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"Come in!" The door opened and the caller entered. It is no other than Dr. Mathers just arrived from England.

Father Salvini, without even turning his head, looked over the letters and muttered thoughtlessly: "Just a minute until I have assorted the letters and then I will listen to your tale of woe."

A few minutes later the priest rose from his chair and, turning, was completely taken by surprise when he beheld Charles Mathers before him.

"Good heavens, Charles! How are you? Welcome home! I'm so glad to see you."

Father Salvini clasped him on the shoulder and sized him up from foot to head. Charles had improved wonderfully in looks and had gained in avoirdupois, and was withal really a handsome man—erect, manly and distinguished looking.

It did Father Salvini's heart good to look upon the young surgeon.

"When did you arrive, Charles?" he asked, inquisitively.

"But ten minutes ago."

"And am I really the first person you see in Billington?"

"The first, Father."

"Now are you sure Charles that some one else—some fashionable young lady—was not at the depot to meet you?" the priest asked laughingly.

"No, Father. I came here unknown to any one."

"Well! well! then I see that you have not yet given your heart away. Surgery and love do not mix well, my good—eh?" laughed the jolly priest, good-naturedly.

pected back from England shortly, and thought it best to broach the matter in time. Dr. McCracken, you know, has the confidence of thousands in and around Billington. He is a fine type of man—thoughtful, honest and sincere, and it is a good chance for you to swing into the current of the best practice in Billington. What do you think of the proposition?"

"I think it is glorious. Who would ever have thought that I should be the recipient of such good fortune? It all seems like a dream!"

"Well, my boy, you have lost a friend in Mrs. Atherton, but God? you see, has found you another."

"Did you say anything definitely to Dr. McCracken about the matter?"

"Yes, I went so far as to say that I thought you would probably accept his offer."

"Oh, I am so glad you told him. Then the position is open to me, and I am to be the assistant of the great surgeon!"

Charles' young face lit up with a smile. It was really the happiest moment in his life. He felt elated that Dr. McCracken should have thought of him. He had never anticipated such a surprise: he had left London in a somewhat discouraged state of mind, but now the clouds were drifting away and he was the participant in a new, fresh dawning. He was to begin practice under the most auspicious circumstances. It spoke volumes for Dr. Mathers, and the people were pleased to know that the great surgeon had placed implicit confidence in the young man. Every one predicted smooth sailing for the latter. And they were not disappointed.

That very afternoon Charles called at Dr. McCracken's office and an agreement was drawn up and signed. Some days later the sign on the office door was changed. It was now to read—

DRS. McCRACKEN & MATHERS, Surgeons.

In a week Charles took charge of his new duties and began life's up-hill fight. He was most fortunate from the outset, had good success with his cases and in twelve months his name was on the lips of everyone. His rise was almost phenomenal. For five years he worked patiently and zealously with his senior partner, and when the latter retired from active work, the whole practice fell into his hands and he was easily, though still quite young, the foremost surgeon in Billington.

TO BE CONTINUED.

"THE LEAST OF THESE."

Father Clancy leaned back in the easy chair in his study and heaved a sigh of wholesome contentment. It had been a trying day in many ways—as when Sunday was not 24—but the priest had borne all the labors and the petty vexations of the day with the patience and a cheerfulness that came naturally to a clear mind in a sound body. While he sat there musing a little curly headed girl, about six years of age, rushed into the room.

in the bright little eyes as she made her way slowly down the stairs, which was dimly lighted by the lamp in the hallway. Her purpose was quite evident. She was making for the switch which controlled the electric light. It was evident that she proposed a continuation of her newly-invented game of "Light and Darkness." The house was wrapped in gloom, and she wished to see for herself a mere turn of the button would flood the place with bright light. Slowly she felt her way down the stairs, and carefully she reached toward the little button which would turn on the light.

Just at that moment there was a click, click, click—a noise evidently made by some blunt instrument on the shutters outside the sitting-room. The sound was repeated, and presently the window opened. Veronica stood stock still with her eyes glued on the window opposite. The next moment it was thrown open and a man entered the room. Surprised, but by no means frightened, the child hid behind the big velvet post at the foot of the staircase. The newcomer glanced around the room and paused as if to hear some sound. After that he pulled out a little dark lantern from his pocket and, opening up the slide, sent a narrow cone of light toward the little knees, and drawing some heavy instrument from his pocket, began to pick the lock of the old-fashioned safe. For more than five minutes he kept this up, and presently, with a grunt of satisfaction, he pulled open the door. The child had remained as motionless as a statue during this performance, but as the thief reached for the bag of money a sudden resolution seemed to shoot through her frail frame. She reached over toward the button, and, giving it a push, flooded the room with light. The man jumped to his feet instantly and turned with an oath on his lips. He pulled his pistol from his hip pocket, and was prepared for a battle to the death. But when he gazed upon that little nightgown figure the desire to fight seemed to ooze through the tips of his fingers. He looked around the room suspiciously, as if to see some one else present, but no, he was alone in the room with the child. Strange to say, the little one was the more self-possessed of the two. She was the first to speak. She did so with a sound of reproach in her lisping tones.

"You were going to take that money," she said.

The man did not know whether to laugh or cry. The situation was so novel that he lost his customary cleverness in adapting himself to circumstances.

"Now, don't deny it," she said in a voice of authority. "I saw you reach in for the money."

"Well," he said, finally, wondering all the time just how he should act under such peculiar conditions, "what of it?"

"What of it?" she exclaimed, her shrill little voice rising. "Why, a great deal of it. That money belongs to the orphans."

"To the orphans?" he muttered weakly.

"Yes," she answered, "to the poor orphans who have no parents to provide for them."

A curious change began to come over the man. He remembered in a vague sort of way that he had a child who was an orphan. When her mother died five years before he had placed the little one in an asylum under the direction of the Sisters of Charity, and then he had gone his way, selecting crime as the easiest method of obtaining the money he needed to gratify his passions. But during these years the face of the child was before him like an anvil, and a well-remembered voice rang in his ears in the night and at times when he least desired it. Now the whole thing flashed up before his mental vision. His long-continued silence seemed to irritate Veronica.

"Why don't you say something?" she said. "Surely you don't intend to take the money that belongs to the orphans?"

Why not? he said feebly, and this time his voice trembled in spite of himself.

"Why not?" she echoed. "Why, if you do, the orphans will have no roof over their heads, they'll have no clothes to wear and no food to eat."

Once again he began to show signs of agitation.

"What was it before that?"

"I don't know," she said, with a bewildered look.

"Where did you live before your name became Clancy?"

"At the asylum."

"He took her little hands in his own trembling fists. He gazed long and earnestly into the innocent face. Five years make a wonderful difference, but the eyes and the features of the infant were there.

"Did you ever see my beads?" she asked with her curious lisps.

"No," he answered.

She pulled at a little string at her neck and drew up a rosary. "They were mamma's," she said; "I always wear 'em."

He recognized them, with a dart of pain. The man was on his knees now, and the tears were streaming from his eyes.

"Oh, what I've lost!" he moaned.

"What, the money?" she asked.

"Something more precious than money," he answered. "But I'll leave you; that will be my sacrifice, my atonement."

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