

THE YEARS BETWEEN.

A Novel by William J. Fischer. Author of "Songs by the Wayside," "Winona and Other Stories," "The Teller and Other Poems," Etc.

CHAPTER XX. CONTINUED.

In the course of six weeks Dorothy was able to be up again. The fracture had united rapidly, and there was no deformity. To be sure, at first, walking proved a difficult thing, but the days in turn brought steady improvement, and in a short time Dorothy was able to move along without the aid of crutch or cane. During all this time Dr. Mathers had been very attentive to his patient. He visited her daily and generously kept the vases filled with the choicest flowers. He brought her books and a hundred other things. It was so unlike Dr. Mathers to do this. He always stood on professional ground as far as his patients were concerned, but with Dorothy it was another matter. The barriers had to be broken down in some way; his heart would have no rest as long as the present conditions prevailed. He often wished to tell her just how disturbed his feelings were since she had come into his busy life. Nevertheless he thanked God for it all. She was Love's own white angel. She was so good and pure, he did not even feel worthy to touch her hand. But he loved her and there was joy and pain in that love.

Dorothy, too, was a changed girl since the day she first looked upon the doctor and, deep down in her heart, she placed the love she hoped might be given him—some day.

One evening Mr. and Mrs. Fairfax were sitting in the drawing-room, listening to Dorothy at the piano. It was the first time she had sung since her accident, and it was a treat for all concerned. She warbled through lullabies, ballads and familiar operatic airs. Then she hit upon "Home, Sweet Home." Slowly and pathetically the old familiar words floated through the room—

"Be it ever so humble,  
There's no place like home."  
It was like the song of the thrush in the fresh morning sunshine, when the fading stars hang their heads together and listen eagerly for the sound of a bird-voice, loath to depart. Her voice was full of music; it was wonderfully tender.

Just as she finished the second verse the door-bell rang loudly, and presently Bridget entered and announced with a broad smile:—"A caller for you, Miss Dorothy!"

"Who can it be?"  
"Why, Dr. Mathers, of course, Miss Dorothy," was the answer as the old cook laughed loudly and bowed herself out of the room.

Dorothy's cheeks flushed crimson for a moment. "He had only called this morning," she said to herself. "I wonder what brings him here now?" With a smile on her face she left the room.

"What's the matter, Katherine?" Mr. Fairfax asked of his wife, when he noticed that her eyes were full of tears. "Oh, nothing much. The last song Dorothy sang always does get the better of my feelings," she answered with a touch of emotion. "And besides—"

"Besides what, Katherine?"  
"Oh, do you know I am afraid we'll soon lose Dorothy."

"Lose Dorothy—what do you mean?"  
"I mean that she will be leaving us one of these days."

"What for?"  
"Why to be married, of course. Have you noticed how attentive Dr. Mathers has been to her all during her illness, and Dorothy only told me this morning that she would lay her life down for him. Something had stolen into her heart, she said, that made her think all the world of him."

"But Katherine, you should not waste any tears over that matter. You should pray that God might favor Dorothy by giving her one of such sterling character as the doctor."

"Tears are not a sign of weakness but of strength," she interposed. "A coward never shed tears. Besides, the singing was to blame for most of them. There is no mother born but hates giving up her daughter when the time comes, even though she marries a duke or a prince."

"But Katherine," he interrupted, "wait until the time comes. There's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip, you see, and by the way, all these things are just workings of your own imagination. I am sure Dr. Mathers is quite on cool terms with Cupid. Many doctors are, you know."

"Dorothy greeted Dr. Mathers with a smile when she entered the room where he was sitting.

"I am so glad you dropped in," she said, somewhat nervously.

"I thought I would like to hear you sing a little, Miss Fairfax. You remember your inviting me to call some evening for that purpose. You know I am passionately fond of music."

"Dorothy's invitation of some weeks previous stood the doctor in good stead. It helped him to throw a cloak over the real motive of his coming. For a half hour or so the two conversed on commonplace topics. Then Dorothy rose to light the gas.

"Ah, never mind," he said, "the moon will reach the window presently, and then we will have all the light we desire."

"I love to sit in the dark," Dorothy replied—especially on a moonlit night. There is something fascinating about it—and— She could not finish the sentence, and what matter for both understood.

For some minutes neither spoke, and silence stole in between them like some happy spirit and drew their hearts closer.

"Dorothy! Dorothy!" at last exclaimed Charles. "The time has come and I must tell you all."

The girl trembled like a frightened dove. Charles could play the doctor's part no longer, so he stole over to the sofa whereon Dorothy was sitting and, in the fullness of his love, poured out his heart-cries to her. It was a passionate appeal, and she came to his rescue just as the moon stole in through the filmy lace curtains and painted strange pictures on the walls. A vagrant

breeze passed by slowly. It seemed to pause a while at the curtained window. Then it heard the sound of a man's voice within. It was only a whisper—  
"Dorothy! Dorothy! I love you!"  
The sentence was loud enough for the woman's ears, and she laid her head upon his manly breast, and in that brief moment, drank in the joy and ecstasy that always comes with love's acceptance.

CHAPTER XXI.

ON LIFE'S COMMON WAY.

The night Mrs. Atherton landed in Billington the streets were practically deserted. A heavy snow-storm was falling and the strong wind was busy piling up drifts of snow. It was a stormy night in which to be out. One caught here and there only the shadow of a policeman passing down the street. Hundreds of cheerful windows threw their pleasant light out upon the snow-filled streets, but they did not seem to attract the attention of the little woman with the thin, yellow shawl, who wandered away from the station platform, up and down, narrow, deserted streets, in and around the various public places. Poor woman! She was not a responsible being. God only knew what the thoughts were that tortured her. She had been an inmate of the House of Pain these long months. Poor Mrs. Atherton! Would that God might restore her senses if only to recognize the old familiar surroundings of her native city! But alas! she stared vaguely at everything as she passed. Nothing seemed to attract her; nothing awakened a faint glimmering of reason within her. Her mind was active spinning out all sorts of horrible thoughts, tossed about in the frenzy of wild delirium. Yet, she sped on through the cold and snow, aimlessly but hurriedly, like a pursued hare. Oh, if Charles only knew that on this night of nights Mrs. Atherton—the benefactress of his early years—whom everyone thought dead, was walking the very streets of Billington, perhaps only a few blocks from his office, what a happy man he would be! Yes, if he but knew, he would rush out into that heavy snow-storm, take her into his arms and press her to his heart. It would be the grandest, noblest, proudest moment in all his life to hear her speak again, and to feel the touch of her hand. For long years they had both walked the hard, bitter road of suffering.

Mrs. Atherton hurried on as if hounded by some terrible dread. At last she reached a place where three streets met. The glare of the electric lights overhead brightened the surrounding darkness. For a moment she halted and raised her eyes to the skies. The hard look had softened on her face. Even a smile came and went fleetly. No one would have thought then that the poor woman was mad, she was so perfectly calm, and that wild, maniacal look had left her. The next moment her mind was upset again. Then tears came to her and she sobbed convulsively. Again she wrung her hands pitifully and cried out to the lonely night:  
"They're after me—they're going to kill me. Ever the stars have daggers for me. Oh, this terrible. Where am I, anyway?" She had passed this way thousands of times, before; but now it was all new to her. What strange antics cannot a diseased mind play with one! It is almost incomprehensible, and yet within that brain, in its lony tenement, life takes its beginnings. One little flaw in the mechanism of that central station has helped to fill hospital and asylum with the poor fledglings of humanity.

The crazed woman pulled her yellow shawl about her and was off in a moment. One of her arms seemed powerless—she always made use of the other arm when helping herself. She heard footsteps on a creaking snow and her mind conjured up the picture of one of those evil spirits following her to her doom.

The footsteps drew nearer. The frightened woman turned about slightly. She saw a man a block away. It was a policeman on his rounds. There were three roads for her to take. One led to the city hall, one to the city park and the third ran right into the heart of the slums. Mrs. Atherton chose the latter. Had she followed either of the other roads, the poor woman's fate might have been a different one. But it seemed God Himself directed her steps and led her by the hand. It was the darkest, gloomiest street of the three, but she, poor soul, had wandered down many a thorny, desolate way. She was used to the pain and misery of it all. She had seen and felt the thorns long enough, but perhaps now she was seeing roses. Let us hope she did. It would have helped to make her burden all the lighter.

Presently she reached the very heart of the slum district and here she met more people on the street. Nature had been kind and covered all the misery of the squalid surroundings with her white, snowy blanket. The houses were closely huddled together. It all reminded one of a miniature city. Here and there a drunkard stumbled along with the ill smell of whisky on his breath; now a door opened only to give vent to the sound of revelry within. On all sides, violent curses sounded—so irreverent that even the wistful-eyed, pure-hearted night paused on her journey and bowed her head in shame. Many a time in the years gone by, Mrs. Atherton herself had threatened these lonely thoughtless, doing good and lifting wretched souls unto a higher plane of living. To-night she herself stood in these sin-steeped streets, poorest of the poor, not knowing what dark, heavy clouds might close in around her at any moment. But surely not one hand would be raised against her powerless woman that she now was in those streets, through which she herself had passed so often like a white angel of mercy, making hearts gladder and purer, which had come in touch with her gentle ministrations. Where were the souls she had helped, where were the pale-checked mothers and the sickly, little children she had met daily on her rounds? All—some of them, at least, might just then have been very near to her, but no one would ever have recognized her. She was so changed.

All these long years of suffering and privation would have worked marvelous

changes in any one, and, now that Mrs. Atherton had again returned to Billington, not a soul amongst all her acquaintances would ever recognize her in that thin, little, wasted body. Suffering, too, was written on her sad face. No one could change looks as quickly as when Pain the artist, takes his brush in hand.

Tired and worn the poor woman was at last forced to rest herself. Presently she stood face to face with the old Woman's Refuge. Here kind friends gave weekly entertainments for the poor of the slum district. Father Salvini, the president of St. Jerome's somewhat older now than since he first met him, was the prime mover in this project. The pale, sickly children of these desolate streets were very dear to him, and every afternoon he could be seen in the slum district, where misery and want walked apace, infusing fresh hope into the souls of men and women to whom life meant nothing but an ending in death. There, in the depths of life's dishonesties he taught many an inspiring lesson. Children of circumstances, thrown upon the mercy of a selfish world—how that priest-heart loved them!

Mrs. Atherton halted for a moment at the Refuge door. Half a dozen windows threw pleasant lights into the night, and from several chimneys overhead clouds of black smoke rose to the sky. It was at least warm inside, and instinctively the frozen woman opened the door and entered the building. A concert was in progress. Hurriedly the new arrival thrust herself to a seat in the rear of the Refuge. A few minutes later the ambulance came to the door and the sick woman was placed on the stretcher and carried out. "Drive to St. Mary's quickly!" was the order Charles gave the driver. "I shall go with the woman," he exclaimed hurriedly.

Father Salvini will accompany you, Dorothy and Bernice.

A few minutes later the ambulance was at the door and the sick woman was placed on the stretcher and carried out. "Drive to St. Mary's quickly!" was the order Charles gave the driver. "I shall go with the woman," he exclaimed hurriedly.

"They are an orderly crowd," exclaimed the doctor. "I expected noise and riot, but the poor things certainly know how to behave."

"I have had no trouble with them whatever in this regard," the priest replied, "since coming among them. They like the talk, and they are very fond of music. I asked Dorothy to sing some old song—something they all knew. They will appreciate it more."

Miss Chadwick played the opening bars on the piano, and presently Dorothy's magnificent voice echoed through the hall in an old, familiar strain which everyone recognized. The men and women followed every sentence, every word, every phrase, and they were so beautiful. Dorothy also felt elated. She had never sung before so spellbound an audience in all her life, and as she stood before the people and noticed the many to whom her voice brought tears, she infused more heart and soul into her singing. These poor wails of life had given every breath a new meaning. She drank deeply from the Father's springs.

After all these weary hours in those desolate streets capable of changing with every thrill of emotion. It only wanted someone to move them. Love still sat reigning in the slums under adverse circumstances, perhaps, but Dorothy felt satisfied as long as hearts expanded and had not yet turned to stone.

Dorothy's voice had also brought restfulness to Mrs. Atherton. Nothing but a diseased mind like music, and while she sang, the poor woman at the rear of the hall closed her tired eyes and soon drifted into a quiet sleep.

When the concert was over the crowd filed out slowly and quietly. Mrs. Atherton was still asleep in her chair. No one seemed to take any notice of her. Only a few persons passed remarks.

"Too much whisky," said one.  
"Too much dope," said another.

A few minutes later Dorothy and Father Salvini came down the aisle with Dr. Mathers and Bernice Chadwick following.

"Well, Dorothy, how did all this suit you?" began the priest.

"Oh, it was delightful. The poor things, how they did enjoy it! I could have sung for them all the evening. They were so attentive. So many wept. Really, I was touched; I could hardly finish the songs."

"Yes, how they appreciated you. They'll talk about it all the week. I shall sing for them again—any time, Father. I value their good-will more than all the gold of the managers."

"Thanks, Dorothy! It is so good of you. But look! do you see the woman there close to the door? She must be asleep. Come, let us see what the matter is!"

The two hurried to the door, and in a few seconds the doctor and Miss Chadwick were on the spot.

"I wonder what's the matter?" the priest exclaimed. "She seems to be fast asleep. Perhaps it's the effects of whisky, cocaine, or morphine. I'll try to wake her."

"The poor thing!" said Dorothy, tenderly.

"She may be ill, Father," exclaimed the doctor.

"Let us see if we can rouse her," said Father Salvini. But before his hand touched her, the woman opened her eyes and stared vaguely into space. The next minute she cried convulsively and muttered:

"Oh! they're coming to take me—those wicked men and women! Go away! Don't kill me—don't kill me! Oh, my head—my head!" She put her hands to the sides of her head, and her face was a picture of deep suffering.

"That woman is very ill," Father said Charles, as he strode to her side and felt her pulse. Then he put his hand to her forehead. It was very hot.

"She has also a very high fever," he continued.

"She must be taken care of somewhere."  
"Send her to the hospital!" exclaimed Dorothy. "I'll pay for her. Give her one of the best rooms."

It was a woman's sympathy for woman. "But perhaps she has a husband or a son living here," interrupted the doctor. "They should be seen first."

"The woman is a stranger to me," said Father Salvini. "I have never seen her before. There's Strand, the policeman on this beat just coming in. Perhaps he will know. He knows every face in these parts. Strand! Come here! Do you know this woman?" the priest called out.

"No, I do not, Father," was the answer. "She is a stranger to me. I saw her about an hour ago. I was a block away. She had a yellow shawl over her shoulders."

"Yes, here it is," exclaimed Dorothy, as she picked it up. It had fallen to the floor.

"Then she is not a resident here?"  
"No, Father, she is a stranger. I received orders to be on the lookout for a woman with a yellow shawl, who was seen making her way from the depot. She was thought to be a very sick woman. I followed her from the cross-roads, but lost track of her in the slums. I saw light in the Refuge, and thought she might have entered here."

"Then this is probably the woman," answered the priest. "Well, there's nothing to do but take her to the hospital."

"And that as quickly as possible," rejoined the doctor. "She is very ill. Her one arm seems to be powerless, and her eyesight also seems to be affected, and then, she is very feverish."

"Her deranged state of mind may be due to the fever, may it not, Charles?" questioned Dorothy.

"Yes, it may be just an ordinary delirium," he answered, "but I am afraid she will not recover. There is something serious at the bottom of this."

"Well, do all you can for her, Charles," said Dorothy, sadly.

A few minutes later the ambulance was at the door and the sick woman was placed on the stretcher and carried out. "Drive to St. Mary's quickly!" was the order Charles gave the driver. "I shall go with the woman," he exclaimed hurriedly.

Father Salvini will accompany you, Dorothy and Bernice.

Slowly the ambulance passed along the snowy street, and, watchful as a nurse, Charles' eyes rested upon the little, thin body on the stretcher.

At last, the two, who for years had been separated, were face to face. They had met upon life's common way, strangers to each other now. God in heaven the only witness to the home-coming. Poor Charles, if he but knew!

CHAPTER XXII.

SISTER ANGELA.

The next morning Dorothy was one of the earliest visitors at St. Mary's. She had always taken a great interest in the sick before leaving for Paris and Leipzig. Not a day passed but she sent flowers for the poor patients in the wards. Since her return from her singing tour she had visited the hospital twice a week. She had a dear friend within those walls—Sister Angela—who filled the duties of head nurse, a rather remarkable woman who had the tactics of nursing at her very fingers' ends. They had been girl friends at school. Dorothy took singing lessons and afterwards drifted to Europe. Sister Angela went to the convent, trained as a nurse and was afterwards placed in charge of St. Mary's. But though the two were parted for some time, they managed to keep the old friendship alive.

Dorothy touched the button at the hospital entrance and presently the door opened. Sister Angela greeted her warmly. The gentle nun had a beautiful, spiritual face, was of medium height, and looked the ideal nurse.

"Ah, Dorothy, it is you," she exclaimed, gladly. "Step inside! I am so glad to see you."

In a minute or so the two were seated in the reception room, engaged in lively conversation.

Presently Dorothy asked how the patient was that she had sent in the evening before.

"She had a very poor night," the nun went on. "She seemed to suffer a great deal of pain. At 3 o'clock I called up Dr. Mathers. It seemed a pity to get him out of bed, but it was very necessary. So he came up. A half hour later several other doctors arrived and they decided to operate on her brain the first thing in the morning. I believe the operation is just over. I hear the elevator going. It must be bringing down the patient. Pardon me, just a minute, Dorothy. I know you are anxious about the patient, and I shall send in Dr. Mathers to see how she is before he leaves the hospital. I know, my dear, you will be pleased to see him," and she laughed heartily and left the room.

Soon after Dr. Mathers entered. He looked tired, worn out.

"Good morning, Dorothy!" he said as he smiled graciously.

"Good morning, Charles!"  
Then the surgeon seated himself.

"Oh, this chair feels fine just now," he exclaimed. "This operation has nearly used me up. It was very difficult and stretched myself with a great deal of satisfaction."

"Pardon me, Dorothy, but I really can't help it."

"I believe, you, Charles," she answered thoughtfully.

"I am sure the work must be very trying. But how is the unfortunate woman?"

"Oh, she stood the operation tolerably well, but she is a very sick woman."

"I was surprised to hear she was operated upon."

"I am sure you must have been. But it was high time she fell into someone's hands. She had an abscess on the brain which I opened. It was caused no doubt by the breaking down of a small tumor that had grown slowly for years. Altogether the operation was successful, but—"

"Do you not think she will recover, Charles? I would so like to see her get well."

"She may, certainly. She has a fair chance, but, of course, it is a serious matter."

"And do you think she will regain all her senses?" asked the girl, eagerly.

"She may in time. Nature, you know, works wonders," he answered thoughtfully.

Let us hope she may, and then perhaps she will be able to tell us her life's story. Who knows perhaps even now her husband and children are waiting for her.

For six months Mrs. Atherton lay at St. Mary's showing slight mental improvement. She had without all the immediate effects of the operation. Her mind was more restless now; it did not border so much on the maniacal state, but at times her lips rambled on incoherently, and those around could not pick up and join the threads of her discourse. It was nothing but a mixture of people and places they had never heard before.

Dorothy visited her daily. Somehow or other the strange woman drew her like a magnet. There was a certain softness about her face that appealed to her. She evidently had been a woman, Dorothy thought, who had seen much of life's sunshine and later some of its shadow. In time, however, the strength came back to her paralyzed arm and to her eyes as well. She no longer put her hands to her eyes to see.

Another six months glided by quickly and by this time Mrs. Atherton was beginning to show greater mental improvement. One day just as Sister Angela carried in a bouquet of roses from Dorothy and placed them on the table near the bed, she exclaimed in somewhat of a whisper:

"What has happened to my head, Sister? It seems to have caved in."

"And then some day, Sister, I will be able to surprise him again, that same day! Were it only here now!"  
TO BE CONTINUED.

It was the first sensible thing the poor woman had said in a year, and Sister Angela felt necessarily elated. Some weeks later she called the gentle nun to her bedside. Sister Angela obeyed.

"Take this!" Mrs. Atherton remarked as she tore a small, gold locket from her neck. It was a pretty piece of jewelry, set with a medium-sized diamond. "Take it—you have been so good to me! It is all I have."

Sister Angela refused the gift on general principles, but Mrs. Atherton was not satisfied. She pulled the nun to her side and pressed it into her hand.

Thereupon Sister Angela sat down. Her patient was proving quite interesting, and she thought she would have a little chat with her.

"Where am I, anyway?" inquired the patient.

"You are in the hospital," the nun answered.

"The hospital?" she repeated doubtfully. Then she shook her head in protest. "No, that cannot be. I—"

Sister Angela thought she would go a step further and she began with:

"What's your name, my dear?"  
"Name? Name?" she repeated again and again, wrapped in deep thought. Somehow or other she could not catch the meaning of that word. Her mind was evidently clouded again just then.

"Ah, yes," the woman replied as a smile stole to her face, "it's Mrs. Atherton." She made several attempts to finish the word, but memory again played her false.

The next morning Dorothy called at the usual hour to see Mrs. Atherton. It was a delightful May day with sun overhead and a violet sprouting up everywhere through the green, wet earth. A pleasant breeze lingered about the large lawn in front of the hospital, charged with the fragrance of lilacs and apple blossoms.

Sister Angela, too, had quit the hospital for a half hour or so in the open. Nature had tempted her out-of-doors to revel and exult in the quickening life that was everywhere. It was a grand awakening, ushered in by the coming of the birds and the leaves and the blossoms. The ears of mankind seemed to be listening eagerly for the sound of music through the parting spring's open door.

Birds sang their songs, the perfume-laden breezes joined them in happy chorus, and the wonderful orchestra of the trees played a sweet accompaniment through the livelong day.

Sister Angela happened to see Dorothy come up the hospital path and went out to meet her.

"Is not this a glorious day, Dorothy?" she said as she took the girl by the hand.

"Yes, it is a perfect jewel of a morning," Dorothy answered. "I came up to take my patient out into the open air. Dr. Charles thought it would do her a lot of good."

"It will be good for her. She has been sitting up several weeks now, and surely she is strong enough to stand a little walk about the hospital grounds. But come, Dorothy, let us sit down for a minute. I have something to tell you."

The two walked over to the bench under the large pine tree but a few feet away and then sat down.

"Do you know, Dorothy," the nun went on, "that woman of yours is getting along splendidly. Her mental condition is improving rapidly, I think."

"Is that so, Sister? I am glad to hear it," interrupted Dorothy.

"Yesterday she seemed very bright. I went in to see her and she made me take her locket for having been so good to her. She seemed to be perfectly sensible, though she had some trouble collecting her thoughts."

"It's wonderful!" exclaimed Dorothy. "I am glad to hear it. And she gave you a locket? Let me see it!"

"Here did she get it from?"  
"She tore the chain from her neck."

"It must have evidently been a very great treasure of hers in her day. May I open it, Sister?" questioned Dorothy, inquisitively.

"Certainly, dear."  
Thereupon Dorothy opened the locket. Upon the outside were engraved the two words—  
"From Charles."

Within, Dorothy found the picture of a young man.

"That must be the Charles mentioned on the locket, Dorothy. Don't you think so?" said Sister Angela.

"It is probably her son at all events," said Dorothy.

"She seemed very talkative yesterday and—"

"Did you ask her who Charles was her name?"  
"No, I did not, but I asked her her name."

"What did she say?"  
"She said it was Mrs. Atherton—Mrs. Atherton. She repeated the word twice, but somehow or other she could not finish the name."

Dorothy jumped up from the bench in great excitement. "Sister! I'm sure I've found out this woman at last. It must be Mrs. Atherton, the woman whom Dr. Charles has been looking for all these years. She was the great benefactress of his life. But you know the story. I have told you it hundreds of times."

"And the locket—" interrupted Sister Angela.

"You see," answered Dorothy, "it bears the inscription 'From Charles.' Might not Charles have given it to her with his picture enclosed some time in the long ago?"

"Certainly, Dorothy. I am sure you are on the right track at last."

"Oh, God be thanked a thousand times!" Dorothy exclaimed joyously. "I hope the strange woman will turn out to be Mrs. Atherton. It will make Charles very happy. His not having been able to find her and pay his debt has been the one great regret of his life. You know, Sister, he believes her dead. So for the present, say nothing to the doctor about the discovery."

"Depend on me, Dorothy. He shall not hear of it. We will move slowly but surely in the matter. I will help you to unearth the mystery."

"And then some day, Sister, I will be able to surprise him again, that same day! Were it only here now!"  
TO BE CONTINUED.

MY FRIEND THE RAG PICKER.

She was a quaint little creature, my friend the rag-picker, with her sharp, bright eyes and nimble tongue. "Old Nance," they called her in the alley where she lived, and many a poor soul in that dismal place had good reason to love and bless the name. Her small tenement room was a haven of refuge for many an unfortunate. Poor she was in the goods of this world, as poor as were her neighbors, but rich in possessing an inexhaustible fund of kindness and sympathy which she lavished on all who needed it. Then, too, she was such a cheerful little old woman, with a happy way of seeing some light in even the deepest darkness. It must be a black cloud indeed for which Nance could find no silver lining. I asked her once how it was she always was so happy and never seemed to worry about anything. Her answer set me thinking.

"Well, child, for three score years the Lord has taken pretty good care of old Nancey, an' I think I can trust Him to take care of me, for the rest of my journey. What's the use of worryin' about to-morrow? We only live one day at a time so just take to-day an' do the best you can with it an' leave to-morrow to the Lord. Many a night I've gone to bed hungry when there wouldn't be a crust in the house, but I've thanked God for the best He could give me in the mornin' somethin' would surely turn up. There'd be work to do an' a few cents to earn, or somethin' would happen. Just hold hard, my dear, trust the Lord an' He ain't going to forget you."

Many an afternoon when Nancey's work was slack (her occupation was picking over and sorting rags in a junk-shop) I have sought her little room to be entertained by her amusing chat. Sometimes a neighbor or two would drop in; sometimes a whole troop of children, for she had a special fancy for little ones, and they in turn simply worshipped her.

One especially stormy day we were sitting in our accustomed places before the stove. I was a guest, occupying the only chair at the apartment owned; Nancey perched on an overturned soap box, a donation from a nearby grocery. For the first since I had known her she had been silent for five consecutive minutes. I watched the old, bent figure as she leaned over and held her hands to the fire. I saw the wrinkles on her hands were wet and they trembled as she held them before her. Outside the storm raged wildly, the snow beating against the window and rattling the panes; inside we two sat. Nancey watching the fire and I watching her.

Presently she looked up with a start, exclaiming:

"Bless me, child, I clean forgot you were there! It's the storm that did it. When the wind howls an' shrieks an' beats up against the house like that as if it wanted to tear the roof off an' was mad because it couldn't, it always sets me thinkin' of my boy, Danny. It was in just such a storm as this that he