hopeless odds and then, then he dropped at his post—senseless, ruined, all that he had and all that he had held in trust lost.

For six weeks after he was borne out of that bloodless battle in his madness and death had won grisly tribute, nature had her triumph or her revenge. For six weeks dreamland from which he had sternly turned away—for six weeks he was young. Then he woke to dull consciousness of weakness, weariness, to the weight of his two score years, to a vague sense of ruin, defeat that he could not at first shape or name.

Into what strange harbor had his wrecked life drifted? He lay in a long, low ceilinged room, white and spotless; a rich fruited grape arbor stretched beyond the window; there was a vase of autumn flowers on the little table beside him. A nun in white cap and flowing veil was slowly pacing the room, saying her beads.

A hospital, he thought, closing his eyes wearily. He was in some hospital, friendly and deserted.

Then there was a light tap at the door, to which the Sister answered.

"Come in, my child, but be very quiet, he is sleeping. Better, yes," in answer to a whispered query, "very much better. The doctor thinks he will be quite right when he awakens. Meantime you can take my place while I finish my rosary in the chapel. Let him sleep as long as he will."

A light footstep crossed the bare floor. The sick man saw through his half closed eyes another little black, figure arranging glasses and bottles. Then the new nurse came nearer. A touch soft as a rose fell upon his brow, and Leigh Grantley's eyes flew open as if he had received an electric shock.

"Dorothy!" he gasped.

"Dorothy indeed! But not the bright-winged butterfly he had left fluttering among the roses. It was the little black-robed convent chrysalis of a year ago that dropped on her knees beside him with a low cry.

"Oh, guardy! Yes, yes, say it again, guardy, say it again."

"Dorothy," the name came steadily, reassuringly, "my little Dorothy! What—what are you doing here?"

"Watching by you, nursing you," she answered, "praying God to save you, to spare you, guardy. Sister Frances lets me come and help her for a while every day. She was infirmarian at St. Clare's before she came here, and I used to help her. Mother thought about nursing, and know something about nursing, and so I learned. Now, guardy, you must shut your eyes and not say another word."

"I must," he answered. "I'm all right, Dorothy, I heard the Sister say so when she thought I was sleeping. I remember everything. I've beggared you and Annie and myself in the stock market. How are you living? What are you doing? Quick, Dorothy, before the nun comes back, tell me all."

The speaker's tone had grown sharp and tremulous, his eyes began to burn. Some instinct, stronger than nurse's training, told Dorothy it would be wisest to tell all.

"Listen, then, guardy, and don't talk. It's all right. Miss Annie is at her cousin's, Mrs. Lane's country-place. She was so broken down with your troubles that they came and took her away. There is that little bungalow of poor daddy's left at Brighton Beach, you know, guardy, and we can all go there and live, for I've got a place guardy. I learned stenography at school, you know, as dear mother said that no one could ever tell, what might happen, and writing was almost out of date. And Mr. Bugan, Archie's father, has given me a position in his office—until I understand—don't be afraid to go on, little girl—until you marry Archie."

But he was weak and could not repress the long drawn sigh, almost a sob, that came with the word.

"No, I am not going to marry Archie," she answered softly. "I can't, guardy, for I've promised— you."

"Die!" he echoed, as he sank back again, catching the fluttering hands in both his own. "Die with those words in my ears! Oh, I am mad still, I am dreaming. Dorothy, you do not mean what you say."

"Yes, I do," she answered softly. "You asked me and I—I promised, for, oh, guardy, you have been making love to me for six weeks—the most beautiful love, guardy. It made even Sister Frances, who heard it all, cry. You told me everything, guardy, how I had grown into your lonely heart all those years until it would be like death to give me up. You said lovely things about me, guardy—things I never dreamed you felt or thought—but I was a butterfly, you added, made for glad flight among the summer roses—not for an old, dull, autumn life like yours."

"Oh, guardy, I don't think you are old or dull at all. It is just the other way. Archie and all the others seem dull and foolish after you. And—I am not the little butterfly you think."

She was down on her knees beside the bed that she might whisper low the sweet confession. "I just danced and flirted so desperately—because I was—desperate, guardy. Because I thought the only man I really loved didn't care."

"Dorothy, Dorothy, my little girl," and the speaker's voice trembled as he pressed his hands he held to his lips. "I can't let you sacrifice yourself. I am a beggar, Dorothy; I have beggared you."

"Not at all," she answered blithely. "We have the bungalow, guardy. And there are oysters on the beach, and I can do wonderful things in a chafing dish. Oh, guardy, it will be lovely to live as a beggar in a bungalow—with you."

And though the after time brought back all and more than he had lost to Leigh Grantley, he felt that it was as a beggar he had won the priceless treasure of his life—the little butterfly who fluttered to his heart to bless it with light and love and faith in all things true and holy for evermore.—Mary T. Waggaman, in Pittsburgh Catholic.

THE VISION

STORY OF A CONVERSION

The memory of suffering is seldom pleasant, yet I recall, even after the lapse of years, some happy hours spent in St. Agnes' Hospital, when the days of convalescence were beguiled by the visits of Sister Vincent, whom I loved to watch as her white fingers fashioned Agnus Deis and scapulars, or rolled showy bandages for the dispensary. On such occasions she would tell me stories of personal experience, and surely a great hospital is a theatre where there are enacted dramas more marvelous than are played on any stage.

"I shall never forget the curious case of Michael Maloney," said Sister one day when I pleaded for one of her experiences. "He was a man well advanced in years, and he had been sent from a small country town nearby to receive treatment for an afflicted knee. It was my duty to take his 'history,' and among other questions was obliged to ask his religion. 'A Catholic, of course,' I queried, smiling, his name and features leaving no doubt of his Irish blood. To my surprise he answered promptly, 'No, ma'am, I am a Methodist.'"

"Methodist!" I exclaimed. "You have the name and face of an Irishman, and I cannot associate you with Methodism." Pardon me, but you bear a close resemblance to my dear old father, and he was one of the most ardent Catholics I ever knew."

"Well, I'm a Methodist, anyway, ma'am, and seeing that Mr. Maloney appearedaverse to further discussion, I said no more.

"Two weeks passed, during which our patient improved rapidly. He was very submissive, giving little trouble, and he seemed to find great satisfaction in watching the Sisters come and go about their duties. Frequently I would turn toward his bed to find him gazing at me with sad, brooding eyes. We all learned to like him, and there was general rejoicing when he was able to sit in a chair, and afterwards to walk about the corridors.

"One Sunday, when I came on duty after Mass, I found Mr. Maloney standing in the doorway of his room, a look of keen interest on his face. 'Sister,' he said abruptly (it was the first time he had ever addressed any of us as 'Sister') 'have you come from Mass? Is it over yet?'"

"Yes to both your questions, I answered, smiling, 'but what do you know about Mass?'"