

St. Cecilia of the Court

By ISABELLA R. HESS.

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CHAPTER XII.—(Continued.)

'Your name is Mickey, and your name is Daley.' Jim's voice was that of a calm referee. 'And if you've got two names, sure a song could have as many. So you're both right. But I'm telling you this, Mickey Daley, and do you be mindin' it! There's many a man right with his tongue that's wrong with his fists!' And then he tenderly played a few measures of the Saint's one song, hoping she would sing it, as she often did, since he had picked up the air—but she had fallen asleep, her red hair even redder than usual, in the glare of the fire. She woke when the boys went, and as she followed them out, she called back cheerily, 'Tis a surprise I have for breakfast for you, Jim!'

But next morning, when she had set the little table, and put on it her surprise, two buns bought with the nickel she had saved by walking to the hospital, she found Jim lacking in appetite, if not in enthusiasm.

'You are mighty good, Cecilia,' he said as he drank a little of his tea.

'But you ain't eatin' 'em,' she answered in disappointed tones.

To please her, he tried to and failed. 'My head aches this morning—I'll be eatin' 'em for supper,' he said as he went away.

All day long, Cecilia tried to keep from looking at the dainties, with the little currants in the frosting, for fear she should be tempted to eat them. When Jim came home in the evening, they stood upon the table, but he set down wearily, and put his head on his arms.

'What is it, Jim? What's the matter?' She bent over him anxiously.

'My head is achin'—and my chest is achin'—and my sides is achin'—in fact, I guess, I'm all one big ache.' He tried to say it jestingly, but she saw that his face was drawn and his eyes strangely bright. 'Go lay down, Jim—and I'll cover you all up—and I'll put a cloth on your head,' and while she spoke, she took the frayed towel from the hook, and poured over it a dipper of water. With a sigh of relief, Jim threw himself across the little bed, and Cecilia, stooping to lay the cooling towel on his head, felt how hot it was.

When the boys came in as usual, she whispered to them that Jim had a headache, and was asleep, and they tiptoed out. All evening she watched by his bedside, dampening the cloth as it grew dry and warm. Jim, who had fallen asleep immediately, turned restlessly about, but did not awaken. Ten o'clock, and eleven came, still he tossed about, and once in a while, seemed to moan in his sleep. Cecilia felt she could not leave him, so she quietly fixed the little fire and decided to spend the night. Her tireless hands straightened the thin little coverlet, and bathed his head, and her eyes grew wide and bright, as the night wore on, and Jim began to mutter in his sleep. He tugged restlessly at the buttons on his shirt—'The ticket is here! If I only had the money to take it back.'

'What is it, Jim?' She bent over him tenderly, but he only turned about, and half-opened his eyes in a way that frightened her.

She never knew before how long the night was. She heard the church bell strike the hours, and was angrily annoyed that it seemed so long between the strokes. Once when she had heard it strike four, she knew the clock must have stopped because she did not hear it strike five; but long after she had decided it must be almost time for the people to go to work, it struck the five clear tones. She could scarcely trust her senses that it had only been an hour. At last, there came a few

faint streaks of gray, and from the courtyard, she could hear the creaking of the pump handle, the sure sign that a meal was in process of preparation.

She was glad when Mickey stopped in on his way to school,—Mickey was the only boy in the Court who she treated as an equal. 'Mickey,' she faltered, 'Jim's sick—he's awful sick!'

'Is he?' There was more wonderment than actual sympathy in Mickey's tones. 'Ain't he goin' to work?' That to Mickey, was the distinguishing point between merely being ill and being dangerously, interestingly sick.

'Going to work!' the Saint echoed wearily. 'He's been burning all night, and rollin'.'

While Mickey went back to tell his mother, Celie tried to straighten the bed, and she washed Jim's face, as she had seen the nurse wash Puddin's. He seemed to brighten, and said something about getting up, but trying to rise, he fell back upon his pillow with a moan and slept again.

It seemed only a moment until Mrs. Daley came in, and her feet beat a merry tattoo, as she stepped across the floor, owing to her economical habit of wearing out Mr. Daley's shoes, when they had outlived their usefulness to their original owner. She felt Jim's head with the air of one experienced, and bent over to listen to his breathing, and her cheery face clouded. 'Tis sick he is, Celie!'

'Is he awful sick, Mrs. Daley?' Cecilia's face was very white as she spoke.

'God bless you, child. I ain't no doctor!' She bent over Jim as she spoke, and her strong arms lifted him to the pillow. 'But it's a doctor had ought be here!'

He got a doctor for Puddin'! Cecilia made a brave effort to keep the sob back, but failed.

'And if he did? Shame on you now to be cryin' over it! Do you go to the drug store and tell the man to send the doctor in.' Mrs. Daley knew from experience the way to proceed.

'Will he come for the asking?' The Saint's voice was very eager.

'He will that! Go, now, Cecilia, and I'll be waitin' till you come back.' And without waiting a moment, Cecilia sped out, across the courtyard, and down the street to the store. The clerk stepped forward as she entered, and, used as he was to the Court and its people, he noted the drawn face and the wide, frightened eyes. Her voice, shrill and high-pitched, yet was timid and pleading. 'Will you be sending the doctor? Jim is awful sick, and Mrs. Daley she said you'd send him for the asking.'

'Sure!' His voice was cheery and he laid his hand on her shoulder kindly. 'And who's Jim?'

'Don't you know Jim? Jim Belway, he mends shoes in the Court. And he's awful good, and will you send him right away?' The Saint's heart was in her eyes, and the clerk, noting it, promised to send the doctor as soon as he came in, and even asked her how to spell 'Belway,' as he wrote it down, and she felt comforted when he stuck the paper on a rack. It took but a minute to speed back to the Court, and take up her place at Jim's bed. Mrs. Daley went back to her washing, and with a sinking fear at her heart; all the Court loved Jim, for scarcely one that he had not at some time befriended.

Jim slept off and on all morning, and even when awake, he didn't seem like Jim; he called her 'Margaret,' and kept on saying, 'I'm keepin' the ticket, Margaret.'

She bent over him, and smoothed back his hair tenderly. 'Don't you be knowin'

my name ain't Marg'ret, Jim? You know I'm Cecilia, Cecilia what's here all the time!' and quite unconsciously, 'I'm the Saint,—don't you know, Jim?'

But Jim muttered on incoherently, and unweariedly; she straightened the coverlet, as he tossed it about, and gave him water, and bathed his forehead. It was noon when the doctor came in, and Mickey was with her, sitting disconsolately by the stove.

With practiced eye he took in Jim's flush, and dimmed eyes, and he felt his pulse, and bent over until his head rested on Jim's chest; all the time his face grew graver, and when he stood up, he simply asked, 'Little girl, is this your father?'

'No, sir, he ain't nothin'!' Her voice shook so, she herself hardly recognized it.

'Who's here to take care of him, child?' The doctor's tone was kind, but he had many more charity calls to make, and his time was valuable.

'Me. I'm all Jim's got.' At the simple, plaintive words, the doctor scanned the tired, pinched face, and the hurried edge to his voice was gone, and he spoke very low and tenderly.

'Then, my dear little girl, you have a hard case for such a little nurse! If he wern't so sick, we'd take him to the hospital, but as it is, you and I will try to fight it out, and if he isn't better to-morrow, we'll try to send a mission nurse in.'

'Has he got something bad?' Her voice didn't quiver now, but was strained in its intensity.

'Pneumonia.' This was very clear to the doctor, but to Cecilia, who had never heard of it before, it was therefore all the more awful. She clinched her teeth, and drew a long breath. The words came slowly, but her heart pulsed through every one. 'I know I'm only—a little—girl, but I'll take good care of Jim!'

'I'm sure you will!' The doctor's voice too wasn't quite steady. 'This little boy will go to the drug store to get the medicine, I know, for I'll give him a penny.'

Mickey sprang to his feet, and glared at the doctor. 'No, I won't! I'll go fer nothin'!'

(To be continued.)

Sabbath in the Country.

(By C. Jennie Swaine.)

With dawn the Sunday beauty steals
Across the summer hills,
And peace, unto the world unknown,
The sacred silence fills.
In sighing breeze and singing bird,
Lord of the morn, thy voice is heard.

The hands from week day labor free
Find time to gather flowers.
And hearts let fall their burdens all,
While praying 'neath the bowers,
Know ye how sweet are prayers that rise
From blossoming sod to vaulted skies.

Softly the sweet-toned Sabbath bells
Send out their peal on peal,
Until a host of worshippers
By sacred altars kneel.
The breath of roses fills the air,
Sweet incense of the house of prayer.

The city has its towering spires,
Its temples, rich and grand,
But sweetly steals, o'er country ways,
The Sabbaths of the land,
My heart with tender longing fills,
For Sabbaths 'mid my native hills.

O fields aglow with clover blooms;
O hills of rustling corn,
My thought wings back its way to you
With every Sabbath morn,
Yet near, and far, and everywhere,
Lord of the Sabbath, thou art there

'What does Satan pay you for swearing?' said a gentleman to a boy.

'He don't pay me anything,' was the reply.

'Well, you work cheap—to lay aside the character of a gentleman, to pain your own soul, and all for nothing—you certainly do work cheap—very cheap indeed!—Selected.