

river bank, she caught a glimpse of Alan's face once more. He was leaning over the old wall above, and intuitively she knew he had been waiting there in the sun all the afternoon; and had they gone to the ferry and returned at sundown, or by moonlight, he would have waited still.

He disappeared instantly as she glanced up. Harold did not see him. She said nothing; she said little for the remainder of the way, and as they turned out on to the turnpike pleaded weariness, and took a passing tram which would set her down at the door of the Bungalow.

Harold sauntered home pondering. Alan was jealous evidently, and Cicely was sorry—naturally—good little soul. It was a pity; it was hard on Alan. But then Cicely was the only girl he knew, while he himself preferred her to so many. Yes, he certainly preferred Cicely to any of them. And it stood to reason she must prefer him, of course. The idea of condemning Cicely to a marriage like that, it should not be; he would save her. His folks might make a fuss, but he would show them he meant to please himself. He would find out where the Owens were going—the mother will tell him. Cicely should see that he was not to be put off. As for Alan, poor fellow, it was too preposterous; the sooner he got over it the better, and he must see it.

Yes, he saw it; he wandered on seeing nothing else, until he woke with a start to find himself in the cathedral cloisters, awhile he leaned over the stone-work glaring into the grassy quadrangle, then gathered himself up and passed on. His shortest way home lay through the building; he need not go out again, and round it. He pushed open the heavy door and slipped in.

The sun shone brilliantly through the glorious blues and red of the west window, tinting the bare wall and the discoloured trophy of dead heroisms drooping its rugged, moth-eaten folds aloft there; slanted coldly through the high north windows, gleaming up into the dim roof, glistening on the cross, leaving the chancel in deep shade, out of which pale sparks of gaslight glimmered weirdly—the gates were closed.

He was not ready yet to pass into the busy streets outside; he wandered aimlessly, professing to look about as if he had never been here before, until he woke up a second time to acute self-consciousness now. Straight before him stretched a great cartoon, painted in long past years on the cathedral wall: just here a king, bowed, grief-laden, clutching the balustrade of a stairway for support, as he feebly hurried to bewail the son who had heartlessly betrayed him; there another father deliberately raised his hand in sacrifice of all his hope, and near again, calmly buried the wife of his youth out of his sight—all the one old story of human love and loss—the grinding of the mills of God. Measured by the eye of God, which was greatest, the man who sacrificed, or the man who bewailed his joys.

He was not alone; sightseers passed and gazed. Over there a woman sat busily stitching hampocks and chatting to an acquaintance;

vergers were preparing for evensong; worshippers gathered; soon the white line of choristers would wend through the chapel yonder, chanting prayer and praise from which he was shut out. Already the organist had climbed into his seat, and was flooding the place with waves of harmony—Alan could feel the swell and vibration where he stood.

Now the chancel gates were open, he slipped in; worshippers came, and the choristers. He rose mechanically when the people rose, and knelt when they knelt, and then he forgot and knelt on unconsciously behind the pillar there in the rear.

The anthem pealed out; he did not know it, but in his brain some words began to stir and struggle and take shape and beat with measured rhythm, and repeat themselves:—

"All I could never be,  
All men ignored in me,  
That I was worth to God."

He raised his eyes wonderingly to the great window before him, lifted himself, and stood upon his feet, and threw up his head, for he knew he was worth the ransom of the Christ.

"Heaven's gates are not so highly arched  
As princes' palaces; they that enter there  
Must go upon their knees."

Harold did not find out where the Owens were going. The first time he called, Cicely was out, Mrs. Owen lying down with an "Indian" headache; the second the bell evoked but hollow echoes, the blinds were down, the place deserted—they were gone. He immediately despatched a wire to Scarborough, packed his portmanteau and followed.

Meanwhile Alan, under sudden inspiration, had arranged to go and see his old governess. It was not far by rail, but he seemed in another world from the moment he saw her waiting in her pony-chaise outside the little station. The feeling grew with every inch of the way he drove through the sunny September landscape as they chatted in the old familiar fashion, and culminated in a shock as he entered the pretty drawing-room, for there, looking very sweet and pleased to see him, was—Cicely.

Perhaps she was not so cool as her fresh summer costume helped her to seem—for it was summer still in the daytime in this nook in the hills—as she explained that she and mamma had been going to Llandudno; but mamma had friends with her and Elizabeth, and she had asked Miss Grey to have her instead.

"I had no idea you were coming," she said.

"And I—I had no idea you were coming," he said, thinking she might have told Harold, and fancied he had known.

"Of course not. How could you? I told no one." And he wondered greatly. He was very grave all the evening. Of course he could not stay the two or three weeks he had meant; he must write and ask to be called to Scarborough.

Cicely too was quiet. Miss Grey saw something was wrong, but wisely made no sign.

Next day he took fishing-rod and lunch and remained away all day, and retired after tea to "write letters."

Cicely, passing through the hall later, saw but one note, and without looking at the address, immediately guessed.

The house door stood open. She stepped out and looked into the star-lit night. Yes, there was a faint scent. She followed it down the garden path, and at the end found the red spark which created it, and the man who created the spark leaning over the wall.

"Aren't you cold?" she said. "It is chilly out here." And with a great gentleness she laid light fingers on his coat, drew it together, buttoned it over his chest, and turned up the collar.

He tossed his cigar away over the wall. "You will be cold," he said. "Go in, please; I'll come."

"But won't you tell me first? Excuse me, Alan—"

"What is it, Cicely?" "You have written to your folks?" He nodded. "Did you say I was here?" Again he nodded. "I told you I did not want them to know."

"No. I beg your pardon, I did not understand that."

"I said I told no one I was coming here purposely."

Alan looked away and pondered. Then, thinking this was far less Harold should misunderstand the situation—

"That's all right. I explained. He will know."

"But if I don't wish him to know?" "Alan was very slow to see."

"He will not mind, Cicely. I will go. I asked for rooms."

Cicely was very patient.

"He might take it into his head to come, and I don't wish it. Alan, when Miss Grey showed me your note and asked if you should come, I was so glad. I thought we should be so happy again, just as we used to be before the oral system came between us."

The pretty fingers trembled and stopped, her face was turned away, and a sob shook her. A great light descended out of heaven upon Alan.

"Cicely, has it only been the oral system all this while?" And Cicely took his hands and bowed her face upon them.

"But, Cicely, how can you possibly prefer me? Harold will be vexed."

"We can't help that. A woman measures a man by his capacity for loving, and a man who makes most fuss cares least. You might know the man who is willing to give her up is the one the woman is sure to want!" laughing up at him out of the breast of his coat. Then, sobering, "You won't tease me about the lip-reading, will you? It makes me nervous—"

"My darling, this is the only lip-reading you shall ever be bothered with." And he stooped and kissed her under the watching stars.

FRANCES HAYDON.

