

THROUGH THORNY PATHS.

By MARY ROWENA COTTER.

PART SECOND.

CHAPTER VI.—Continued.

"No, Aunt Nellie; how can you suggest that when you know how distasteful it has been to me? On the contrary, I appreciate my home all the more, but, like the little birds who leave their nests as soon as they are able to fly, I feel that the time has come when I, too, must fly away. It seems a waste of time to linger here in idleness when life is so short and time passing so rapidly."

"I had no thought of that, Cecelia, and you may be pleased to know that things are not nearly so bad as at first feared and there is little chance now of losing our home."

long years of separation. With the man it had been a love hidden for a time by changing scenes, but with the woman it had burned in an unquenching fire, as shown by remarks made earlier in this narrative. The first words the prisoner spoke after the greeting were:

"Until when, Cecelia?" "Until I saw you and heard your voice."

about him. Where is he now?" Mrs. Cullen dared not reply at once to the last part of the question. She knew too well that nothing could be more imprudent, so she used the greatest caution, concealing almost to the end of the story her brother's whereabouts.

same loving disposition could not be hidden. "God bless the girl," was his oft repeated mental comment, and the memory of her sweet face brightened the long weary hours of the day and appeared to him in his dreams at night.

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CHAPTER VI.—Continued. "You above all others, Cecelia, have no reason to accuse yourself of idleness. Every hour of your time seems filled with some good work."

CHAPTER VII. Spring passed, and to Cecelia the weeks seemed long and dreary. She was daily growing more tired of life in the world and was fully resolved to remain outside the convent no longer than necessary.

CHAPTER VIII. Mrs. Cullen looked at her niece and read in her eyes more than her words could have conveyed.

CHAPTER IX. Cecelia felt herself growing weak and dizzy, and could wait to hear no more for fear of betraying her presence.

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