

NORA BRADY'S VOW.

BY MISS ANNA H. DORSEY.

CHAPTER VII.

Her heart with love beaming, her eyes with smiles beaming.

What mortal could injure a blossom so rare? Oh Nora—dear Nora—the pride of Slidaria!

Notwithstanding Nora's noble purpose—the principle of right which governed her, and the strong will which animated her impulses and actions—

notwithstanding the bright and almost romantic hopes which had impelled her to brave the perils of the deep and unknown trials in a strange land, there were times when her heart almost failed her—

when the poor emigrants who crowded the steerage of the "Fidelia," many of whom were old and white-haired, to whom it had been a grievous trial to leave the sod where their fathers slept in hope, to go away to die and be laid among strangers.

There were little children, also, who were sick and pining for fresh air and nutritious food, whom the poor emigrants of the steerage was a slow poison, and the undulating motion of the ship incomprehensible and terrifying.

Nora Brady was not one to stand idle in such scenes as these passing time and energies over the inevitable past and in vague fears for the future. Her stores were abundant, and had they been less so, she would have shared them with those who needed aid.

In the effort to cheer and strengthen others, she often scattered the clouds which were gathering over her own heart, and filled it with sunshine. She inspired the desponding with courage; she brought smiles to the countenances of the old emigrants by singing the sweet merry songs of "home" to them.

Her busy hands were never idle. She cleansed the sleeping-places of the sick, and prepared food for those who were unable to prepare it for themselves.

The little ones halted her coming, and entreated her hands or clamorous shouts; and in all that band of poor, heart-weary exiles there was not one whom Nora Brady had not in some way served.

And yet, if anyone had told her that her conduct was extraordinary, that she was performing great and meritorious acts, she would have wondered how the performance of apparent duties deserved remark or eulogy.

now, for the first time, presented itself. She could not see the dim light of the future, any more than she could see beyond the horizon; and, feeling discouraged and out of heart, she thought the best thing for her to do, if Mr. Halloran was not in Boston, would be to return home in the "Fidelia."

Just then Nora was startled by a wild and agonized shriek, and, rushing forward, saw a woman standing on the deck, with her eyes and arms uplifted, almost frantic with terror.

Several of the sailors ran to the spot, and those of the emigrants who were on deck hastily joined the group. Looking up, she saw a boy, some eight years old, clinging to the main-mast above the last cross-tree.

To that dizzy height he had clambered until now, in attempting to return, he grew sick and liddy, and looked down with a wild and frightened countenance.

There was a clamor and shouting from the group below, which bewildered and frightened the child still more, who every moment grew whiter and weaker. Suddenly the captain of the ship appeared among the excited people.

He saw at a glance what was the matter, and, commanding instant silence, inquired to whom the boy belonged, and what was his name.

"He is mine, sir, my name is Patsy," said the poor mother, wringing her hands.

"Don't look down, Patsy; look up," shouted the captain; "hold tight and look aloft. Don't look down again, but feel your way with your feet. That's right. Look up, and tell me how many stars you see through the sunshine. That's it. Look aloft—look aloft, you young monkey, for your life!"

And so, cheering him and watching his perilous descent, keeping his eyes fixed on every movement, the captain stood brave and hopeful, while the silence and suspense of those around him were so deep and intense that the very shifting of the child's hands and feet on the ropes could be distinctly heard.

Lower and lower glanced the bare feet among the black and weather-stained cordage, while the boy's hands, strained and bleeding, clung like the talons of a bird to the tattered ropes until he was just over their heads, or perhaps a fathom higher.

nothing worth knowing turns up, miss, that you don't see in the Pilot; and Mr. Donahoe's a man that's not ashamed of his country or his religion, but stands up boldly for the interests of both; and as for Mr. Halloran, if he's been to Boston, he'll be sure to know it.

Our boy Willie's learnin' the art of printin' at the Pilot Office, and he'd be right handy for you to go and ask a few questions yourself.

"When can I go?" asked Nora, full of hope.

"To-morrow, when Willie goes to work," replied honest Thomas McGinnis.

"And it'll be a good time, Miss Brady, dear, to be inquiring for the situation you was speaking of," added his wife. "Many's the time a girl Mr. Donahoe's befriended in that way. He's got the warm side left for his countrymen, sure, an' never thinks of trouble when he can do them a good turn."

With a light heart, Nora, neatly and becomingly attired, accompanied Willie McGinnis to his place of business.

When they arrived there, the town clock struck, and the boy, finding him self a half hour behind the time, ushered her into the handsome and spacious book-store of the Pilot buildings, and ran with all the speed he could to the printing-press.

Nora felt abashed and embarrassed at being so suddenly left to depend on her own resources, and stood half-frightened and undetermined whether to stay or go away and beg the favor of Mr. McGinnis or his wife to come with her on the morrow.

A number of persons were passing in and out, and the clerks were occupied with packing books to be sent away, or waiting on customers.

At last one of the clerks observed her, and asked her politely, what she would have.

"I can turn my hand to anything," she said, quietly; "but at home I mostly sew, and I got up linen."

"Very well. Persons very frequently come here to inquire about help, and I will keep you in mind. Now you had better go. But where did you say you stopped?"

"With Willie McGinnis's mother, sir; she's the boy that's with her."

"Do you know the way home?"

"I'm afraid not, sir; it's a long way."

"Stephen, send Willie McGinnis here," said the publisher to a porter who was passing by at the moment.

"Here, lad," he continued, when the boy, flushed and expectant, came in; "go home with this young woman to show her the way, then make a holiday for yourself the rest of the day."

Every morning Nora hoped that before night she should hear something from the "Pilot" Office.

She listened with strained and anxious ears, as evening came, and she determined that she should not lapse into indifference through her neglect.

It is the fashion of that region to have an "eye to the main chance" in every particular phase of life, and Mrs. Sydney was like the rest; therefore she cherished genuine pity in her help, after her own ideas.

My wife. I suppose I should find trials everywhere and in every situation; if, by your pleasure, I'll come in the morning, if that'll suit."

"In the morning, of course. Be here by 6 o'clock. I think we shall get on; for Nora, you look as if I shall be able to respect you. Your dress, so plain and neat, everything so clean and tidy about you, is suitable to a young woman who has to earn her living, makes me think you have a great deal of self-respect; and it's a good thing for everybody to have."

In her new home, Nora Brady found that Mrs. Sydney had not exaggerated the difficulties of the situation. In the first place, Mrs. Sydney herself was in a continual fuss about Nora's religious practices, and her going to confession, so that really, if she had been a bad Catholic, she could scarcely have fared worse.

Mrs. Sydney knew that her interest depended considerably on Nora's religious sincerity and steady morals, and she determined that she should not lapse into indifference through her neglect.

It is the fashion of that region to have an "eye to the main chance" in every particular phase of life, and Mrs. Sydney was like the rest; therefore she cherished genuine pity in her help, after her own ideas.

Then Mrs. Sydney was dreadfully afraid of her black cook, Phillis, and would have inspired Nora with the same terror, only Nora soon discovered that Phillis, with the keen instinct of her class, knew very well who to show her airs to and who not.

She was one of the rescued from bondage ones, and had been made quite a heroine of, when she first arrived at Boston, by the "Equal Rights and Southern Transportation Company," which not only tickled her vanity and self-love, but inspired her with an idea that her friends, after all, were only poor white folks, to put themselves down so with negroes; so she set her drab at their expense, and then show her off, and dress her, while she laughed in her sleeve, and was not much astonished to find herself suddenly dropped when their ends were accomplished.

She had been in Mrs. Sydney's kitchen ever since, and presumed no little on having heard it said so often that all races were equal, and the black man as good as the white. The insolence of the coarse and ignorant black woman, who regarded Nora with no favor, because she saw at once how widely they differed, was a sore trial; but after the high-spirit Irish girl had thrown out a few flutes from her handsome black eyes, and told her, in a quiet but very firm way, not to interfere with her, and had on several occasions helped her through no slight difficulties in cooking; she behaved somewhat better.

Nora did not like to waste; and Phillis did. Nora was neat and tidy; Phillis was slovenly and careless. Nora was even tempered and cheerful; Phillis was like a volcano. Nora was close to the interests of her employer; Phillis was wasteful and extravagant.

Thus being two beings so adverse in race, color and morals there could be no harmony or comfort. But Phillis could find no grounds of complaint against Nora, and was annoyed and angry to discover that in all that way, she had not a single degree of respect for her which she had not felt for any white person before, since she left "Ole Virginny."

With the cold. Forgetting entirely the bundle she found in the room, she changed her dress, and, as soon as her strength returned, she went about her usual business, with no other concern than a fear that she should not be able to get to church in the morning.

When she opened the door of Mr. Mallow's apartment, to go in and light his fire, a scene presented itself to her which caused her to start back and pause. Two candles were burning, one on the mantle, one on the floor. Everything in the room was in the wildest disorder.

Cluttered here and there, papers were scattered in every direction, his wardrobe doors wide open, and the bed clothes tossed in a heap together in the middle of the bed, while he sat upright in his leather-backed chair, as rigid and motionless as if he were dead.

There was a strange glare in his eyes, and Nora feared that he had become suddenly deranged.

"Are you ill, sir?" she asked timidly.

"No," he growled.

"And what has tossed your room up, sir, so dreadful?" she asked.

"Be silent, girl! Is it any of your business? Let the room be! I tossed it."

"Shall I light your fire, sir? It is very cold; and you have two candles burning away."

"Two candles! I am mad! I am ruined! Put them out. I haven't a farthing to buy another! No; I'll freeze."

CHAPTER VIII. Sweet it would be once more to see the earth where my fathers rest, and to find a grave, a sounding wave in homelands of the lovely west.