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IN TREATY WITH HONOR

A Romance of Old Quebec.

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CHAPTER XXIII.

A DAUNTLESS DEMOISELLE.

A heavy snowstorm accompanied by a high wind set in that day; even had we been in a condition to proceed, travel would have been difficult. So fatigued were we, however, we thought it better to rest and take our horses no farther. A coach carrying the northern mail was to arrive in the evening, continue to the lines, and returning to the tavern where we were, go south in the morning. Ramon and I decided to take seats in the coach and hasten to Augusta. While we slept our hosts and his sons watched, fearing that since we were so near the border, posers of soldiers might venture across and capture us.

In the course of the afternoon, from our window of an upper room, I saw two men on foot approaching the house. As they drew near I saw from their dress and features that they were French Canadians. Going down to the door I hailed them.

"Bon jour, mes amis, are you bound for the next village?"

"We are laborers," answered the older of them, and having spent the summer months are going to our homes in Canada for the winter."

"We have just come from there and wish to send back our horses," said I. "You are good honest fellows, I know. If you will agree to deliver the animals as I tell you, we will let you ride them home. This will be better for you than trudging along on foot, *est-ce pas?* But we cannot let you start until night. The horses must be well rested."

"N'importe," he said, the other man, nothing loth to take shelter during the storm.

So far no one had passed who could carry to the lines the news of where we were. Late in the evening the coach stopped on its northern trip. Owing probably to the bad weather, there were no passengers. The household had retired with the exception of one of the boys, who had waited for the stage, and myself. The two Canadians lay asleep on the floor of the bar. Before the driver entered, on the impulse of the moment, I caught up the capote and toque of one of these men and put them on. Still smoking my short black pipe, I seated myself in the chimney-corner. After some conversation between the driver and the young man the latter said, pointing to me, "This Canadian here talks of riding to the lines."

"Qui, out," I chimed in. "How much you are, *mon ami*, *mon ami*, you take me to Canada?"

"The fare is half a dollar, replied the driver."

"Miserable, *c'est trop!* And it is a dark night. I will stay here till tomorrow."

"For the sake of having company I will take you for a quarter, if you'll stand the liquor at the tavern," he urged liberally.

"No, I thank you. I guess I not go."

"Never mind him," chuckled the driver. "I'll ride over with you, just for the lark, since you will be here again so soon."

Three hours later, when the coach came back, the young man drew me aside and said in high glee, "Oh, sir, the tavern at the lines was crowded with soldiers from Quebec and Tories of the neighborhood. They must have found some trace of you, for when we went in they gathered around the driver and asked him if he had seen two men on horseback armed and wearing military caps and cloaks. He shook his head and answered that he had met no such men. Then they turned to me. I told him two travellers of the description had breakfasted with us this forenoon, but from the direction they took afterwards they must be near Moose village by this time. Ha, ha, Moose village is a good twenty miles from here, sir. If they thought you were so near, I am afraid they would have swooped down on you."

In the morning Ramon and I paid our friends well for their service and took our places on the coach. The evening of the second day afterwards we reached Augusta. When we were settled in lodgings here I wrote to Jaquette. Though I would gladly go to the ends of the earth to claim her as my bride, since she had done her best to get me out of Canada, I begged she would follow me, or for her sake I might be rash enough to return.

"Under the care of old Pascal, and with your maid for company, you can easily travel to Augusta, *de-r-one*," I continued, "and here we will be married. The war and my long imprisonment have indeed played havoc with my fortunes, but there is still a small sum of money well placed to my credit in the States, and this will enable me to take care of you until I find occupation. Is not even the cheerless journey at this season better, my darling, than that we should be still separated? The patriots have not yet abandoned their cause as hopeless. If the troubles break out anew, we may be parted forever."

How eagerly I awaited a reply! Day after day passed and the uncertainty seemed to eat my heart out. During this interval of suspense, when I was often moody and despairing, Ramon gave me his companionship with a patience I did not half appreciate.

At last my faith and trust in my love were rewarded. The mail brought me a letter from Jaquette, and glad news—*she was coming*. When I told my comrade that, waverer though I was, my life was to be crowned with happiness, he grasped my hand with all the ardor of his brotherly affection and wished for my darling and me a future as joyous as our wedding day. From this time, however, he grew restless. Heigh ho, only a lover can wait with equanimity upon the humors of a pretty woman! I might, it is true, beguile the hours by building castles in Spain; but what was there to interest Ramon in this little river-city, far from the stirring scenes toward which his thoughts hastened?

I was not altogether surprised when after the receipt of sundry letters, he announced that he must set off at once for northern New York, where the patriot refugees and their friends were again secretly arming. The next day he was a passenger on the coach bound for Boston, the first objective point of his new wanderings alone.

"A soldier does not halt long, even to marry," I said, in a twinkling of an eye. "Apply for a command for me too, comrade, I shall soon join you. Jaquette will not want me to dangle about her when there is work yet to do for the cause she loves."

"Au revoir, then," he replied. "Ah, Nial, I shall not forget that to you I owe the joy of liberty. But for your help, ingenuity, and courage I should never have escaped from Quebec."

Thus we parted friends part when they expect soon to meet again.

After Ramon was gone I spent most of my time in loitering about the station waiting for the Canadian coach. It arrived late one afternoon, and as I stood at a little distance, fearing the disappointment of hope deferred, yet eager to see if it might have brought the most precious passenger (to my mind) it would ever have the good fortune to carry, a woman was assisted by the guard to alight.

I took a step forward. Pshaw! She was stout and, I judged from her figure, mature and wore a bright green veil wrapped about her bonnet. Yet she had the air of a lady and could not be the Jaquette's maid; neither was there any sign of Pascal. Jaquette had not come. I drew back with a sinking heart. Oh, why did she delay?

The inside passenger had a great number of handboxes and packages. Impatient at seeing them lifted out, I was about to turn away when I caught sight of a little gloved hand thrust out of the window of the coach. In another moment a trim foot shod in a fur boot was on the step and a younger woman sprang out of the creaking old vehicle. Enveloped in a coat of squirrel skin, by comparison with her companion she appeared slight and girlish, and though her face was hidden by her pretty fur hood I knew the stranger could be none other than my darling.

"Jaquette!" I cried, springing forward.

"Nial," came the sweet answer from the depths of the hood.

Clasping her hands in mine I drew her into the little parlor of the coaching inn, and her companion followed us. Once out of the range of the bystanders, gathered to witness the arrival of the coach, I folded my darling in my arms, greatcoat, hood and all.

"Nial, do you want to smother me?" cried Jaquette, with her old, gay laugh.

Thus warned, I desisted, while she took off her wraps. But when she stood before me, rosy and smiling in her soft-tinted gray gown, I claimed another kiss.

"Enough, sir," she protested in a tone of mock reproach. "All this time you have not noticed the friend but for whose kindness in accompanying me I should not be here."

Turning to her chaperon, who was still endeavoring to free herself from the many windings of the green veil, I recognized the good-humored countenance that beamed upon me like a sun emerging from the shadow after an eclipse.

"Madame St. Germain!" I exclaimed.

"Truly, madame, I shall never cease to be grateful for your kindness."

"Ma foi, but Jaquette is a wilful demoiselle, and glad enough I shall be to resign my care of her to you, monsieur, to-morrow," averred Madame St. Germain, with a shrug of her ample shoulders.

Jaquette blushed rosier, and hastened to change the conversation.

When the ladies had supped, having made sure that the landlord of the inn had done everything possible for their comfort I went back to the lodgings Ramon and I had shared together.

The next morning, at the little French Canadian church of the town, Jaquette and I were married, in the presence of Madame St. Germain and a few prominent people of the town whose acquaintance I had made.

As we stood before the altar I thought of good Dr. Nelson and wished he could have been there and, I venture to say, Jaquette did also. Though there was no one to give the bride away, we were happy in knowing this was no made marriage, but the blessing of God upon our love, the sacred tie that bound our hearts and lives together for all time. And, in spite of the dangers and sorrows through which we had passed, notwithstanding the absence of friends when we were so far from home, our little wedding breakfast was as gay as any I have ever attended.

In the middle of the forenoon Madame St. Germain took leave of us, after having favored me, as well as Jaquette, with a maternal embrace. We saw her comfortably started on her northern route and two hours later, my wife and I took the coach for the metropolis of New England, through which we were to pass on our way to New York City.

Ours was a strange wedding journey. In many towns through which we went the people, having heard of us, welcomed us with congratulations upon my marvellous escape from the citadel of Quebec, and admiration of my darling's loyalty to me and her efforts to help the imprisoned patriots.

At New York we received an ovation. William Lyon Mackenzie, who had sought refuge in the States, now edited a newspaper here. Still the leader of "the cause," he assigned to me the task of putting before the people of this great city in a series of addresses.

This occasioned a delay of several weeks before I could carry out my plans but I consoled myself with the knowledge that no further steps had been taken by the patriots.

Friends claimed a visit from Jaquette and it was at last arranged that I should leave her with them and proceed to Odgensburg, the border town in whose vicinity the Canadians and their allies were again quietly gathering.

Meanwhile we were staying at Frances's Tavern, at a corner of Broad and Pearl Streets,—an old hostelry built

of brick brought from Amsterdam in the Knickerbocker times,—where I chose to lodge because of its many interesting associations with the beginning of the Republic. The day before I was to start for the frontier, Mr. Mackenzie came to lunch with us.

CHAPTER XXIV.

TRIED AND TRUE.

While we lingered at the table, in the very room on the second floor, where, more than once, the great Washington had with his friends, I who was seated opposite to a window, saw a man on horseback ride clattering up the street. He drew rein at the door of the house, sprang from the saddle, and leaving his mount to the care of a stable boy, entered the bar.

"An express! an express!" The cry caused us to start to our feet and almost at the same moment the messenger, having run up the stairs, pushed his way into the room. Surely I had seen this black-haired, dark-skinned little man before now.

"Toussaint," I exclaimed, calling him by name.

He stared at me for a second, then caught and wrung my hand in delight.

"Major Adair," he stammered, with tears of emotion. "Ah, even the light lining cloud of war sometimes a silver lining shows. It was said I might find *m'sieur* here. Louisonne, Louison, and the wives and children of all who uphold the cause have prayed for him."

At the entrance of the express, Jaquette had slipped away to her own little drawing-room.

"Thank your good Louisonne and the boy for me, Toussaint," I now said. "Do you bring word from the St. Lawrence? Am I so unfortunate as to have missed the first skirmish of the new campaign?"

"That is as *m'sieur* views it," Terault replied grimly. "If he still finds life sweet, he will be consoled that he was not called upon to lay it down."

"This is my news, *m'sieur*," he continued in French. "A party of volunteers commanded by Colonel Von Shultz were landed by two schooners near the Canadian town of Prescott. The leader of the expedition, one General Birge, was to return with reinforcements from Odgensburg and a good supply of ammunition and provisions. But he lost courage and the ships were captured by the United States revenue officers, in accordance with the proclamation of neutrality. Abandoned by his chief, and deserted also by many of his followers, Von Shultz took possession of a stone windmill. With a force of less than two hundred, three times he drove the British troops back to their garrison, at Fort Wellington, and for three days defied their bomb-throwing ships in the river. Despairing of aid, he yet begged his men not to yield, reminding them that death would be better than a hopeless captivity. Driven from the mill at last, the intrepid little band took refuge in the bush. They had respected the enemy's flag of truce and permitted them to take their wounded from the skirmish field, but now, when the exhausted volunteers sent out a white flag, their bearers were shot down, and directly they were captured. Birge was to have brought muskets and powder to the Canadian sympathizers with the cause. As it turned out, the patriots, being without arms, could do nothing to help the friends who fought in their behalf." Mackenzie, without waiting to hear more, thrust into my hand a packet that had been inclosed in one Terault had delivered to him, and rushed away to despatch letters hither and thither in a frenzied effort to save the gallant young French aristocrat from the consequences of the treachery of others and his generous adherence to a cause not his own. Noble Von Shultz! Truly he was a hero whose memory should be wreathed with laurels.

But not alone for him was I concerned. It was to join fortunes with this brave officer, his compatriot, that Ramon had gone to the front.

"Toussaint," I cried, "what of Captain Ryecerski? Has he been a prisoner and abandoned by the fate that hangs like the sword of Damocles above the head of his countrymen?"

The messenger drew a hand across his eyes.

"*M'sieur* need have no fear for *m'sieur le capitaine*," said the good fellow. "He sleeps as a soldier wishes to rest at last, upon the field where he fought. A letter addressed to *m'sieur* was found upon his breast. It is in the packet."

I turned away. In my first grief I did not want even Jaquette's sweet sympathy to come between me and the friend I loved, at our last comrades' parting. For such would seem the moment when I should read his farewell message, commune directly for the last time with this brave spirit, my other self, whom I thought I knew as I knew my own heart,—Ramon, the embodiment of the ideal of chivalry, manly generosity, and honor that I strove to reach in my own life.

Nor could I read his letter anywhere within walls; the room where I was, the house, would have seemed about to close in upon me. Surely, out under the boundless sky to which we so often looked up together, in the days when we were care free, in the bondage we shared, and later in our bold dash for liberty, in the South's out-does, where the air stirs the pulses and the joy of living is keenest, would not Ramon's deathless spirit be with me still?

Going out, I walked to Broadway and involuntarily turned my steps toward the beautiful promenade of the Battery. But no, its paths would be thronged with fine ladies and gentlemen strolling aimlessly. Wheeling about, I plunged onward in the opposite direction, passed the busy little row of newspaper offices at the southern end of the City Hall park, where the people several times set up their Liberty Pole before the Revolution, and continued northward.

In those days lower Broadway was already a crowded business thoroughfare, where the passenger omnibuses were so numerous one could almost have walked on the roofs of them from the American Museum to Bowling Green. Then, among the sights on the thronged pavement, street vendors were much in evidence. Some of them bore trays laden with baked pears swimming in molasses; others sold hulled corn. Men with two-

wheeled carts dealt in the white sand used for kitchen and tap-room floors; there were darkies with bundles of straw, and an old man cried "door-mats woven of faro-ropes," and an enterprising lad peddled spring water at two cents a bucket. These things I saw in a dazed way, without being conscious of them.

A short distance above "the Canal" the noise and confusion of the city's commerce, as well as the cries of the itinerant peddlers, were left behind. From here on, the Way was bordered by tall trees, that must have given it a lovely aspect in the summer time, and lined by handsome mansions. Mr. Mackenzie had told me the vacant lot at Blacker Street was a great blackberry patch for the boys, and beautiful were the roses that during June clambered up to the windows of a stone house near by.

Giving small heed to my surroundings, however, I continued past Astor Place to the old powder house in the Square, and beyond it to the Madison Common and the Bo-ton Post Road at its eastern boundary. Thenceforth, as I walked on, I was in the open country, a region of farms and farmhouses, beyond which I came to the old Bridge where, in former times, when a gallant rode out from the town with his sweetheart on the pillion behind him, he might claim a kiss from his pretty companion.

Pausing at last, I seated myself on the stone parapet. Once I had come here with Jaquette when the day was bright, when the tones of the landscape were pale gold and violet, and a gleaming waters of the river were a gleaming azure stream. Now the afternoon was dreary even for the first week in December. The clouds were lowering and heavy with snow; the fields bleak and brown; the neighboring woods, leafless and spectral, seemed an army of gray ghosts. The brook, that in summer flowed beneath the bridge and went babbling down to the East River, was frozen fast, the distant current hid, but the present environment was in keeping with my mood.

From my coat I drew out a packet. Tearing off the outer wrapper, I discovered it had been sent by none other than Captain Weston. Being in command of a party of British who went over the field near the windmill seeking their wounded, he had come upon Count Ryecerski, dead, with the letter in the breast of his surcoat.

The fate of the English officer ended with a kind of *non-sequitur* from Phoebe, now his wife. Gentle Phoebe had been, indeed, unable to fulfill the promise she once gave me to aid my friend if as a captive or a fugitive he should again cross her path. Yet it was her husband, once Ramon's prisoner at St. Denis, who had found him, fallen, but unconquered, upon the field of honor.

Evidently my comrade had written his brave *adieu* to me a day or two before he set out on the expedition that proved so disastrous for himself, his noble leader, and the valiant men who followed them. The massive was crumpled and defaced, but it was the second seal upon it that dimmed my eyes with tears, the crimson seal of the bullet that only too surely found the valiant heart of the writer of the letter and sent the heroic soul to answer in the roll-call of the God of Armies.

When, at length, I pulled myself together sufficiently to break the waxen impress of the proud crest I knew so well, I think it not unmanly to admit that my hands trembled as I unfolded the paper, nor that I was still more unnerved when something inclosed fell to the ground.

Stooping hastily, I caught it up. It was a bit of blue ribbon, a keepsake plainly, and now upon it, as upon the letter, there was a spot of crimson. At first, dazed and uncomprehending, I stared at the bright bit of silk. If this was a love token, why had my comrade sent it to me with his dying farewell? Did he wish me to forward the news to some woman who loved him? If so, God help her when she should receive back the gage of her love.

The pretty trifle clung to my fingers like the clasp of a shadowy hand. All at once, as I gazed upon it, I had a curious sense of having seen it before. Then, suddenly, a recollection flashed upon me. I saw again a wide harvest field upon the banks of a clear river with a background of woods in the golden and scarlet glory of their autumnal foliage, a great assemblage of people listening spellbound to a gifted orator, and anon, marching around a liberty pole, a royally crowned maple from the forest. I saw two ardent young men swearing fealty to a now lost cause and vowing everlasting friendship. Again, as these comrades passed beneath a lady's balcony, I saw a beautiful girl smile at one, and losing the knot of ribbon from her neck, throw it down to the other.

Yes, this was it—the blue ribbon that, on the day of the huskings at St. Charles, Jaquette, in a spirit of girlish mischief, tossed to Ramon. Why had he treasured the gay gewgaw? Why did he want me to have it? Or—the sword with which grief thrust at my heart seemed pressed closer—was it to Jaquette he had sent back the token?

In these few moments I had forgotten the letter. But now, putting the ribbon back into my coat, I set myself to read the last words of the man who was to me more than a brother. They were words of generous affection, and showed his thoughts were of me and not of himself, even though he was on the eve of an undertaking that he could not but feel to be extremely hazardous. The closely written pages seemed to reflect the glow and animation with which they were penned. As I read on, my heart thrilled, as sometimes it had been wont to do at the handclasp of this best loved friend. They were for me and not for the part of the letter that had to do with the blue ribbon I will refer again.

Making my way back to the hotel, I found Jaquette in our little parlor. She was white as a ghost as she crossed the room to meet me.

"Oh Nial, Mr. Mackenzie has told me all," she said, with a sob. "Dear Nial, what shall I say to comfort you?"

I bent my head, kissed her sweet mouth, and with my arm about her led her to a chair.

"Jaquette, you have not heard all," I began. "But first, tell me, was there

ever any love between you and Ramon? I once fancied you cared for him."

She drew away from me, and her voice was cold as she replied, "No, Ramon never spoke of love to me." And then, enlightened by a flash of intelligence and as if probing my very heart, she added, "Do you doubt the dead, Nial?"

"Heaven help me, I would if he were any other," I cried passionately. "Yet I would not be less generous than he who is gone. Do you remember this?" As I spoke I put the little keepsake into her hand.

"My ribbon," she exclaimed incredulously, after having scrutinized it a moment, and tears glistened upon her long lashes as she noted its glorious brocade of crimson. "Yes, yes, I recall the day in the meadow at St. Charles when you and he came marching down from the liberty pole past the gallery of the farm-house. Ah, Nial, it was a fateful day for us three!"

"It was a fateful day, assuredly," I rejoined; "for on that day, *mignonne*, you stole away both my comrade's heart and mine."

A startled expression crept into her eyes.

"No, no, no, Ramon's," she protested with the artlessness of a child.

"Yes, Ramon's; so this, his last letter, acknowledges to me. Blind as I was, and absorbed in my own love, I was, as was the sympathy between us, never unmissed the truth. I owe it to him that you should know."

Unfolding the letter I read aloud the paragraph that had been so great a surprise to me.

"Nial, you will never see this letter until after I have passed beyond the picket line of the stars. Therefore I will tell you in it the only secret I have ever kept from you since we pledged our friendship. To you I send the knot of ribbon. I have worn it next my heart since the day of the meeting at the Richelieu. From the moment I first saw her, I have loved the beautiful girl who, with gay coquetry, cast it at my feet. But you loved her, too. Who, watching her as we did, during those stirring days at St. Denis, would not? Had she given me her love, I must indeed have stayed; her soul crying out to mine would have claimed my first allegiance. But since she was still fancy free, I went away, leaving you to win her if you could. You would have done the same for me had you known. Jaquette is now your wife; you are both happy. She will never hear of my love for her; but I tell you, Adair, that you may know I have been true to you, my comrade, as you have been to me. You might have escaped from prison earlier had you consented to leave me. It is something for you to remember, Nial, you here, I in the great hereafter, that even our love for the same woman could not break our friendship."

As I passed and glanced at Jaquette she rose to her feet with the womanly dignity that surpasses the regal air of a queen. Would it have been better after all had I never read this letter to her? In doing so I had indeed brought about a strange situation.

"Jaquette," I persisted, "nevertheless, had Ramon stayed, would you have given your heart to him instead of to me? If he had asked you, would you have married him?"

My darling's beautiful eyes gazed steadily into mine.

"Nial," she answered proudly, "you and Ramon were faithful friends. What he did for you I, too, believe you would have done for him. But why trouble your peace and mine with idle 'ifs'?"

"I love you, I am your wife. Are you not content?"

Years had passed since then, and Jaquette and I have had a happy life. We have three sons. The eldest is named for Dr. Nelson, who since his return from Bermuda has lived near us in New York, and the younger one for me. But the boy we loved best, I think, is called Ramon. And I am not jealous, though I know Jaquette treasures, above every jewel but her wedding ring, a knot of blue ribbon that a gallant soldier, who was my friend and comrade, long wore next his heart.

French Canada's struggle of 1837 and 1838 is now almost forgotten. Independence she did not win, yet the lives of her heroes were not given in vain. Does not the dawn of the freedom she enjoys to-day date from the protest of the Patriot War?

THE END.

THE COMING OF NORA.

A fine, bright, smiling morn near the end of March. The breath of spring in the air, whispering messages of hope and cheer to many a heart the winter has oppressed and clouded. The signs of spring struggling everywhere to assert themselves after a dark and weary bondage. Men yoking their horses to the plow. Carts rumbling over the lanes that lead to the fields. Boys hallooing and waving their hands, to hunt away the greedy crows from the lately sown seed. Birds chirping in every bush their welcome to the beautiful spring that is here, and the still more beautiful summer that is to come. Life, light, gladness and an exhilarating freshness everywhere—in the air, on the earth, in the sky; in all places save one sorrow-clouded spot—Dan Maguire's cottage in Glena-Mona.

In Dan Maguire's cottage there is no gleam of the hope of spring; there is no gladness, no sunshine, no laughter, no thought of anything only one gloomy, sorrowful subject—the departure of Nora Maguire for America, this very morning in the glorious springtime.

No wonder old Dan and Kitty—the girl's father and mother—are weeping bitter tears; no wonder they cling to her and faint would keep her near their fond and sorrow-seared hearts forever. No wonder they bemoan the black day that brought with it the letter from Nora's aunt in America, which gave birth in her mind to the wild longing for a glimpse of "life" in those grand places far away, of which Delia Quinn (who had been in America) had told her many a time. Delia hadn't gone back to "the other side," as she called America; but, all the same, she never

tired of saying that it was "the only place for a girl to see life," always adding, with a disdainful shrug of her stooped shoulders, "there isn't much life to be seen in Glena-Mona!"

So Nora and many of her young companions had got into their hearts the ceaseless longing "to see life;" and when the letter came from Nora's aunt, offering to pay her passage to America, entreating that all the tongues in Ireland could address to her would have been of no avail in striving to keep her at home.

Dan and Kitty felt it sorely. She was the last of all they had reared; the others had gone out into the world already; she was their pet and the light of their lives; and they fondly dreamed always that when the message came for them to leave earth and its worries behind, she would be by their side—their own Nora (for fair-haired little Nora)—to close their eyes for the last long sleep. That dream is shattered now—gone forever; and only the sad, slow years—few or many, as God willed it—lie before them. Every child there has watched growing up around them, and above all, their Nora (for Dan and Kitty were far away, and the old hearth dream and lonely).

No wonder, indeed, that they cry aloud this bright March morning; no wonder that, as Nora comes down from her little room, ready dressed for the train, looking prettier than ever, but with the hot tears which she cannot restrain burning her cheeks like flames of fire—no wonder the poor old couple's weeping rises to a wild wail that is akin to a dirge for the dead.

"O Nial, Nial!" Dan Maguire cries, like one in the grip of despair, as he grasps her little hands tightly in the rough palms that have toiled for her through many a year, while the tears blind his eyes, and his strong face and mouth quiver under the lash of the pain that fills his heart, and his throat seems ready to burst with the something that has welled up into it. "O Nial, Nial!" He can say no more; but the words fall upon Nora's heart like a scourge, and nearly dislodge the longing for the world that is there. Many a time afterward did that cry come to her ears, above all the noises of a great city, and bring into her world weary eyes the tears of remorse and bitter sorrow.

"O loved one of my heart!" sobs poor old Kitty, her wasted arms around the young girl's neck, her withered cheek pressed close to the fresh sweet face, her frail frame trembling with the awful grief that has stolen into every fibre of her being. "O darling! shall I ever see your face again this side of heaven? May God look down on us this day, and help us to do His holy and blessed will! O children! children! children! shall I ever see your face or hear you speak again? You'll come back to us—won't you come back to us before we die, and drive the sorrow out of our hearts—the sorrow that will be in them from this day? Won't you come, darling to close our eyes when God is ready for us above? Say you will, Nial—say it before you go, children of my heart!"

It is hard to say it; for Nora is convulsed with grief now, and the words almost refuse to come. But say it she does, somehow; and with it, too, she says will bring with her shining gold to give them comfort in their declining days; and that she will be their "Nora Ban" always, no matter where she may go or whom she may meet; and that she will be home sooner than they expect; and that their names will be on her lips and in her heart every time she kneels to pray.

They become more calm after this; and Nora kneels and receives their blessing, spoken as fervently as blessing has ever been spoken in this world. Then, with a lingering kiss, she goes from the house to where a little group of boys and girls, who are to be her fellow passengers, wait for her at the end of the barren leading out to the highroad. One last wave of her handkerchief, at the turn of the barren, one last kiss wafted on the morning breeze, and the old couple standing in the doorway feel the earth and sky grow suddenly dark, and the breeze that was kind a moment before now sharp and cold. Their Nora Ban is gone!

II.

It is two years later, but the scene is far away from Glena-Mona. The exact time is the late afternoon of St. Patrick's Day; and the exact place is a grimy, gloomy tenement house in a certain city of America. There are more families in this house than one could imagine possible; but they might as well be half the world apart—some of them—for all they know of one another. They are mostly exiles from other lands, and the poverty that is the heritage of the poor in the great American Republic, and who have failed in the fight which the attainment of that fortune would entail—a fight through many a year against adversaries trained from childhood in all the wiles and all the craft of the world of to-day—adversaries drawn from all the cities of the earth.

To this house, and to houses like it, the beaten ones have drifted, hopeless and dispirited, to wear out in dismal poverty the remainder of the lives that would have been useful in the lands for which the Creator destined them, but which