"And Angels Came--"

By ANNE O'HAGAN, in Harper's Magazine.

(Concluded from last week.)

There was a sudden explosive sound and, with a crunch and a jerk which almost threw them from their seats, the machine came to a standstill. Brockton and his chauffeur were out in an instant, the one peering beneath, the other examining more closely. He emerged in a moment, and there was a jargon of explanation unintelligible to the two women. All that Anna and Millicent understood was that the accident was not serious; that they would be delayed only a few minutes, and that Brockton was very angry with some one for the mishap. The two men worked together. Anna looked at her cousin.

"I'm dead sleepy," she half whispered. "The wind in my face and the sun are too soporific for me. Let us not say a word to each other."

"You read last night," Millicent accused her. "But I don't feel particularly conversational myself."

She leaned back and surveyed the scene again. She could read the words graved on the granite block beneath the bronze soldier:

"To the men of Warren who fought that their country might be whole and their fellows free, this tribute of love is erected."

Millicent's sensitive lips quivered a little as she scanned the honor-roll of Warren's fallen. Her ready imagination pictured them coming to this very square, perhaps—the men of Warren. Boys from the hill farms, men from the village shops, the blacksmith who had worked in the light of yonder old forge, the carpenter who was father to the one now leisurely hammering a yellow L upon that weather-stained house,—she saw them all. What had led them? What call had sounded in their ears that they should leave their plough-shares in the furrows, their tills, their anvils, and their benches? What better things had stirred with the primeval instinct for fight, with the unquenchable, restless longing for adventure, to send them forth? She read the words again—"that their country might be whole and their fellows free."

She moved impatiently. For now an old shadowy theory of hers—an inheritance from the theories of the recluse, her father—stirred from a long-drugged quiet; a theory that there was a disintegrating unpatriotism in the untouched, charmed life of riches she and her fellows sought. She felt the disturbing conviction that those common men—she could almost hear their blundering speech, see their uncouth yawns at the sights and sounds of beauty on which she fed her soul—that those men had wells of life within them purer, sweeter than she. She averted her eyes from the monument.

"Honey!" called a voice, full-throated and loving—"honey, where are you?"

There was a play-tent on the little patch of yard before the brown cottage to the left. The voice had come from the narrow piazza. Millicent shivered as she looked at it, with its gingerbread decorations already succumbing to the strain of the seasons. The answer came from the tent:

"Here I am, muvver. Did you want me?"

She came out—a child of five or six years. The round-eyed solemnity of babyhood had not left her yet. She brought her small doll family with her, and a benevolent collie ambled beside her. Her mother watched, tenderness beautifying her brown eyes; she was a young woman, no older than Millicent, but her face was more lined than Anna's; a strand of dark hair was blown across her cheek; there were fruit stains on her apron. All the marks of a busy household life were about her, all the bounteous restfulness of a woman well beloved, and the anxieties of a loving woman. She gave the automobile a passing glance, but it had no interest for her. Her eyes came back to caress the young thing which toiled up the steps to her babbling of a morning's events in the tent.

"Yes, sweetheart, that was very nice," she said, in answer to some breathless demand for sympathy. "And mother has brought you the bread and jam she promised you this morning. Will you eat it here, or in the tent? I think it's cooler here."

"Couldn't I come into the kitchen to eat it, where you are?"

"Why, yes, honey, if you want to."

The door closed upon the vision of intimate love. Millicent saw Lena walking sedately with the governess of no charm and encyclopaedic information.

"Now we're all right," called Brockton, loudly. "Upon my word, Mrs. Dinsmore, I think you were asleep! Miss Harned, you can't be as entertaining as I thought if your cousin falls asleep with you."

"But think how soothing I must be; that's even better than to be entertaining."

"By ginger! I never found that out—that you were soothing, I mean." It was evident that Mr. Brockton intended a compliment. Anna Dinsmore saw the annoyed red whip out upon Millicent's cheeks. She interposed a few ready, irrelevant questions before the tide of Brockton's flattery.

They made their swift way through the hills, sometimes overlooking the winding course of the river, sometimes skirting the great estates of the region, again whizzing noisily through an old village. Anna and Brockton sustained the weight of conversation. Millicent smiled in vague sympathy with their laughter and joined at random in their talk. Obstinately her mind had stayed behind her—with the men of Warren, with the round-faced child, and the woman to whose life love and not art gave all its beauty.

They approached one of the larger old towns of the country—a place with a bustling main street and elm-shaded thoroughfares branching from it. Here were ample, well-kept lawns and houses of prosperous dignity. It seemed charming to Millicent with its unhurried activity or undrowsy repose.

"What is this Anna?" she asked. Anna told her.

"Riverfield?" Millicent repeated the name, but in a strange voice. Anna stared a little.

"Yes. Why? Do you know anyone here?"

"No." The word trickled slowly, unwillingly, from Millicent.

"Lovely town, and there are some good places outside," said Anna. "The Ostanders have one, and Jimson, the artist. But the native city, or whatever you call it, is adorable. It has that air of rewarded virtue which makes one ashamed of one's self—"

"I wish"—Millicent spoke remotely, as if out of a sleep—"I wish, Mr. Brockton, that we might find a little library and museum they have here."

"Why, of course!"

"Are you going to compare it with the Vatican, Millicent?" asked Anna flippantly. Millicent turned a distant, starry gaze upon her cousin.

"No," she said; and then, in a flash of sympathy and fright, Anna remembered that it had been for some little Berkshire town that Will Hayter had built a library and museum just before his death, six years before—the town from which his family had originally come. Her memory worked rapidly, constructing the story. The blood dyed her face at the thought of her obtuseness. Then she set her lips firmly. She had done her best; if a wanton fate chose to interfere now and make Millicent slave to the phantom of her early, radiant love, she, Anna, could do no more!

"Here we are, I guess," called Brockton. The machine shot into a broad street. A promenade between a double row of elms down its centre gave it a spacious dignity. The modest court-house stood on one side, as green-bowed as if Justice were a smiling goddess; a few churches broke the stretch of houses. And on the other side the library and museum stood.

"Pretty little building, but plain," commented Brockton, making disparaging note of its graceful severity.

"It's exactly suited to the place; it epitomizes its spirit," said Anna, glibly. "It's austere without being forbidding—a perfect Colonial adaptation of the Greek. And I love that pale buff tint."

Millicent made no architectural observation. Instead she said: "If you don't mind, I should like to go in for a while. You could pick me up later, perhaps, on your way back to— Where is it we are lunching?"

Consternation looked out of Anna's eyes, bewilderment out of Brockton's. But Millicent turned to them with such gentle command in her gaze that they could offer no protest.

"Come back in half an hour, if you are ready," she said. Upon Anna, whose baffled look followed her up the flagging between the close-clipped lawns, there came a feeling that she was leaving her cousin alone with the beloved dead.

"Now what—" began Brockton, in full-toned protest,—"what the—"

"That was the last thing Will Hayter did,"—Anna interrupted his question. "And the first, so to speak. It was a fairly important commission. Jessup, the Tyra Drop liniment man, came from Riverfield—he has a mammoth place outside now. When he began to coin money faster than the mint, he gave lots of things to his birthplace—which has always blushed for him. It's prouder that Whittier once spent Sunday with one of its citizens than that Alonzo Jessup is its son. Well, he gave the library and museum, and the commission went to Will Hayter. The Hayters came from here two or three generations ago. It was just before his death, and Millicent has been abroad almost ever since. So she had never seen it."

Brockton gave a look of speechless chagrin at his hostess, which she answered haughtily:

"My dear Mr. Brockton, after all I never undertook to be a marriage-broker!" Then she glanced at the chauffeur and forbore.

Meanwhile Millicent sat in the square exhibition-hall. The sweet air, with the scent of hay from the farther country faintly impregnating it, blew through the quiet. No one else shared the room with her. The even light soothed her eyes, the stillness calmed the fluttering apprehention in her breast which had presaged she knew not what fresh anguish of loss. There were pictures on the walls—one or two not despicable originals which Tyra Drop Jessup had given, many copies, and a few specimens of Riverfield's native talent. But she saw none of them, any more than one sees the windows and the paintings in a great cathedral in the first fulness of reverence. To her this was a sacred place. That grief had lost its first poignancy, that youth and health with cruel insistence had reasserted its sway over her life, did not mean forgetfulness, unfaith.

"Truly, truly,"—she almost breathed the words aloud,—"there has been no other one. That was my love, young as we were. But I must fill up the days—I must fill up the days."

Her eyes were fixed unseeingly upon a great canvas at the other end of the hall. Some Riverfield hand had portrayed a Riverfield imagination's conception of the moment in the life of Christ when, the temptations of Satan withstood, angels came to Him upon the mountain. In the lower distance the kingdoms of the world grew dim beneath the shadows that fell from the vanquished and retreating tempter, and from the opening heavens a dazzling cloud of angels streamed towards the solitary Figure on the height. By and by Millicent's eyes took note of it. She half smiled. There was daring at least!

Then the picture faded, and again the persistent figure of the child which had so filled her imagination came before her. But this time it was towards herself that the rosy face was turned and limpid eyes lifted in unquestioning dependence. She was the mother; she stood on the piazza, and by her side he stood, who had been so dear in himself, so infinitely dearer in the thought of all that should be; toward them the child came; they were enveloped by breathless love for each other and for that being, innocent, trusting, which their love had called into life. So, dimly, she had dreamed in the radiant days of old. Almost she could feel his hand upon her shoulder, hear his voice full of tenderness that expressed itself only in tone, not in word, taking refuge from too great feeling in jest. She closed her eyes against the vision that made her faint with anguish.

Some one entered the room with a brisk little trot; Millicent opened her eyes and turned her head. A small woman, "old maid" from the top of her neat gray head to the toe of her list shoes, came forward. She held a pad and pencil and wore the unmistakable badge of habitual authority in her manner. At sight of Millicent she paused, blinking behind her glasses. Millicent came slowly out of the trance in which she had been; recognition dawned upon her. She rose.

"Miss Hayter—Aunt Harriet!" she cried, advancing.

"It is you, then!" chirped the elder lady. "My dear, who could have expected this?"

"Not I, for one!" She held both Miss Hayter's hands. "I had no idea you were here. Surely you haven't given up your beloved Boston school?"

"Oh, no. Only in the summer I come here for a month and substitute for the regular curator while she is on her vacation. It"—she struggled against a constitutional distaste for self-revelation—"it seems like a little visit with Will, somehow."

Millicent's throat throbbed with a strangled sob. No one had spoken his name in so long! Her people had had no interest but to banish the memory of him from her heart; this quaint little aunt of his, who had adored him and lived for him, was the first who had spoken of him in—she did not know how many years. She held tight to the old hands, her eyes clung to the withered face. "Say it again," she whispered; "say his name."

"Why, my dear," cried the older woman, "is it still as hard as this? Come, sit down here with me. Of course I knew that you were not one of the changing kind,"—Millicent winced,—"but I'm sorry to think you should suffer now as keenly as you do."

"It is not just that," said Millicent, shamefacedly. "Only, seeing you unexpectedly gave me a pang. And then, being in the place he built—"

The older woman patted her hand soothingly. "I understand," she said. "I've always understood. When—when you didn't write after the very first, I knew it was because you couldn't, not because you forgot. You were really made for each other, you two. I think I never saw two such radiant, happy creatures in the world. Ah, well!" she wiped a sudden dew from her glasses, "waiting's hard, my dear, but it ends—it ends."

Millicent was hurt by the unbroken faith in her, by the unquestioning belief she could not share. She looked wistfully upon the shining, tearful eyes.

"It is very beautiful to think that," she said, "but, dear Aunt Harriet, you are mistaken about me. I am going to tell you everything. I—I loved your nephew. I shall not love anyone else. It happened to come to me in perfectness when I was young—love. But I live, I am well, I am alive to pleasure and pain. How shall I fill up my life but with the things that still matter to me?"

"You think of marrying, you mean?" Aunt Harriet's voice was dry and harsh. "Well—I am sure Will would wish your happiness, and I—it would not be for me to object. Every day it is done, and very often rightly, I suppose; for money, for companionship, for the chance of self-development, women marry without love. I—I could only wish you happiness."

"You—do not understand."

"My dear,"—her voice softened again; something in the pallor and the quivering pain of the girl touched her,—"I do not mean to speak hardly to you. It seems to me like this: when it comes to piecing out a life that has been broken, as yours was—as mine was, my dear, as mine was—there are two ways of doing it. Either you keep your ideal of perfect love, and lead your poor, every-day life of odds and ends, like mine, filling your days with the best scraps of pleasure or usefulness you may, or you give up your ideal of perfect love and marry, and have your home and your children and your rounded outward life. There is, maybe, no question of higher or lower. Each one of us does what her nature bids her. I had always thought of you as one who—But it is not for me to judge."

Her voice was gentle, and she did not look at Millicent. Her eyes seemed to pierce the canvas on the opposite wall and the hangings and the stones behind it, and to see a far image of souls in the struggle of choice. The woman beside her sat silent, her thoughts with the idealists—the men who gave up the comfort of their firesides, the gain of their occupations, and followed whither the vision led; the women whose home was built up on love, and who could see only infamy in houses founded otherwise; the poor soul beside her, stronger in courage, more aspiring in thought, than she, with all her delicacies, her refinements of taste. The ideal had led them all—the ideal, as it had once shown for her and for him whose spirit had informed and beautified the spot where she sat and made her choice.

"Aunt Harriet," she said, and her face was like the sudden flashing of stars between torn clouds,—"Aunt Harriet—" She could not utter the decision in words. "May I come to see you—and learn something from you?"

Miss Hayter looked. There was no need to question. No knight ever rose from his accolade with a face more glorified than Millicent's when she silently dedicated herself to the shining company of those who keep unsullied the early vision.

As she passed out of the hall, her eyes fell again upon the painting of the Temptation. She read the black and gilt legend below it—"And Angels Came and Ministered Unto Him." Then she laughed down upon the old-fashioned figure trotting by her side. "And angels came," she said.

Her rapt look frightened Anna when the automobile returned for her. Then the heart of that frivolous woman was stricken for a moment with wistfulness.

"You seem very happy," she faultered, "and—amused, is it? What are you smiling over?"

"I am still thinking of angels. Would you ever have dreamed, Anna, that they sometimes wore list shoes and sometimes ate bread and jam, and occasionally spoke with granite lips? They do."

Brockton stirred uneasily, foreboding failure. And Anna sighed, mourning two lost visions.

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OLD FAITH IN ENGLAND.

Place Where Last Stand Was Made for it Described.

A writer of the Evening Post, New York, describing some country communities in England, says of the hamlet of Sampford Courtney, Devonshire, that it lies with its cottages of yellow "cob," deep-thatched and with outer stairways, looking much as it must have looked when the Devon folk gathered there to make a last stand for the old faith.

"In that very church, whose fine perpendicular tower overlooks the huddled cottages," says the writer, "was the new English service, the first prayer-book of Edward VI., read to a murmurous congregation on a fair Whitsunday in the year 1549. On the next day the people went to their priest and called on him to say Mass as of old. 'They would keep to the old and ancient religion as their fathers before them had done.' The flame of revolt, once kindled, spread to Exeter and through all the country. The Catholic insurgents, in the vigorous language of their chronicler, Hoker, could not 'abide to hear of any other religion than the one they were first nuzled in. Wherefore, to keep and observe that was their only endeavor, and in respect thereof they regarded not king nor keisar, passed not for kin nor friendship, regarded not country nor commonwealth, but were wholly of the opinion of the rebels and would have no reformation in religion.'

"The stand for the ancient faith and the ancient language was all in vain. Lord Russell, seconded by the Carews and Courtneys—great Devon names,—put down the rebellion. Russell relieved Exeter, which had been straitly besieged by the rebels, and stamped out the last embers of the revolt in the very town where it had first been kindled."

For some 350 years the gray old church of Sampford Courtney has been given over to Protestant worship, yet even now it is not hard to call back that far-off time when the people, defrauded of their ancient faith, rose against the armed might of the anti-Catholic government in an attempt to win back their spiritual heritage.

Some day, Catholics devoutly believe, the old faith of which the English people were robbed in those days will again flourish as of old in England.

Lots of people have more money than brains, and they are not plutocrats at that.

Never try to judge a man's age by his appearance. Maybe he's married, strength patting themselves on the back.

CHARGED WITH MURDER.

"Prisoner at the bar, have you anything to say why sentence of death shall not be passed upon you?"

Suddenly the prisoner arose to his feet, and in a low, firm, but distinct voice, said:

"I have! Your honor, you asked me a question, and I now ask, as the last favor on earth, that you will not interrupt my answer until I am through.

"I stand here, before this bar, convicted of the wilful murder of my wife. Truthful witnesses have testified to the fact that I was a loafer, a drunkard, and a wretch; that I returned from one of my prolonged debauches and fired the fatal shot that killed the wife I had sworn to love, cherish and protect. While I have no remembrance of committing this fearful deed, the verdict is in accordance with the evidence.

"But, may it please the court, I wish to show that I am not alone responsible for the murder of my wife!"

This startling statement created a tremendous sensation. The prisoner paused a few seconds, and then continued in the same firm, distinct voice:

"I repeat, your honor, that I am not the only one guilty of the murder of my wife. The Judge on this bench, the jury in the box, the lawyers within this bar, and most of the witnesses, including the pastor of the old church, are also guilty before Almighty God, and will have to stand with me before His judgment throne, where we shall all be righteously judged.

"If it had not been for the saloons of my town I never would have become a drunkard; my wife would not have been murdered; I would not be here now, ready to be hurled into eternity. Had it not been for these human traps, I would have been a sober man, an industrious workman, a tender father, and a loving husband. But to-day my home is destroyed, my wife murdered, my little children—God bless and care for them—cast out on the mercy of the world, while I am to be hung by the strong arm of the State.

"God knows I tried to reform, but as long as the open saloon was in my pathway, my weak, diseased willpower was no match against the fearful, consuming, agonizing appetite for liquor.

"For one year our town was without a saloon. For one year I was a sober man. For one year my wife and children were happy, and our little home was a paradise.

"I was one of those who signed remonstrances against re-opening the saloons of our town. One-half of this jury, the prosecuting attorney on this case, and the Judge who sits on this bench, all voted for the saloons. By their votes and influence saloons were re-opened, and they have made me what I am."

The impassioned words of the prisoner fell like coals of fire upon the hearts of those present, and many of the spectators and some of the lawyers were moved to tears. The Judge made a motion as if to stop further speech, when the speaker hastily said:

"No! No! your honor, do not close my lips; I am nearly through.

"I began my downward career at a saloon bar—legalized and protected by the voters of this town. After the saloons you allowed have made me a drunkard and a murderer, I am taken before another bar—the bar of justice—and now the law-power will conduct me to the place of execution and hasten my soul into eternity. I shall appear before another bar, the judgment bar of God, and there you, who have legalized the traffic, will have to appear with me. Think you that the Great Judge will hold me—the poor, weak, helpless victim of your traffic—alone responsible for the murder of my wife? Nay, I in my drunken, frenzied, irresponsible condition have murdered one—but you have deliberately voted for the saloons which have murdered thousands, and they are in full operation to-day with your consent.

"All of you know in your hearts that these words of mine are not the ravings of an unsound mind, but God Almighty's truth.

"You legalized the saloons that made me a drunkard and a murderer, and you are guilty with me before God and man for the murder of my wife.

"Your honor, I am done. I am now ready to receive my sentence and to be led forth to the place of execution. You will close by asking the Lord to have mercy on my soul. I will close by solemnly asking God to open your blind eyes to your own individual responsibility, so that you will cease to give your support to this dreadful traffic."—Ex.