

HONOUR WITHOUT RENOWN

BY MRS. INNES BROWN

Author of "Three Daughters of the United Kingdom"

CHAPTER XXI

Father de Woodville advanced and took his stand beside the old woman...

"Who can he be?" pondered the priest. "Poor fellow, he is but a wreck of what once he must have been..."

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strength to fulfil my vow, I will take all the sustenance that I am able...

"She did. I came to her assistance, and she bid me go in search of you. God knows, it cost me much to leave her; for we had not met for years, and I am her brother."

"Her brother! You her brother!—and a De Woodville!" stammered Manfred, endeavouring to raise himself...

Once again the blood dyed the brow and neck of the young priest, but he spoke not a word; for few knew how dear to him had always been his affectionate, merry little sister!

"How terribly he must have suffered!" thought the watcher. "He cannot last long. And yet from what I gather he has a statement of importance to unfold ere he leaves this world for ever..."

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wealth she had none, yet she wanted for nothing; I had made huge sacrifices to attain happiness, and yet had never for one instant grasped it. What had she done to win it?"

"That is just what your weekly confession does to you, my son," replied the abbot; "it washes your soul and keeps it pure and prevents sin and imperfection cleaving to it."

"Talk about women being collectors of rubbish!" Susette drew her unfashionable, but becoming eyebrows into a disapproving frown.

"I shall not be long," he said; "I go to see Sister Marguerite. But should she suffer awhile, and call for me, send a messenger to acquaint me instantly of the fact."

Father Basil De Woodville lost no time in traversing the distracted streets. He knew well where the little convent stood, and chose the shortest cuts and least frequented routes.

"How is she, Sister?" inquired the priest in a low tone, as he paused an instant within the little passage and scanned the nun's face anxiously.

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"Ever and ever so many folks who are not Catholics carry these little statuettes," Meta leaned forward in the huge chair. "My father knows an awfully rich man who is as particular about seeing that he has his in his pocket every day as he is about a clean handkerchief. He says a 'Little Sister of the Poor' gave it to him. I can't imagine what he'd do if he ever lost it."

"I want all three," declared Susette. "I suppose the Saint would want you to make a choice?" She turned to Joan.

"No, I'm not really. That's only on the surface," she said the heavy drawer into the desk. "And that's that! A new man coming tomorrow, Miss Whitley (again she mimicked her employer greatly to the shocked delight of her hearers) I look to you to see he has the proper equipment."

"What is it, old Jenks' address? We might send it out to him," suggested Meta.

"Let me have another look, please, Joan," Susette begged. Thoughtfully she studied the bent case and the tiny figure it enclosed.

"If he cared anything for it old Jenks should have taken it along, I suppose," she ventured.

"Who, him?" demanded Susette, more indignantly. "My dear old Jenks was so overwhelmed with the idea of getting out of this stuffy place into the new branch at Omaha that it's a wonder he remembered anything. Now, though I don't honestly think it's his Saint Joseph, or that he ever knew it was in his desk; he never cleaned it out in his life, you know he didn't, and half a dozen men must have had the place before he came into the firm, notwithstanding all this. I'm going to give him a chance to reclaim it."

"I shall slip the little thing under these envelopes away back in the drawer. If old Jenks writes to any one of us about it, we'll drag it forth. If he doesn't it's there for the new man and I hope it brings him good luck. He'll need it!"

"There you go again, Susette. You mustn't talk about it as if it was a charm," scolded Joan. "Because it isn't!"

"I know it isn't," insisted the offender.

Stephen Roche fitted easily into the routine of the main office of the J. Simpson Supply Co. It was his third place in five years, and Stephen had by this time arrived at the point where he realized he was not the indispensable adjunct to the commercial life of the city which he had believed himself to be on that day in which he had rented his first hall bedroom in an unattractive Chicago rooming house.

He had long since achieved more congenial surroundings and contact with men who accomplished "big things," while preserving a simplicity amazing to the youth, had rubbed away much of his superfluous conceit. So Stephen Roche sat gratefully in old Jenks' swivel chair and dictated rooms of letters into old Jenks' telephone, as if he had grown up with the firm.

Three pairs of eyes, grey, brown and deep blue, watched the Omaha mail anxiously as January melted into February, but though Robert Jenks wrote voluminously in regard to everything in the new branch office inquiries as to the best silver case and its tarnished contents appeared nowhere in any letter.

"You might as well have taken it, Susette," Meta said one blustering March day. "Certainly we know now it never was Jenks'. As to our Mr. Roche, he'll not want it."

"He isn't a Catholic, but he might like it," said Susette.

"He ought to be," Joan broke in quickly. "I'm all out of patience with his sort! Just as soon as they come up to town they imagine everything they learned at home is old foggy! My mother knew his family very well. But do you think for one minute that I'd tell him so, or give him any of her messages? Not I! Take it now, Susette, if you still want it."

"No, let's give him a little more time," it was nearing the end of the noon hour, but the three conspirators were still the sole occupants of the long room. "If some thing doesn't happen soon I'll go right up to him and ask him for it. I can say that I must have dropped it when I cleaned out his desk."

Susette cast a look of unutterable innocence toward the ceiling and concluded. "And that's absolutely and positively true. She here comes Mabel!"

"Susette you are impossible," cried Joan. Meta buried her laughing face in her hands, but added nothing in the way of reproach or approval, as Susette ran past the

gossipy switchboard operator, to wash her hands.

It was precisely one minute after four o'clock that afternoon when the "something" did happen. Susette was certain about the time. The over-weighted clouds which had hung irresolutely above the skyscraping office building, since early morning, suddenly precipitated deluge into the canyon-like streets, and brought consternation to the umbrellaless.

"Will it stop before closing time?" Susette whispered to her nearest neighbor, Meta, and they both glanced at the clock above Stephen's desk. One minute after four, its impeccable hands recorded and Stephen Roche was reaching far back into the orderly top drawer for a smaller envelope.

Meta turned feverishly to her card indexing. Susette's lips parted in a mischievous smile, but her blue eyes were extraordinarily serious as they noted the flush of either annoyance or dismay which flared into Stephen's rather pale cheek, when he withdrew his hand. He dropped the envelopes upon his desk, and looked for a long moment at the worn silver case. Susette leaned over her machine. The little case seemed to scorch his hand. Stephen gave a defiant glance around the room, then becoming aware of the utter indifference of its absorbed occupants, he opened the case and reverently took out the tiny statue.

"What is he thinking of?" Susette wondered. "Is he going to throw it away or will he put it back in the drawer?" She held her breath. Stephen did neither of these ordinary things. When he had stared at it, for what seemed an age, but which the clock affirmed a scant sixty seconds, the statue was returned to its case, and then Stephen Roche dropped it into a pocket of his fashionably cut clothes. And looking up, he met Susette's wide blue eyes and mischievous smile.

"Did you see them in church last Wednesday, Joan?" Meta asked. They waited to cross the boulevard until the lumber motor-bus, from which Stephen and Susette, sharing the top with a much be-muffled old man, waved a gay good-by, should have passed.

"Of course I did, and at all the other Holy Week services! Isn't it the most outrageously ridiculous thing," laughed Joan, "that his coming to his senses and going to church and all that should be through that little imp, Susette?"

"I heard she is under instruction," began Meta. "Did she tell you?"

"No!" cried Joan.—Alice G. Hyde in the New World.

THE REFORMATION AND POPULAR LIBERTY

The gradual growth of religious and civil absolutism under the Reformation furnishes an interesting study. Luther's original plan had been the establishment of free congregations. Those "whose hearts God had touched" were to meet and choose their "ministers or pastors."

The priesthood belonged to every man, he held, and no commission was required for the preacher's office. But such freedom soon led to divergences of opinion. To stem these departures from his doctrine he first demanded the intervention of his evangelical town councils.

Even in the year 1525 he braced as "seditions" the wish of the peasant parishes to appoint or dismiss ministers without reference to this purely civil authority. So the secular arm was already invoked at this early stage, not merely for the suppression of Catholic worship, but for the regulation of his own Lutheran congregations.

Yet even these civil councillors might prove but weak instruments in maintaining the inviolability of his creed. His next step, therefore, was to give full authority, religious as well as civil, into the hands of his favorite princes. Thus finally arose Luther's clearly expressed doctrine of the ruler as absolute "patriarch," whom he compared to King David. He was to appoint bishops, to extirpate religious errors, and by the power of the sword to coerce all to attend the Lutheran sermons and conform outwardly to the Lutheran worship. A theocracy was, therefore, privately established, with the most despotic power entrusted to the hands of the Lutheran sovereign. Catholic rulers were not to presume to use such powers. The inquisitorial Electoral Visitation in Saxony was carried out, by Luther's consent, from 1527 to 1528, and was to serve as a model for other Reformed States. So, with Luther obsequiously holding the stirrup, religious and political absolutism was firmly established in the saddle.

The course here described was doubtless accelerated by the Peasants' War. When Luther turned from these oppressed tillers of the soil, who had been roused to rebellion by his earlier attacks upon the nobles, and called upon the princes to stab and slay them "like mad dogs," his once marvelous popularity with the masses was forever forfeited. Thereafter he was constantly to be bound more closely to the aristocracy. Yet for the favors received from them he surrendered the freedom not merely of the people, but also of his own religion. His former protestations of liberty were now but dry leaves upon the wind. His frequent and indignant outbursts of obsequy were unaccompanied by any effective will to break the shackles

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