

St. Cecilia of the Court

By ISABELLA R. HESS.

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CHAPTER XV.—(Continued.)

'It wasn't only science, Billy, and it wasn't a miracle, except in the sense that it always is a miracle the way nature squares accounts. Back of that attack of pneumonia stretched a clean life, and that gave science the upper hand of death. That's all!'

'That's all!' Daniels' voice was a bit strained. 'But a clean life is something you can't buy! And a clean life in that God-forsaken Court is a finer achievement than anywhere else! Phil, that little red-headed Saint told me to keep on fighting—I rather think I will! God knows I can make an effort at least to keep the rest of my life clean!'

'And Billy,' the doctor's voice had a glad ring in it, 'you can make the stains of the past grow dim. Why, Jim Belway had that wedding-ring on his finger, and the nurse said that when the messenger brought it, he cried and kissed it, and called down blessings on the one that sent it.' And they went up-stairs together, and found that the Saint was getting very restless in bed.

The doctor very gravely felt her pulse and looked at her tongue, and sounded her chest, then he announced solemnly, 'The patient may now get up, provided she puts on at once these garments provided,' and Mr. Daniels just as solemnly laid out on the bed his purchase of the afternoon. Cecilia looked at them a moment, then looked at the doctor and Mr. Daniels, and didn't know what to say; her eyes took in with delight the pretty things, and all her innate feminine love of finery shone in her face. But her eyes soon filled with tears, and her cheeks flushed red, and she said: 'My own clothes is good enough. I can't pay for these. I only take things from Jim—Jim says that's square, for I work it out.'

Mr. Daniels' face clouded and the doctor looked puzzled, but the nurse, being a woman, felt she could help them out. So she said quietly, 'I'll tell you! Cecilia will try them on, and see if they fit, for I know a girl just her size who will be glad to take them. And then she will go in and see how Puddin' likes them.'

So they left her with the nurse, and went in to see Puddin', and await the Saint's coming. And in about a half-hour she came to them, and staring at her, they weren't quite sure whether this was really little St. Cecilia of the Court, or if it were some one else conjured up by the nurse. This one wore a suit so warm and bright that even into her wan cheeks, under the glow of the dim lights, there had crept a bit of its glow; the unruly red locks had been brushed smoothly back, and were held in place by a great black bow. For the first time in her little life, all her garments were whole, and as she walked towards them, she was filled with a certain exaltation that had come to her as she put on the new, neat clothes.

'Puddin', having progressed so far as to be propped up in bed, looked at her wonderingly, his big eyes filled with admiration. He seemed to doubt her identity until she was fairly by the bedside, and then he ejaculated, 'Golly! Celie!'

'Puddin', darling,' she bent over the bed lovingly, 'do you think I look nice?'

Puddin's answer was emphatic. 'Do you look nice! I never seen you look like that!' Then, the admiration evidently growing deeper, he said, 'I love you more now!'

'Puddin'! The Saint's voice was full of an indignant hurt protest. 'Don't you know, I'm just the same! Sure you love me just as much in my own dress!'

But Puddin's masculine instincts came out stronger than his reason. 'No, I don't! I like you better in that dress! You never did look that way before!'

Mr. Daniels seized his opportunity, and

remarked, 'I think a great deal of Puddin', and I am very sorry that he isn't to have the opportunity of seeing you in it all the time. I fancy it would help him to get well.'

Cecilia looked down at Puddin', and the

then, too honest to hide her thought, she finished, 'And 'cause I like 'em too!'

They saw the pleasure radiating from her face, and how thorough it was they knew from her whispered words to Puddin'. 'Oh, Puddin', the shoes have got shiny ends, and the hat's got a feather on it!'

She was too full of a restless happiness to keep silent, and the doctor and Mr. Daniels, passing down between the two rows of beds, heard her singing to Puddin', the words ringing sweetly through the long room,

'Jerusalem! Jerusalem! Hark! how the angels sing,

Hosanna in the highest! Hosanna to your King.'

XVI.

A Surprise Party on Jim.

The next morning, Cecilia went back to

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heavy ugly brace that supported his back, then she looked down at the red dress, and smoothed its folds softly, and felt of the satin ribbon on her hair; then she lifted her face to Mr. Daniels and said slowly, 'I'll take back what I said, and I'll keep the nice things, 'cause Puddin' likes them,' and

the Court, escorted by Mr. Daniels; and marvel of marvels, they went in a carriage! When they got in, her heart beat so that she could scarcely take in the magnificence of it all; but when the glory of being whirled along behind the horses had somewhat died down, she ran her hand