# MARY TRACY'S *FORTUNE*

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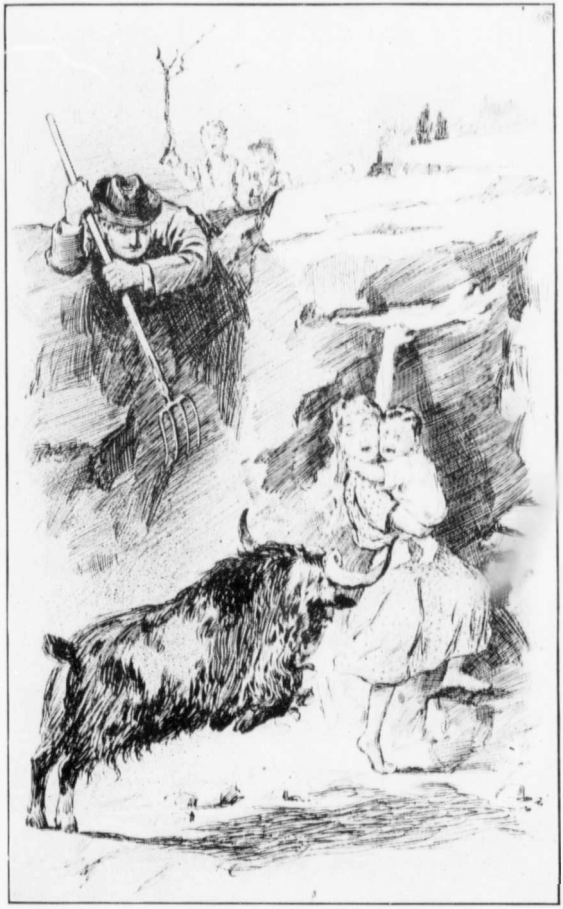

"TEDDY, FROM ONE OF THE ROCKS ABOVE, ENGAGED THE GOAT WITH THE PITCHFORK." (See page 24)

# MARY TRACY'S FORTUNE.

BY

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# MARY TRACY'S FORTUNE.

## CHAPTER I.

### MARY TRACY.

MARY TRACY had been left an orphan at so early an age that she had a vague impression herself of having been always an orphan. She had been adopted by some not unkindly folk, who inhabited a shanty among the rocks which skirted Central Park, New York, so that in obtaining a share of their worldly goods, she had not come into a very great inheritance. As soon as she was of an age to be intrusted with that delicate duty, she was set to mind the baby. It therefore came to pass that her weird, almost elfin, figure was usually to be seen, on fine afternoons, sitting on

a projection of rock with a tiny atom of humanity in her arms or beside her on a shawl.

So she was sitting one Sunday afternoon when a wonderful thing happened. A gentleman passing by gave her a silver quarter of a dollar, and so laid the foundation of her fortune. The gentleman was one of those idle pleasure-seekers who love to wander about in unusual places and enter into conversation with unusual people. He was a bit of an artist in an amateurish kind of way, and he had taken a sketch of the child from the road below. Of course, he had only taken the merest outline, to be filled up later if he had the skill, of the face, preternaturally worn, shaded by thin, unkempt locks falling down on the shoulders; of the eyes, keen, piercing, intelligent, with a rare sweetness in their depths that almost startled the beholder. He had noted how the scanty clothing of sombre hue was relieved by one dash of color—a crimson silk scarf—which Mary Tracy had found one day blowing about

among the rocks. It had probably been lost from a carriage, but as no one ever claimed it, and as Mrs. McGowan, Mary's adopted mother, had no use for it, it remained in the child's possession, and she always put it on on Sundays or great occasions. So the artist, noting this bit of color and a certain grace with which it was worn, as well as all the rest, drew the child and her unconscious charge, a somewhat heavy-featured infant. His conversation with Mary had been somewhat as follows:

"You live here on these rocks?"

"Yes, sir; over to McGowan's shanty." And she pointed to that residence, just visible among the gray surroundings.

"How old are you?"

"Turned thirteen, Mrs. McGowan says."

"Is she your mother?"

"No; I hain't got any mother."

"Do you like living here?"

Mary stared.

"I guess so," she said, with some wonder.

She had never lived anywhere else.

"Do you often go down into the city?"

"I've been down twice," she said, looking towards the dusky mass of buildings dimly discernible, as though she were speaking of some distant country. "I've been to the Park, too," she added, "three times; and I was up to the Bronx River."

This particular recollection seemed to afford the girl a special delight. Her whole face brightened, and it was then that the observer noted the gleam of those wonderful eyes. They seemed to catch the sunlight in them and hold it there.

"Do you go to school?"

The sunlight faded.

"No," she said.

"Can you read?"

A slight flush crept into the pale cheeks, and the head was solemnly shaken.

"You ought to learn."

"I've got to take care of him," she said, briefly, pointing to the baby.

"I must think about it and see what can be done."

If he ever did think about it the result of his meditations must have been unsatisfactory, as nothing more was heard from him. But he dropped a quarter of a dollar into Mary's hand, and so set her dreaming of a fortune that might be made.

She held the coin tight, till she heard Mrs. McGowan calling to her to bring the baby in. Mary rose at once to obey, the setting sun clothing her in a garment of glory as she walked among the rocks, cautiously feeling her way for the sake of the infant in her arms. Mrs. McGowan, who was not in a very good humor, gave her a slap over the shoulders for keeping the baby out late, and so brought her sharply back to reality. But she said nothing, only laid the child in its rude crib, smoothing its sparse hair over its forehead.

Mr. McGowan soon came in for his supper. He was a good-natured man, always

kind to Mary, to whom he often flung a pleasant word in the shape of a jest, and whom she consequently liked. Mrs. McGowan's tongue was occasionally sharp, and she sometimes emphasized its utterances with the weight of her hand. But she would probably have administered the same rude justice to her own children had they lived, and she treated Mary, in the main, kindly enough.

As soon as Mary had a moment to herself she stole out of the open door of the shanty. The moon, struggling through dark, ragged-looking clouds, shone upon her little figure as she made her way stealthily towards a certain point. There was something weird in the scene, and it communicated its weirdness in some measure to the child. She passed swiftly from rock to rock, no longer cautiously as when she held the infant, but with the fearless step of one who had trodden these uneven surfaces from early childhood.

At last she stopped and looked cautiously about her. The moon went behind a cloud at the moment, as though it refrained from peering into her secrets. Mary suddenly stooped and began to feel about cautiously with her disengaged hand. In the other she held the coin so closely that it left its imprint upon her palm. Having found what she sought—a small cavity in the rock—she deposited there with the greatest care that wonderful piece of silver, the like of which she had never possessed in all her life before. She carefully covered the entrance to the cavity with leaves, and stole away from the spot with the utmost caution, looking to the right and left and over the edge of the cliff, as if she suspected that her presence there might be remarked and the secret hiding-place of her treasure be discovered.

Between that spot and the house she met Michael McGowan, who was strolling about, smoking his clay pipe in contentment. She shivered as she thought how near she had

been to detection. Not that Michael would have deprived her of the coin, but he might have talked about it in his careless way and so led to her being deprived of it.

"Hello, Mary!" he cried out. "Is that yourself? Sure, I took you for a sperrit—for 'Petticoat Loose' herself; an' that was the name of a ghost that used to walk the Rock of Cashel by night when I was a boy."

Mary was interested at once, and stopped to ask some questions about the ghost with the remarkable name, who belonged to that very ancient period when Michael was a boy. For in Mary's opinion the stout, well-preserved man of fifty was of the patriarchal times.

"I'm thinkin' you'd better go in," said Michael, after a while, with a significant nod towards the house. "Herself will be lookin' for you."

Michael himself stood somewhat in awe of "herself" when she was out of temper, though occasionally, when his Tipperary

blood was up, he asserted his authority and let the household know who was master. But this did not very often happen, and he ordinarily walked in the way pointed out by his hard-working, if sometimes irritable, wife.

Mary did as Michael directed, gliding away, with her graceful, lithe movements, out and in of the moonlit patches—for the great luminary above seemed as if playing at "hide and seek" with the child, now throwing this point of rock into high relief with its brilliance, now darkening that other projection with deepest blackness. Mrs. McGowan did not specially notice the girl's entrance. She had just got the baby to sleep, and merely signed to Mary to be still and not awaken him.

As it was Sunday night, there was no work to be done. The rough patching and mending over which Mary often bent her weary back was laid aside. So the little girl sat watching the shadows climbing up

and down on the unpainted wall, and the moonlight stealing in through the window, two panes of which were gone. She had a sense of relief in being free from toil, but she had also something of that aimlessness which is apt to attack busy people in their moments of leisure. She was thinking of the silver which she had hidden away in the rocks, and she was planning a dozen things which she should like to do with it, though resolving all the while to keep it until she should have added more and more and more to it. In all her life, she had only possessed one penny, which she had found among the rocks, and a five-cent piece, which Michael McGowan had once given her at Christmas.

"If I could get work, I might earn some," she said to herself, with sudden energy. "If I could hold horses or run errands, like the boys do."

But reflection showed her that she could not very well do either one or the other, with the baby in her arms.

"If only Jim would grow!" she thought, despairingly. "But it ain't no use. He never will."

It seemed to her that, by the slow process of babyhood, the time would never come when Jim could walk or run himself.

"I'll try somethin', anyhow," she concluded. "See if I don't."

Mrs. McGowan, who was unconscious of the implied challenge, told her just then, in a loud whisper, to be stirring early in the morning, as it was wash-day. Upon this hint, Mary set about preparing for bed. The crimson scarf was folded and laid away for another week, and so closed the Sabbath, the day of comparative rest for little Mary Tracy and for many another toiler.

## CHAPTER II.

### MARY AND JIM ARE IN DANGER.

MARY was up betimes next morning, as Mrs. McGowan had commanded, and after a breakfast of bread, with molasses, which was held to be cheaper than best butter, and a glass of water from the well outside, Mary set to work. She wore a very faded skirt and a blouse of the coarsest material, sadly worn besides. This was in preparation for the washing, a certain portion of which fell to her share, and which she did before Jim was stirring.

She was soon up to her elbows in warm suds, scrubbing away at the washboard and dashing the clothes up and down, with a vigor which could scarcely have been expected from her slender frame. Her

thoughts often wandered to that spot in the rocks outside where her treasure lay concealed. She had slipped out before beginning work that morning to assure herself of its welfare. The leaves which filled the entrance to the cavity had not been disturbed, and the rock still held the silver piece which meant so much to her.

It was late in the afternoon before she got out to her favorite station, towards the edge of the rocks, where she could see everything that passed on the road below, while sitting securely in the sunshine with Jim. The baby lay wide awake, but quiet, upon her lap, its round blue eyes blinking up at the sky, with the meditative look of profound gravity which only a baby can assume. Its chubby hands opened and closed, and grasped at everything within its range, or at nothing, with equal energy and determination. Only, when it did succeed in getting hold of anything, it instantly let go again with the greatest indifference. As the

baby stared at the sky, Mary Tracy stared down at it.

"You got a weenie nose, Jim," she said, touching that organ, which brought the baby's eyes down from the sky and set them wandering about till they found their way to her face, "and a tiny mouth, and your eyes is awful round."

The baby received these remarks in profound silence, but, happening to catch Mary's eye, broke out into a chuckling laugh, as if it perfectly understood the joke.

"Oh, you's a laughin'!" said Mary. "And what at, I'd like to know? You's a keepin' the joke to yourself, so you is."

At this the baby seemed to laugh harder than ever, while Mary, by a sudden impulse, cried:

"Wait till I tells yer a secret, Jim."

Mary, looking all around to be certain that no one was in earshot, put her lips to the baby's ear and whispered:

"I've got a whole quarter, so I have!"

The baby crowed with delight.

"I'll mebbe buy you somethin' out of it sometime, when you can walk."

This also seemed to tickle the baby, who was in a particularly happy frame of mind that afternoon. But he presently grew grave again, in a philosophical meditation upon the character of a sunbeam which fell across his face and down upon the flat surface of the rock beside him.

As Mary thus sat with her charge in perfect security, with no shadow of coming evil to disturb her, danger was threatening them both from an unexpected source. They were sitting in a sheltered sort of nook, with rocks on every side, and with only a tiny path which served as entrance and exit. It was upon this path that Mary saw a shadow fall, and, looking quickly up, saw first a beard, then two eyes glaring fiercely at her, and lastly a pair of horns.

"Gosh!" cried Mary, in affright, ducking her head as if she had already felt the shock

of those formidable horns. "It's Moloney's cross Billy!"

As she bent her head, she also shielded the baby, spreading her ragged cloth cape over him by an almost involuntary movement. The goat was, indeed, too far off to strike, and for the moment did not seem disposed for active warfare. He simply stood and stared at the children. No sooner had Mary gathered up herself and her charge, however, glancing around her with a futile hope of escape, than the goat took steps to prevent it. He began to descend the path which stood between them and home, his head well down, his terrific horns in evidence.

"You get out, Billy!" cried Mary, in terror. "You go away, there's a good beast. Hoa! good Billy."

Billy came on to the charge. Mary could have escaped by clambering up the steep rock at either side. But there was Jim. Clasping the baby in her arms and covering him

entirely with her cape, she dodged the first blow of the enemy by springing to one side. The goat passed by, but made a side thrust at her, which struck her severely in the side. Yet she never relaxed her hold of Jim, keeping him as well as possible out of the animal's reach, but exposing herself recklessly the while she sprang from side to side, thus escaping at least some of the blows.

The goat was growing seriously angry, and once he nearly got Mary down. But the brave child recovered herself and continued the struggle, never once thinking of sacrificing the baby, though she several times felt the force of those sharp horns and that battering-ram of a head. Her one idea was to save him, at least, from harm, and, as the goat's attacks became fiercer and more frequently repeated, she held Jim up, striving to reach the flat surface of rock above. This deprived her of her last means of defence, and she began to fear that the goat would really kill her. She knew that she could not

hold out much longer, and she redoubled her cries for help, to which Jim, becoming alarmed, lent his best efforts.

This finally brought Mrs. McGowan out of her shanty, who, seeing the fearful situation, screamed in her turn, but stood looking in helpless terror, while Mary, every moment growing weaker, cried:

"Run for the Moloneys! They'll take Billy off afore he kills us."

This woke Mrs. McGowan to a sense of the only practical thing that was to be done, and she ran, screaming, in the direction of the Moloney household. The eldest boy Teddy came quickly out, and, seizing a pitchfork, ran towards the spot, accompanied by half a dozen other boys who got wind of the affair. Teddy, from one of the rocks above, engaged the goat with the pitchfork till Mary had time to creep feebly up the path, where Mrs. McGowan, weeping, received Jim from her arms. He had not received a single scratch. With Mary the case was

very different indeed. Almost fainting from the reaction after her long struggle, bruised, weary, and aching in every joint, she managed to crawl to the shanty. There she was put to bed by Mrs. McGowan, who was fairly overflowing with gratitude for the baby's safety, and who fully realized all that Mary had done. She did what she could for the scratches and bruises, and made her a cup of tea, which unwonted luxury filled Mary with a strange sense of comfort, as she lay upon the hard bed, aching and bruised though she was. This new feeling of being cared for and permitted to rest helped her to forget her injuries.

When Michael came home and heard of the affair, and looked at poor, exhausted little Mary, the tears came into his eyes. His Tipperary blood was up, too, and he was so angry that his wife had great difficulty in preventing him from going straight over to the Moloneys. Mrs. McGowan was a prudent woman, and anxious to keep on good

terms with her neighbors, and she knew very well that, if Michael were to go over there in his actual state of mind, there would be trouble.

"I'll find out who let that goat loose, or I'll know why!" said he.

"Well, wait till you've had a bit of supper, anyway," said Mrs. McGowan. And during supper she persuaded him to put off his visit till the next morning, knowing that he would by that time have cooled down.

After supper he went in again to see Mary. Her room consisted of a small space partitioned off from the main apartment. It had no other furniture than a settle-bed and a packing-case, which did duty at once for chair and bureau.

"You saved the little one's life," Michael said, huskily, "an' I'll not forget it to you."

A pleased look made that same glow in the child's eyes which the artist had noted, as Mary smiled gratefully up into the rough face of the man.

"Do you think Billy could have kilt Jim?" she asked, with some awe in her tone.

"One blow of that brute's head would have done it," said Michael, "or, mebbe, it's maimed for life he'd have been, with them horns."

Mary shuddered. The remembrance of the horns was still very fresh in her mind.

"I'll go over to the Moloneys in the mornin', as soon as any of them's stirrin', and I'll find out, onst for all, if that beast is to be allowed the freedom of the rocks or not. I'll have him shot, one of these fine days, if they don't mind what they're about."

Mary looked timidly up as he spoke. She would like to have asked him not to quarrel with the Moloneys about it, for Mr. Moloney was not as sober as he might be, and was sometimes quarrelsome. But she lost courage when she saw the angry gleam in Michael's eyes. As he was about leaving the room, Michael pressed into Mary's hand a five-cent piece, which was not much, but was

nevertheless, a tolerably large percentage of his day's earnings.

"Don't say a word," he whispered. "It's little to what I'd like to give you this night."

Small as the offering was, it filled Mary with delight. Coming so soon upon her other treasure, it seemed to justify all her hopes. The silver quarter given her by the stranger had been evidently a luck-piece. She would be rich, and perhaps before long. And then——! Visions of that bygone day at the Bronx River began to float before her mind. She seemed to scent again the perfume of clover blossoms and of the wild flowers she had gathered on the banks of that stream, and once more to see mirrored in it the feathery tops of the trees. Oh, it had all been so beautiful! The water which the poet describes as running through Paradise could not have been fairer than the tiny Bronx River in the mind of that child, for whom pleasures were few, and to whom fortune had denied so much.

In the feverishness which followed upon the excitement and the injuries of the day, she had a longing for the shaded spots near the river's bank, where cool trees met overhead, and the bushes in matted clusters crowded the shore to mingle with tall weeds and grasses of emerald green. When she had made some more money, she would take Mrs. McGowan and the baby, and Michael, too, if he could go, and they should all spend the day in that lovely place.

She began to plan, too, how she would go to school just for a while each day while the baby slept, and learn to read all the wonderful books that there were. Teddy Moloney had brought home from school some lovely books written for Catholic children, which had been given him for prizes, and he had read some of them to Mary. Teddy's pronunciation had not been very good, and he had jumped some of the big words and stumbled over others. But, still, that reading up among the rocks had been a great

treat, and in Mary's memory ranked next to the Bronx River excursion. Oh, how she would love to go to the Sisters' school near by, and learn to read for herself!

She carefully put her five cents under her pillow, and made up her mind to go out very early in the morning and put it in the hiding-place, with her quarter. Her mind then slipped away, half deliriously, to that little stream, which she seemed to hear gurgling between its banks and to see shining in the sunset.

Meantime, in the adjoining room, Michael said to his wife:

"That's a good girl in there!" And he pointed towards where Mary lay.

His wife nodded.

"She saved the boy's life," he added.

"She did *that*," agreed Mrs. McGowan, cordially. "An' if you could have seen the way she was in, and that beast butting at her, and the state of her clothes, and her only thought all the time for the baby!"

Mrs. McGowan paused to take breath, and then added, in a lower tone:

"I was thinkin', Michael, it was mebbe a reward for the good act you done in takin' her in, when her father died."

"I couldn't have done less," said Michael. "There wasn't one to give her bit nor sup; an', for the matter of that, it was you had the trouble of her ever since."

"I was too hard on her at times, I'm afraid," added Mrs. McGowan, in the fullness of her gratitude. "I'll be better to her for the future; for, I'm thinkin', it was the blessin' she brought upon the house, that saved our helpless infant this day."

So here again, though Mary was unaware of it, not having overheard the conversation, she was in luck.

## CHAPTER III.

### MARY HAS A VISIT FROM A DOCTOR.

But in the morning, when Mary woke, she was quite unable to stir. The soreness and stiffness had grown so much worse that Michael wanted to insist on sending for a doctor. This his wife opposed, saying that for the moment there was no hurry; that she would have to tidy up the house first; and that, as they were so hard pressed for money, it was better to wait and see. She promised to run over to the dispensary, in the course of the morning, and get something for Mary's bruises.

While she was gone, Mary was left alone in the shanty, the baby's crib having been pulled up close to the bed, in case Jim should awake. She watched through the open win-

dow, a high square one in the hall, which she could see from her bed, and which gave light to both rooms, the wash still flapping on the line outside. Michael's red flannel shirt made a vivid contrast to the other articles of clothing, mostly of gray cotton. The child amused herself making up stories, after a rude fashion, about them, as though they had been people, and so the time passed.

All of a sudden, it struck the little girl that, if she were to be kept in bed all that day, and, perhaps, a portion of the next, it might go hard with her treasure in the hollow of the rock. Besides, she wanted to put her five cents in safety, lest it should get lost. So she suddenly resolved that she would take advantage of Mrs. McGowan's absence to visit her treasure-house.

When she first attempted to rise, she fell back again, a feeling of hopeless dismay coming over her. Perhaps she would never be able to rise again. But her will was so strong that it finally prevailed over her weak-

ness and the pain which every effort cost her. She succeeded in getting up and slipping into a dress, over which she put her ragged cape, and set out. She was not concerned about her feet. In warm weather she went barefoot just as often as not.

Every step was a positive agony to her, especially upon the rocky ground. She had to go very slowly, and to hold by projections of the rock. But, at last, she sank down exhausted on the ground, close to the hollow which contained her fortune. She put in her hand, and, with a deep-drawn sigh of relief, discovered that everything was as she had left it. She drew out the shining coin, and, having held it a moment or two in her hand lovingly, she restored it to its place, with the five-cent piece by its side, and began to creep slowly back towards the house.

She was terrified to see Mrs. McGowan standing at the door. That worthy woman had returned in her absence. Mary fully expected to be greeted by a storm of angry

words, intermingled, perhaps, with blows. But Mrs. McGowan only cried out:

"Such a child! What a fright you gave me! What in mercy's name took you out?"

Fortunately she did not insist upon an answer from Mary, who hung down her head, and stood blushing and confused, fearful that the truth would be wrung from her.

"Get into bed this minnit," said Mrs. McGowan, but not unkindly. "The doctor said mebbe he'd look in upon you in the course of the day."

Mary could not have been much more alarmed had she heard that a dragon proposed paying her a visit. She had never in her life been visited by a doctor, and had, indeed, never seen one. The idea was appalling. She got into bed, and lay there very quietly, quaking inwardly. She pictured the doctor, as she had seen him in Teddy's book, with great glasses and a wealth of hooked nose.

She was, therefore, agreeably surprised

when a young man came into the room, very fashionably dressed, with a pleasing countenance and a singularly gentle manner. He sat down in the place which had been vacated by Jim and the crib, for indoors, at least, Jim's bed usually went with him. The doctor asked many questions, holding Mary's pulse, and carefully examining her injuries, after which he looked very grave.

"This child will have to be kept very quiet for some time," he said to Mrs. McGowan, when she went with him to the outer door. "She is very badly injured."

"And all along of that rascally goat," cried Mrs. McGowan. "And the baby might have been killed!"

"Possibly the girl, too," said the doctor, dryly. "She has had a very narrow escape; but her injuries are not, I think, likely to prove fatal."

"Fatal!" cried Mrs. McGowan. "Oh! then, doctor dear, don't tell me she's in any danger."

"I have told you that I don't think she is," said the doctor; "but we must take great care. I will drop in occasionally, and see that she has all she needs."

"God reward you!" said Mrs. McGowan. "For you can see for yourself how we are here, and she not a drop's blood to us. Not that we wouldn't share the last crumb with her; but we had sickness and death last winter, and lost three of our children, and their father out of work at the time. That's been a sore setback to us. So, you see, it isn't much we can do. Och, but it's hard times the poor does have, anyway!"

"The same story everywhere," thought the doctor, who, having heard Mrs. McGowan to the end, took his leave, walking homeward through the Park. "It would be disheartening only for the patience that most of the poor show. That explains what it's meant for. As for this little girl, she came within an ace of losing her life. I suspect she's a bit of a heroine."

"Doctors ain't all like that one in Teddy's book," thought Mary. "If this one had been, he'd have surely, surely scared me, so he would."

When she fell asleep, she had a confused dream, in which the real doctor, the doctor of fiction, and the goat were all mixed up in a wild and terrifying manner. Truth to tell, Mary had been almost as much frightened at the prospect of the doctor's visit as she had been when she perceived Billy about to attack her, and these combined terrors had affected her sleep very unpleasantly. She awoke screaming, to find Michael and Mrs. McGowan bending anxiously over her.

"I was only dreamin'," she said, with a faint smile, "but 'twas awful. I thought the doctor had a goat's head on and specs, jest like the picter in the book."

But she never again felt any horror of the doctor. In fact, she began to look eagerly forward to his visits. As for him, his medical associates during the next few days used

to quiz him very much about a favorite patient somewhere up in the Nineties.

"She's got a wonderful pair of eyes," the doctor once replied, musingly.

"Oh! I say, that scents of danger," cried one of the students.

"Danger far off," smiled the doctor, "as this siren is somewhere about twelve. But she has got eyes that might be a fortune to her, if she lived in a brownstone rather than a shanty. Only, then, she wouldn't need them."

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE DOCTOR DOES MARY A SERVICE.

MARY certainly did look forward to the doctor's visits, and little wonder. He had always a pleasant word to say, and he was so gentle in his ways, and hurt her as little as might be, even when he had surgical work to do, and stiff iron plates or bands to put on, or muscles to straighten out. The doctor, on his part, admired the wonderful patience and fortitude of the child. She never uttered a complaint, though he knew that she was suffering great pain. She only lay and looked at him, with a wistful look in her great eyes which appealed to his naturally tender heart. He was, in fact, growing every day more interested in his patient.

Once he inquired of her concerning a toy

which lay upon the coverlet. It was a horse, which wanted a leg, but was none the less precious in Mary's eyes. Teddy Moloney had brought it to the door, when he came to inquire, in a shamefaced way, how Mary was getting on.

Michael McGowan had not forgotten his intention of going over to the Moloneys. He had informed them of the accident, and inquired how it was that the goat had been at liberty. This no one had been able to answer. and it was concluded that the animal must have broken loose. Michael had very strongly urged the necessity of keeping the goat properly secured for the future, under penalty of its expulsion from the rocky kingdom, which a few families held in common. People said they were squatters, and perhaps they were, but they held undisputed possession of the place.

As the Moloneys were sincerely horrified at what they had heard, and as Michael, having "cooled down," kept his temper, he said

what he had to say with moderation, and the amicable relations with the Moloneys remained undisturbed. So Teddy had come with "the pony," which, despite its maimed condition, was a treasure not often seen upon the rocks. It had, indeed, been given to Mrs. Moloney, with other broken toys, in a house where she had done charwork, and was a most valued possession of the Moloneys. It was, in fact, only under the grave circumstances of the attack by the goat and Mary's injuries that they would have parted with it at all.

"I see that this animal needs surgical attendance, too," said the doctor. "Now, what would you say, Mary, if I were to take him home and set about repairing him?"

Mary looked to see if the doctor was laughing. But his face looked grave enough. Only his eyes were laughing, and those Mary couldn't see, for they were fixed upon the horse.

"You know my business is to mend bro-

ken bones," said he. "Will you trust me with your horse?"

Mary nodded. She was not a great talker at the best, and was rather shy of the doctor yet. But she trusted him completely. So much so, that she was fast making up her mind and screwing up her courage to tell him her great secret.

"Very well, then," said the doctor, putting the disabled steed carefully into his instrument case.

"Doctor!" said Mary.

"What is it, little one?" said he, kindly, busying himself with preparations for departure.

But here her courage failed, and she said:

"Nothing!"

So the doctor, remaining in ignorance of the great secret which was to have been communicated to him, went away with the horse. He took considerable care in mending it, having procured the missing leg from Teddy Moloney. But he did not tell any of

his associates at the College of Physicians and Surgeons, where he was taking a post-graduate course of lectures.

"If the fellows at the P. & S. got hold of this," he said, laughing, "my life wouldn't be worth living. But there's something fetching about that little rock-heroine, and I'm going to follow her up. I'll put Mrs. Morrison on the track, too."

Great was Mary's joy when the horse was restored to her in perfect condition. It was literally as good as new—better, for the doctor had made some important improvements in the trappings.

It was probably in the first burst of joy and gratitude for this favor that Mary finally threw off her shyness sufficiently to enter upon the great matter of the secret with the doctor. She had a double motive in so doing. She wanted to be sure of its safety, while her sense of justice urged her to offer it to the doctor in recompense for his services. The room was quite empty. Mrs.

McGowan was taking in washing from the line, and Michael had not come home yet.

"I'd like to tell you somethin'," Mary said to the doctor. "It's a secret."

"A secret!" cried he, in amusement, for Mary's face looked very grave, and her eyes were very dark.

"What can it be?" thought the doctor, curiously. "And how could there be a corner for secrecy in such a life as this?" And he looked out into the main room of the shanty overcrowded with rude furniture, clothing, and the stove.

"It's somethin' ye can do for me," she said, hesitatingly. "I wouldn't ask, only you's been so good to me."

"Well, what is it, Mary?" he said, gently.

"I've got money that I'm savin'," said Mary.

Money, where all was so poor! Here was a surprise.

"I never telled any one afore," said Mary. "It's hid in the rocks."

"Oh!" said the doctor, and his face looked somewhat grave as Mary stopped and fixed her eyes upon his face. He was wondering how money could have come into her hands, and secretly.

"I was keepin' it," she went on, "towards gettin' some schoolin' and some other things. But you've been awful kind, and I wants to pay ye."

"To pay me!" said the doctor, half touched and half amused, and wondering still more what the amount was, and where she had got it. Patients better off than she often neglected to pay him, though he was just beginning to practice, and his education had been an expensive one.

"You needn't think of that, Mary," he said. "I wouldn't take a penny from you. I was only too glad to help you."

A great look of relief and gladness came into Mary's eyes when she heard this. It had cost her an immense effort to offer her treasure to the doctor. She lay still, the

tears coming slowly into her eyes and coursing down her cheeks. At last she said, her lips quivering in her excess of gratitude:

"You've been awful good to me, and I'd like to pay you."

"Where is this money?" said the doctor.

"It's hid in a hole in the rocks," said Mary. "And I'm afeard it might be took, an' I thought mebbe you'd look if it was safe."

"If you can tell me just where, I'll look with pleasure," said the doctor. And this was the climax of all he had done for Mary.

"How much is it?" he asked, rising to execute the commission, after minute instructions from the patient.

"Thirty cents," said Mary, solemnly.

The doctor stared. He could not believe that he had heard aright.

"Cents!" he repeated, and he had hard work to refrain from laughing when Mary nodded assent. The child did not notice, so intent was she upon the subject.

"Twenty-five cents that a gent give me, and five cents from Mr. McGowan. It's a lot, ain't it?"

The laugh died upon the doctor's lips. How little the rich realize the simple pleasures of the poor, and the trifles that make their wealth! And it's all a matter of comparison, after all.

"I will go and see that it's all right," he said, and left the room hastily, partly to hide a certain emotion.

He followed the child's directions as minutely as possible, pausing, as he went, to take a look at the curious surroundings—the pile of rocks, dotted here and there with dwellings that might have existed in the backwoods. Near one of these he saw the warlike Billy, secured by a strong rope, and butting the wall of the shanty, in default of another antagonist. He saw children, scantily clothed, darting in and out among the rocks, and watching his own movements with curiosity.

He felt that he would have to bide his time, lest Mary's secret might become known to her juvenile neighbors. He strolled about, apparently in an aimless way, till he had tired out their curiosity. Then he suddenly swooped down upon the rock which Mary had described to him, and which he knew by certain marks she had herself placed in its vicinity.

He found the little hoard safe in its hiding-place, and, before he returned it there, he searched among the loose change in his pocket and added a quarter. He laughed as he did so, for quarters were not very plentiful with him.

"And my time is not so valuable as it should be," he said to himself. "If I were a prosperous practitioner, I should not have time for adventures of this sort. But that will come, and, anyhow, I love my profession. I wish I could always practice it for nothing"

He returned to the cabin, and assured

Mary that her fortune was intact, but he did not say a word just then about the addition he had made to it. Mary was profuse in her gratitude, her eyes saying more even than her tongue. She asked, too, before he went away, if she could be permitted to have Jim near her and take care of him some. She knew how much Mrs. McGowan had to do, and how the care of the baby hampered her in her work. Besides, she was really fond of the baby. The doctor hesitated, but finally gave his consent, only telling his patient to be very careful, and not to attempt to lift Jim.

So Jim's crib was once more placed close to the bed, greatly to Mrs. McGowan's relief, it must be owned; and the baby laughed and crowed at Mary, as if he were asking her from what strange country she had suddenly returned, and why she had taken to following his example by remaining in bed.

"You's never still a quarter of a minnit, 'cept you're a sleepin'," said Mary, regard-

ing him with glee. "Legs and arms, they all move together."

The baby gave a further exhibition of his powers in this respect, as she spoke, kicking a shawl which covered him almost into a ball.

"There, you, Jim," cried Mary, "look what you've been a doin'!"

Of course, it was not always fair weather in the crib, and it was difficult for Mary to soothe its troubled occupant when he began what she called one of his "cryin' spells." Mary, remembering the doctor's positive orders, could not take him up, and could only drag herself to the edge of the bed to soothe him as best she could.

"I can't take ye, Jim; there ain't no use," she would say, rather piteously, as the baby seemed to stretch its arms towards her. Sometimes he seized her hair, and gave it so vicious a pull that it brought the tears to her eyes. But fortunately the baby hand speedily relaxed its hold, and Mary had, be-

sides, the consolation of knowing that "Jim didn't mean nothin'!"

Troublesome as he sometimes was, he served to pass the days, which otherwise would have been very irksome to active little Mary. She told him stories, which he did not understand, but to which he listened with meditative gravity, interrupting them by crowing laughs or ear-piercing screams, or sucking his thumb by way of variety. She told him over and over again about the quarter and the five-cent piece, and dwelt upon that far-off future when he should be able to walk, and she would expend a part of her fortune in taking him upon some distant excursion, even to the very confines of Central Park.

Teddy Moloney came sometimes to the door to ask about Mary, and brought her once in a while an offering of an apple or a handful of nuts. This seemed wonderful to Mary, who had got so few presents in her life, and it was apparently part of that

good fortune which had suddenly overtaken her.

One or other of the neighbor women came in every day, with that kindness of the poor to one another. They recommended all sorts of different remedies for Mary, few of which were ever employed. They usually stood gossiping with Mrs. McGowan, talking of the affairs of that little colony upon the rocks, which had its jealousies and heart-burnings, its good and evil fortune, like other colonies. The doings and especially the shortcomings of this or that man, woman, or child were the favorite topic, as in more polished circles. The Moloneys, for instance, talked about their neighbors' troublesome children. The neighbors, in turn, dilated upon "that vagabond of a goat," to whom Larry, the younger of the Moloney boys, and the most mischievous, was very freely compared.

Mary listened, as she had listened over and over again ever since she was able to under-

stand, the self-same themes being still under discussion. The women, as a rule, each in turn took Jim from his crib and danced him in the air, in a manner quite awful to the uninitiated, and inquired how much he weighed and how many teeth he had, and if he showed any signs of putting his feet under him. They asked, in fact, half a score of questions which are being asked, the world over, wherever there is a gathering of women, and one of those mysterious lordlings who assert the supremacy of the human race. Never again in life is man so absolutely master of his surroundings, or, at least, the living portion of them, as during his first year. Michael, coming home at evening, often brought a colored picture cut out of a paper, or a sugar stick, which Mary shared with Jim and found invaluable as a means of keeping him quiet. It went very far in this direction, too, for a single crumb put upon his tongue would suffice, in most cases, to still his clamors.

So wore away the time of Mary's enforced helplessness. And after all, the days were no more uneventful than those of her health, the variety then being chiefly in the shape of hard work.

## CHAPTER V.

### MARY'S FIRST DAY OUT.

It was a very joyful day, indeed, for Mary Tracy, when she was able to go out once more into the sunshine, which, like herself, was pale and thin. For November was nearing on to its close, and the lines of bushes and trees marking the entrance to the Park were growing scanty in their covering, and giving signs that the old age of Nature was stealing on them.

Still, it was pleasant to be out again under the blue sky. The shanty was both dingy and squalid, though Mary Tracy had no precise perception of this fact, having never known anything which might teach her by contrast. The doctor had had a special invalid chair brought up from the hospital,

and had himself arranged it comfortably in the rocks, carrying his patient thither in his own strong arms and settling her for the afternoon. The baby was out, too, and Teddy Moloney had volunteered to assist Mary by keeping an eye on Jim.

He was sincerely glad, indeed, to see them out again. He was the only one of the rock children who had ever seemed to take to Mary. And it was as well. He was a good lad, and had lately made his First Communion at the school, where he stood very high in the Brothers' esteem. To add to Mary's pleasure on that happy day, Teddy volunteered to bring over his book and read to her a bit. He had much improved in pronunciation, and could manage most of the big words. He was, indeed, progressing very rapidly at the Brothers', and promised to be a prize pupil.

"And you, Jim, keep still, not a word out of you, while Teddy's reading," said Mary.

Happily the baby's eyes were caught by the peak of Teddy's cap, which seemed to him worthy of serious consideration, and the reading progressed very favorably for some time. Occasionally, Mary would interrupt to ask the meaning of a word, and Teddy would explain as well as he was able, though it didn't always happen that he used dictionary language. Sometimes he stopped himself in presence of an imposing array of several syllables.

"That's a jaw-breaker for you," he would explain, counting the letters so that Mary might know how big the word was. But an interruption came when Jim began to reflect upon the miseries of the world in general and his own in particular. His face suddenly assumed the appearance of a rubber doll, and Mary, with her fatal gift of experience, knew that the worst had come. Teddy, more sanguine, hoped to stop the sounds which immediately followed the contortions by cries of:

"Shut your mouth!" or "Hold up, or I'll stuff a potato in!"

In vain. The story had reached a most interesting point, towards which Teddy had been hurrying, surmounting the big words as steeplechase riders do the hurdles. Mary leaned forward with the calm of despair, hopelessly patting the wailing baby, and addressing him in soothing tones. Relief came at last from an unhoped-for source. The lively strains of a piano organ suddenly sounded from the road below. Jim hesitated, quavered, and finally stopped in sheer astonishment. What kind of an instrument was this, and what manner of world might it be, where such unearthly sounds could be heard?

Mary, encouraged, directed his attention towards the place where the man stood, surrounded by a very swarm of children, and playing those familiar airs which are a perpetual surprise when so rendered. Teddy even took Jim in his arms—he had had some

practice of the sort at home—so that the baby might have a better opportunity of hearing and being charmed by the siren strains. In any case, music on his own part would have been impossible, and Jim was far too sensible a baby not to realize the fact. He recognized his own limitations, and so fully accepted the inevitable, indeed, as to applaud his rival's music. He expressed his satisfaction by all those devices known to babyhood, so that Mary had to wipe his chin, over which he dribbled in the exuberance of his delight.

Mary, indeed, enjoyed the music as the children of the rich enjoy an opera, and Teddy cut capers as each familiar strain fell upon his ears. When the organ had moved off, the man waving his hat and bowing to the trio on the rocks, just as if they had given him a donation, which needless to say they had not, the reading was resumed.

It was a peaceful and a happy scene, and so thought the doctor as he strolled up the

path unobserved: little Mary sitting in the sunshine, with the crimson scarf thrown over her shoulders, with no fear of being called to work or of being slapped or scolded; the baby quiescent upon the shawl at her feet, and Teddy beside her reading, which completed her happiness. Happiness, after all, is a comparative thing, for no millionaire's child, with the world at its feet, was happier than little Mary Tracy at that moment.

She was ready to sing with joy, and in the pauses of the reading, in fact, did so, with an eerie voice not altogether unmusical. It was in one of these pauses that the doctor joined the group, sitting down with them, and conversing after his genial fashion. Indeed, his pleasant laugh could presently be heard all over the rocks, so that some of the neighbors put their heads out of windows to see who it was that laughed so long and so merrily.

He had merely stopped, he said, on his way back from some other patient, to know how

Mary had been affected by her first outing. He was more anxious about this little patient than either the child herself or any of those about her knew. Hers had been a serious case from the first. Teddy was presently called away to go an errand for his mother, and Mary then asked the doctor to take a look at the money and see that it was safe. He returned, remarking with a very grave face:

"You have done wisely in hiding it in the rocks, for money seems to grow there."

Mary put back her thin locks from her eyes with a hand which had grown thin and wasted, and looked up at him inquiringly.

"I certainly found two quarters there," he said, in the same solemn tone, "and you told me there was only one."

He purposely gave her this information to make that day of her first sitting up as happy as possible. Mary looked puzzled for an instant, then she cried out:

"Oh, it was you! It was you!" And

her feeble strength giving way, she sobbed aloud.

"There now, Mary, be quiet!" said the doctor. "You mustn't give way like that. You must brace up your nerves, you know."

Mary was quiet in a moment, but she looked up into the doctor's kind face with those wonderful eyes, which caught and held the pale gleam of the November sun in their depths. The doctor was once more deeply moved. Somehow this child produced a strange effect upon his mind. She seemed to embody to him the pathos of poverty and of endurance. He asked her if she would like to go into the house, so that he could carry her while he was there, but she begged so hard to be allowed to stay out longer that he yielded.

"Mrs. McGowan and Teddy between them will get you in," he said, cheerfully. And as he left her and took the car homeward, he said to himself: "The rich have very little idea of the pleasure they might give them-

selves in going among the poor. I wouldn't exchange the best fee I ever got for that child's gratitude this morning. And I'm not an over-sentimental man, either."

The students at the P. & S. asked him that afternoon, in their bantering way, how his patient in the Nineties was getting on.

"Have you done her any good, old chappie?" said one.

"I don't know," laughed Mary's doctor; "but she's done me some."

And he wouldn't explain when they pressed him to throw light upon this enigma.

"Go up there yourselves," he cried, "and you'll see."

"But, hang it all, man," cried another, "a whole brigade of doctors can't go scaling the rocks just to find out what maggot's bitten you now."

"The exercise would do you good, and you might hear of something to your advantage," said the doctor, disappearing down the corridor.

"He's a rum one," said some who stayed behind. "Straight, though," said others. And to this all agreed.

"He's a Roman Catholic," suggested one, who had hitherto held his peace. This seemed in some measure to explain the doctor's peculiarities, and the subject was dropped.

## CHAPTER VI.

### LARRY MOLONEY'S CRUELTY.

MEANWHILE Mary's beautiful day was coming to an end, and it was destined to go down less fair than it had arisen. Teddy had returned soon after the doctor left, and had taken up the reading again. Jim slept peacefully, snugly covered up in the shawl. Mary, leaning back in the chair, enjoyed even the very weariness of convalescence. The little group was suddenly approached by Teddy's brother, Larry, who was foremost among the rough gang who made the rocks, at times, a terror. In fact, it was only their almost continual absence when at other scenes, which gave the rocks their tranquil appearance and secured their inhabitants from annoyance.

"Halloa, Ted!" he cried, "what's the matter with you, sittin' jawin' to a girl, while the fellows has been 'most up to High Bridge?"

"I'm reading," said Teddy, curtly.

"Readin'! Oh, you're a nob, you are! A howler!"

"You get away!" cried Teddy, impatiently.

"I won't, neither!" cried Larry, in defiance.

"Look out that I don't make you," roared Teddy. "The kid's asleep, and, if you wake him up, I'll——"

His threat was interrupted by a well-directed pebble, which hit him almost in the ear, causing Teddy to start up wrathfully and fly in pursuit of his assailant. He muttered, as he ran, various uncomplimentary epithets, which would not have shocked Mary, accustomed as she was to the rude language of the shanties, but which might shock many readers were they set down here. The pur-

sued, however, doubled upon Teddy and was swiftly out of sight, descending with cat-like agility to the road below. Teddy, supposing the contest over, disdained to follow, but returned and sat down again to continue the reading. But this was not to be.

Larry's head presently appeared above the rocks, bestowing upon his more studious brother a perfect volley of uncomplimentary adjectives. It might not have mattered so much, for these boys, accustomed to a rude atmosphere, could give and take, had it not suddenly occurred to Larry to turn his genius for invective upon the unoffending Mary.

"As if I'd sit there, readin' to a pauper!"

Mary had never heard the word before, and it fell harmlessly upon her. A dark flush rose to Teddy's face, for he had a delicacy and kind feeling which are often seen, to a marked degree, in the poor.

"O you villain!" Teddy muttered, shaking his fist at his brother.

"A pauper! A pauper!" cried Larry,

delighted at the effect he had produced. "Spongin' on the McGowans; and eatin' the scraps they throw her."

Mary understood. All the light faded from her eyes, her pale cheeks grew paler, her lips quivered pitifully, and at last the tears forced themselves from her eyes and began to course down her cheeks. Singular as it may seem, the sense of her dependent position had never forced itself upon her mind. She had been there; she had been taken care of, in a manner, by the McGowans. She knew that she had no parents. But what did it all mean? To the credit of the McGowans, it must be told that never, even in their angry moments, had they given her the cruel explanation. She knew now what a pauper was, and that she was one.

"Ain't you ashamed?" cried Teddy, trying to silence his brother.

"She *is* a pauper," persisted Larry. "Ma said so, and that she was a burden to the McGowans. A charity child!"

The worst of it was that this was true. No later than that morning both boys had heard their mother wondering "why that doctor was makin' such a fuss over a pauper," and had enlarged upon the theme. Teddy, being in no position to deny the truth of his brother's assertion, sprang to his feet and ran towards him to arrest the flow of his eloquence.

But it was in vain, so far as Mary was concerned. Her face, wan and pinched, her eyes, strained and pitiful, looked towards the sky. Yes, there was the sun still shining, and beginning, in its descent, to merge a variety of tints into one whole of flaming scarlet, over which quivered the gray of the clouds. It was so beautiful, this world which God had made, and only a few moments ago she, Mary Tracy, had been so happy; and now——? She felt as if she could never hold up her head again, now that she knew that the people of the shanties were pointing at her as a pauper. It seemed to her that her heart

would break. She bent down over Jim, and clasped him pitifully with her uninjured arm. He didn't know she was a pauper. He came to her just as willingly, and cared for her just as much, as if she had not been a charity child. The baby, in fact, waking up, smiled at her in his genial way, as if saying:

"What does it matter, Mary? I shall always be glad to see you."

And his fat hand stroked her face, and seemed puzzled when it met the tears, still falling unheeded down upon the ground. When Michael himself came out to lift her in, she almost shrank from his touch.

It was charity to the pauper. He was struck with the strange look about her face, and her listless, drooping manner. When she was put into bed, she lay with her face turned towards the wall, thinking:

"And now I'll mebbe be always a pauper, for I'm too weak to work. I can't ever help with the washing nor carry Jim about."

The first thing which brought peace to her

mind was when she caught the sound of the Rosary which Mrs. McGowan was saying aloud with Michael. The familiar words had a new meaning, even to her untutored mind: "Thy will be done." That meant that people had to do whatever God wanted, and that they had to do it willingly too. "God wants me to be a pauper," she said, with awe; "but mebbe not always." Then it comforted her to think of her fortune hidden away in the recess of the rock, which had already doubled itself.

"I'll try and add to it, if only I can get strong," she said.

But the truth was that Larry's cruel words, which to him meant no more than the mischief of an idle and naturally brutal lad, had hurt her even more than the goat's horns. They proved a setback, too, to her recovery, for, strive as she would, the knowledge she had gained seemed to take all the heart out of her. When the doctor came next, he noticed the change at once with his keen, pro-

fessional eye, and set about discovering the cause.

Bit by bit it came out, and the doctor, rising from the bedside with flashing eyes, told Mrs. McGowan, begging of her to see that the young rascal got the thrashing he deserved.

"I'd like to give it to him myself," he said, almost fiercely. And Mrs. McGowan promised to look to the matter.

"It is not bad enough," she complained, "that they 'most killed the child with their rascally goat, but they strive to vex her with their vile talk."

"Not Teddy," said a feeble voice from the inner room. "Teddy's been good to me."

The doctor had found the scene with Mary a very painful one. The wound to her natural sensitiveness had been very deep, and he had caught an insight into a nature almost painfully intense.

"Tragedy even among the rocks," he said to himself.

Michael McGowan on this occasion did not

wait to "cool down," but strolled over to the Moloneys' door. Had he met Larry upon the way, there is little doubt that he would there and then have administered summary justice himself. But that enterprising and far-seeing youth, perceiving the approach of their irate neighbor, and suspecting its cause, had fled swiftly to an adjoining rock, whence he could both see and hear without being in imminent danger. The Tipperary blood was near causing a breach between the neighbors, which might have had serious results. Mrs. Moloney, in particular, very much resented hearing her younger son described as "A good for nothing vagabone," "The plague of the rocks." She took the field in his defence, her maxim being apparently a paraphrase of an epigram employed by a distinguished patriot with regard to his country:

"My son, be he right or wrong!"

For the truth was, she was kept in perpetual turmoil by that youth's doings and sayings, in or out of the house, and by the

constant complaints of him which reached her ears. It was a lively war of words, which need not be recorded here; but it was fortunate that Moloney the elder had that species of common sense which is sometimes more apparent in men than in women, with a rude sense of justice.

He admitted that Mary was harmless, and that therefore she ought to be left out of the boys' quarrels, and that he would himself see and thrash Larry for the offence. Michael, mollified, broke into praises of Teddy, which did much to conciliate even the mother, though she still had a lingering soreness with regard to her prodigal.

"Mrs. Moloney, ma'am," said good-natured Michael, "if I said too much in my heat, don't keep it in agin me; for, when all's said and done, boys will be boys, and mebbe he didn't think that little Mary would take it so sore to heart."

"Children in her condition shouldn't be too thin-skinned," said Mrs. Moloney, not

quite appeased. "I'm afraid it's many the hard day's in store for her, if she begins like this."

"I hope not, ma'am," said Michael. "From my heart, I hope not. Poor Mary's that biddable and quiet like that no one could spake ill of her, and she saved the life of our only child from——"

Michael paused. The subject of the goat was delicate ground which had been gone over before. Moloney shifted uneasily in his chair and coughed slightly. His wife busied herself with some household work, but presently remarked dryly:

"I don't think the life of either of them was in danger."

"We have the doctor's word for it," said Michael, flushing with anger, as Mrs. Moloney tossed her head, "and Mary crippled as it is. I'm surprised at you, ma'am, to be so hard-hearted."

"You're the first that ever said it of me, Michael McGowan," said the woman, which

is often a convenient arrangement where argument is weak, "and it ill becomes you——"

"I know, ma'am. I know all you did for us in the trouble of last winter," said Michael, softening again, "and that's why I'm surprised, for a more tender-hearted woman than you showed yourself couldn't be found from here to Galway."

"Well, well, we all have our faults," said Mrs. Moloney. "And if Larry was a bit rough spoken with the girl, his father will correct him, and no more need be said, for he's no worse than most of his neighbors."

Michael had to be satisfied with this, and took his leave, feeling that very little had been accomplished. But it is only fair to say that Larry met his deserts from both father and mother, the latter giving her opinion of him in no measured terms.

## CHAPTER VII.

### MRS. MORRISON.

WHEN the doctor said that he would put Mrs. Morrison upon Mary's track, he had a double object in view. He was not only doing his very best for the little girl, but he was anxious to benefit this other and very different patient of his. She was an elderly woman, a connection of his own, to whom he was sincerely attached. She was a widow, with large means. In the midst of a worldly career, when fashion had held full sway over her and she had been one of its most determined votaries, a series of severe family afflictions, beginning with the death of her husband, followed by that of her children, had suddenly and completely transformed her. She still occupied her mansion upon

Fifth Avenue, but it was never more opened for those assemblies wherein money had been so extravagantly lavished. The balls, for which the flowers alone cost many thousands of dollars, became a thing of the past, with dinners, luncheons, and receptions. In fact, the sad-faced, stately woman had rushed to the other extreme, and shut herself up alone in that great, gloomy house, "the world forgetting, by the world forgot."

The doctor, who was one of the few friends still admitted, and that, at first, in his professional capacity, noted this sudden change, and the effect it had upon his kinswoman's health, with concern. The period of natural grief being over, he saw that she was verging towards a morbid state of mind and a settled melancholy. All that was genial and lovable in the woman seemed to have deserted her, and her warm heart to have grown cold.

It had occurred to him, as if by inspiration, that once bring Mrs. Morrison into contact with little Mary and awaken her interest

in the simple joys and sorrows of those poor folk upon the rocks, the victory would be won. He went, one afternoon, on purpose to broach the subject to her, but he said nothing until it was almost time to take his leave. He had considerable tact, that doctor, young as he was.

Mrs. Morrison listened to his narrative somewhat listlessly, leaning back in her deep armchair.

"And so, my philanthropic doctor," she said, at last, "you want me to interest myself in this rock-maiden?"

"Such a little one, and such a helpless one," pleaded the doctor. "I want you to see her, and become interested as I have done."

"But what can I do for her?" said Mrs. Morrison, languidly. "You say yourself that these people she lives with are fairly kind to her. So there is no need of taking her away, or anything of that sort."

"No need in the world," said the doctor;

"but they are very poor, and Mary is very helpless just now. To help her would be helping them."

"Your boy's heart is so big," said Mrs. Morrison, regarding the doctor with a cordial glance. He was a favorite with her, partly because of a real or supposed likeness to one of her lost darlings.

"I know one bigger," said the doctor, with his merriest look—"a great, great deal bigger, if only it were given play. Mine is getting hardened, quite callous, so that I wonder how little Mary has pierced it with her big eyes. That other heart knows no limit."

"They say that sorrow softens hearts," said Mrs. Morrison. "Mine has grown hard and harder all the time."

"*Don't* ask me to believe that," said the doctor, with honest, boyish admiration. "And *do* take Mary under your wing. Think of the thirty cents in the rock, upon which such magnificent plans are built."

"We all build on trifles," said Mrs. Mor-

rison, somewhat coldly; "but this Mary has found a skilful advocate, and you have interested me. In fact, I think I will see this child. When can you spare an hour, doctor?"

The doctor put on a comical look, partly to conceal his triumph.

"I have so many important cases on hand," he said, "and can scarcely get away; but, fortunately, one of them happens to be on those very rocks, and in that very shanty."

"Take luncheon with me, then, to-morrow, if the weather is good, and we shall drive up to this wonderful place."

The doctor only looked his gratitude, but it was enough.

"He must have more patients, that dear boy-doctor," said Mrs. Morrison, when he had gone, turning the rings on her finger meditatively. "With his kind heart, his honest eyes, his gentle manner, he ought to get up to the very top of his profession. I must see about it."

She leaned back in her chair in a thought-

ful attitude, smiling a little as she said to herself:

"This girl may be very ordinary, indeed, and perhaps these people are all impostors, trying to work upon the doctor's good-nature. But I will go once, at any rate, if it be only to find them out."

She had a basket of knitting beside her. She was preparing stockings and socks to be distributed to the poor by her servant about Christmas time.

"I wonder if this girl can knit," she continued. "I could employ her at some of these. To earn for herself will please her best, if she be what the doctor believes; and, in any case, it will be the safest way of helping her. Then I might get her to make rag carpet. Yes, that would be excellent, and she would enjoy the bright colors, while that baby could be near her. There is always a baby, bless its heart, in the annals of the poor."

She laughed softly.

"It is, I suppose, the only sunshine in the

darkness, from the very fact that it is the only being who is quite unconscious of all the misery and privation."

So here was the doctor's prescription working already, and Mrs. Morrison beginning to be as interested in the carrying out of these charitable schemes as she had ever been in the details of a social function. She arose and walked over to the bow window, standing there among the tall palms, and watching the carriages whirling by or the carts rumbling on, all impartially attended by a thick cloud of dust.

She thought suddenly of some babies who had once been there in the luxury of that mansion. How each one had grown, till its little feet toddled over the marble of the halls and stumbled in the pile of the carpet. How each had outgrown that stage, and had bounded up and down in schoolboy glee. How some had paused there and never grown any more, and passed silently out. While one among them all had grown tall, as tall as

the doctor, and had merry eyes and a pleasant voice like his. He had not waited either for the further stages of the journey over which she was hastening alone. A great sorrow, a great yearning, quite unlike the cold melancholy of the past months, came into her heart.

"Yes, for the sake of those baby ones," she said, "I will befriend that baby, and for the sake of the others it shall be Mary; and the doctor himself shall be my special care, because of him who was last to go. Their memory shall be a benediction to Mary."

Little Mary, of course, did not know all that was passing in that grand house down on Fifth Avenue, nor in the mind of that great lady, who henceforth had the will, as she had the power, to help her. Assuredly, Mary's prospects were brightening, and that little bank in the rocks was, indeed, the foundation of her fortune.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### TEDDY GETS THE TREASURE.

MARY had managed to crawl as far as her treasure-house, one morning, and had actually felt and gloated over that mysterious quarter which had been added to her original store, and which she very well knew had been placed there by the kindly doctor. Several days had intervened since she was last out.

The dart aimed at her by Larry had gone so deep that it had seriously impaired her physical condition. She had been forced to lie in bed, more weak and helpless than before. Even Jim had not been placed near her, as Mrs. McGowan feared that Mary was not strong enough to look after him.

Those days had been gray and drizzling, varied by storms, during which hail and rain

beat pitilessly against the windows, and the wind threatened to dislodge the shanty altogether from its position upon the rocks. The window-panes had been so obscured by the pitiless downpour that for hours together Mary could not see out. She had some queer fancies, too, during those hours of darkness. She thought that the rain upon the roof and the wind in its howling seemed to repeat, over and over:

"Pauper! Pauper!"

And even when the wind softened to a moan and went sweeping over the rocks, it sounded as if it were pitying her forlorn condition. Sometimes the silence was so awful, for Mrs. McGowan had gone out to work by the day, that Mary wished that Jim would wake up, even if he screamed. But he did not. Mrs. McGowan had been home at noon to see to him and Mary, and one of the neighbor women had come in later with a shawl over her head to give him some milk and otherwise insure his comfort, so Jim

slept peacefully, and cared nothing for the wind and rain.

"If it were only one day," Mary had said over and over again to herself.

But the bad weather had entered upon a term, it seemed, and, like Jim in his "crying spells," was not to be restored to sunshine.

When at last fine weather did come, and Mary got out to visit, as has been described, her treasury, she was almost in good spirits. What a blessed relief it was to see a blue sky, and how glorious the rocks seemed after her room! As she sat and reflected, Teddy Moloney approached her. He had been rather shy of her since Larry's misbehavior, and, besides, she had been much indoors.

"Mary," he said, without any preamble, "I got somethin' to tell you."

"What is't, Teddy?" Mary asked, smiling at the boy, to show that to him, at least, she bore no ill-will.

"I don't know if it signifies anything, but Larry he's been a watchin' you this mornin'."

Mary turned pale.

"I heard him mutterin' to himself that he'd just like to know what you were mousin' about them rocks for, and he's bound to find out."

Mary burst into tears.

If Larry had his eyes on her treasure, it was as good as lost, and she felt utterly unequal to making the same effort she had made that morning. And kind as Teddy was, she did not know whether it was wise to place so great a strain upon his kindness and honesty as to tell him her secret. Teddy watched her as she wailed, rocking her body to and fro in her anguish. At last he said, slowly:

"I guess it's better to tell you right out, Mary. But I know what's troublin' you."

"*You* know?" cried Mary, suspending her tears in astonishment.

"I know you got somethin' hid in the rock."

Mary drew a deep breath, half of relief, half of fear.

"And I guess your folks don't know nothin' about it."

He paused, and Mary did not contradict this last assertion.

"And I know more'n that, too," he continued, slowly, as if to watch the effect of his words upon his hearer. "You got fifty cents or more hid away there."

If Mary had been guilty of theft, and Teddy her judge, she could not have looked more confused, nor the boy more solemn.

"How you got it ain't none of my business," said Teddy.

Mary flushed crimson.

"But I guess it's all right," Teddy went on, reassuringly, "because you're a different make from some of the kids round here, and honest as—as Jim."

"It's real good of you to say that, Teddy," said Mary, gratefully, "and it's true as the Catechism, I never stole in my life, cause it's a sin; and anyway——"

She did not finish her sentence. Again

that thought appalled her: "If Larry should get it!"

She had some delicacy, however, in suggesting to Teddy that his brother might be less honest than himself; but Teddy went on, quite calmly:

"Larry'll get it if he can, and snicker if you make a fuss about it. He'll say it was no more yourn than his."

Another thought struck Mary, and she asked, though not suspiciously, for she now felt sure of him:

"How did you get to know it was there, Teddy?"

"I found it out, one day, just pokin' around. I thought, first off, I'd struck ile myself; but I minded seein' you about there a good deal, and the doctor, too. So I guessed it was yourn."

"I thought no one saw me," said poor Mary, in dismay.

"Oh! there ain't much done upon these rocks that I don't see," said Teddy, with

pride. "But now we've got to keep Larry from gettin' his claw on it."

"And I can't go there again to-day," lamented Mary. "I can't, I can't. If only the doctor would come!"

"So he knows, does he? I thought as much," said Teddy, with an odd feeling of annoyance that a stranger should be trusted before him. "Well, if you waits for the doctor, I guess Larry'll have had a first-rate time with the cash."

"Oh! what can I do?" cried Mary.

"I can get it, if you say so, and bring it right here," said Teddy.

Mary's face brightened with that smile of hers which seemed to light up the depths of her eyes.

"If you do that, Teddy," she said, "I guess I'll feel like doin' anything for you in return."

So Teddy went to the hole in the rocks, which gave up the treasure at once. He rejoiced in the thought of the disappointment

which awaited his evil-disposed brother, with a joy that was scarcely Christian, as he put the money into Mary's hand. He did so with due solemnity, feeling a little awe of her good luck in having "such a pile."

Mary, who had been making up her mind as to the best course to pursue under the circumstances, received the money with joy. She drew the five-cent piece from underneath its weightier companions, and offered it to Teddy. It was a sacrifice, but Teddy had been so good to her. To Teddy, in his turn, it was an immense temptation, such as had scarcely ever assailed him before, and which not another boy upon the rocks would have resisted. But Teddy had his ideas, and one of them was that it would be mean to take advantage of a girl in this manner. So he put back the coin, with a flush upon his face, and a gesture that was final. Mary felt almost ashamed of having offered it.

"'Taint much for all you've done," she said, shamefacedly.

"I don't want none of your money," he said, almost roughly. He was afraid she might think that was why he had warned her of the danger. There was a pause, rather an awkward one, for neither knew exactly what to say. Teddy spoke first:

"Larry, he'll be dancin' a war dance, when he finds the pile gone," he said, with glee.

"But how'll he know 'twas there?" asked Mary.

"I'll tell him," said Teddy, vengefully. "And won't it make him sick when he thinks how he'd a done New York with that money."

Mary said nothing. The mention of Larry's name was painful to her on account of the injury he had actually done her, as well as of this second one which he had planned. But she was wondering why it was that he was so different from his brother. Teddy seemed to guess at her thoughts.

"Larry wouldn't take no schoolin'," he said, apologetically, "an' ma, she can't do

nothin' with him. Pa's the only one he's afraid of, and pa's most always away."

"P'r'aps he'll get better some time," said Mary, encouragingly.

Teddy shook his head. He could not imagine Larry any other than he was.

"Mebbe he will," he said, briefly

## CHAPTER IX.

### MRS. MORRISON VISITS THE ROCKS.

WHILE the children were still talking, they were startled by an apparition. A splendid carriage, with coachman and footman, had just driven up to the foot of the path leading upward to the rocks. The carriage was a very grand one in the children's eyes, accustomed, though they were, to such equipages. For it was one of the joys of their rocky domain to watch the carriages coming and going in and out of the Park, or to and fro from the Boulevard, and to note the costumes of those who drove in them.

"Great Scott!" cried Teddy. "There's a lady, a real bigbug in it, an' a gent, and they're a comin' up here."

Mary stood upright in her effort to see,

though she was obliged to put her hand to her side and clutch at the adjacent rock for support.

"It's the doctor!" said Mary, in a breathless whisper.

"Who's t'other?" asked Teddy.

"I dunno," said Mary, briefly, as she watched, with fluttering heart, the strangers beginning to ascend the rocky steep. For it was, indeed, the doctor and Mrs. Morrison, who having been compelled to defer their visit to the rocks during all the days of storm, had seized the opportunity offered by this first fine weather. They laughed once or twice as the doctor had to assist his companion up the slope, but they advanced directly, nevertheless, towards where the children stood.

"Gosh!" cried Teddy. "I'm off." And away he flew like a deer over the rocks in the direction of the Moloney homestead.

"Who's that running away from the doctor and myself?" said a softly modulated

voice. And that was Mary's first introduction to Mrs. Morrison.

Mary was too much overcome by shyness to answer the question, so the doctor replied for her:

"I suspect it's Teddy Moloney. Isn't that right, Mary?"

Mary answered, "Yes."

And Mrs. Morrison went on:

"Oh! I'm so sorry. He's one of the very people I wanted to see up here. But that will come later. Where can I sit down, doctor?"

Mary glanced towards the house, and the doctor, understanding, said:

"Wait one moment and I'll get you a chair."

"No such thing!" said Mrs. Morrison. "I want to sit upon the rocks, and see if I can look as picturesque as Mary does, with that crimson scarf about her!"

Mary did not know what "picturesque" meant, but she understood the pleasant smile

and the kindly look upon the visitor's face, and she responded with a smile which won her another heart.

"The doctor is right," she said to herself. "Her eyes and smile are singularly attractive. I wish I were an artist."

But aloud she said:

"So you are Mary Tracy, of whom I have heard so much. And is that your cottage yonder?" She did not say shanty, as Mary was quick to observe. Mary nodded assent.

"And that, I suppose, is the Moloneys'; and that very formidable animal engaged with an imaginary foe is the renowned 'Billy.'"

Mary stared. How could this great lady know all about the rocks, and the people there and the goat? She felt less at ease with her than with the doctor. Her laugh was, perhaps, a little artificial, and her manner easy, gracious, but less simple and direct than his. Mary could not have explained that, but she felt it.

"Well, well!" continued Mrs. Morrison, pleasantly, "I'm glad to have seen them all. And now, Mary Tracy, how old are you?"

Mary answered that she was thirteen.

"Only thirteen, and yet, as I hear, you have started to make a fortune."

Mary's pale face colored a little as she glanced at the doctor.

"You see, I have been telling, Mary," laughed the doctor. "And by the way, how is that great treasure getting on all these stormy days since I was here last? Shall I go and see?"

Mary opened her hand, and showed the treasure concealed there.

"Hello! What does this mean?" cried the doctor. "Is it possible you can have been climbing?"

"Teddy got it for me," she said.

"Oh! I see. A run on the bank, which is no longer safe, and a trusted agent. I thought I was the only one."

"Teddy said that Larry had found out and

wanted to get the money," said Mary, forgetting her shyness in the absorbing interest of the theme.

"Who is Larry?" asked Mrs. Morrison's clear voice.

"Oh, he's a daisy!" said the doctor. "He's the youngest Moloney, and in a fair way of reaching a great height."

"A great height?" repeated Mrs. Morrison, puzzled.

"The gallows!" said the doctor, grimly. "And, indeed, after this last escapade, I'm not sure that it isn't my duty to help him there by handing him over to the police."

Mary's face flushed and paled, as she cried out, awe-stricken:

"Oh, doctor! don't. He didn't take the money; and even if he had——"

The police had always been one of the chief terrors of Mary's life. Occasionally she had seen one of those guardians of the law appearing upon the rocks when Larry's gang were particularly uproarious, or when one of

the men in the shanties had been celebrating some particular festival. But these experiences had been particularly trying to the little girl, and she recalled them now with horror.

"Well, I won't, then," said the doctor, watching Mary's face. "I'll let him make his own way to the hangman. But we shall have to find a safe place for your money."

"Why not put it in the savings bank?" said Mrs. Morrison. "Then you can add to it, penny by penny, fivepence by fivepence, all by your own industry."

This was an alluring prospect, though Mary was thinking that she did not very often get money. Still, with the good start she had, she might be able from time to time to earn a little.

"Now that you are not able for very hard work, the doctor tells me," went on the lady, "let us see what else you can do. Can you knit?"

"Yes, ma'am," Mary answered. She had

been taught that useful art just as soon as her fingers could hold the yarn.

"Good. Then I shall send you some knitting. If you succeed, I will keep you supplied with that kind of work, and pay you what I think fair."

To Mary all this seemed like a page from a fairy tale in Teddy's book. She earning money, and having it in a real bank! Then she would no longer be a pauper. She would earn for herself, and in time contribute to the support of the house. Her lips quivered, her eyes filled with the tears that she could not keep back, and they rolled down her cheeks, almost as upon that other day when she had received the wound now being healed by Mrs. Morrison's kindly tact.

"Of course," added the lady, "you cannot earn very much at first. Later you might do sewing, if you can sew, or make rag carpet, as the women in Canada do; that will be more profitable. Do you know how to make rag carpet? No! Well, I'll show you some day."

Mary explained that she could not sew as well as she could knit; but Mrs. Morrison declared that she would have her taught, also that she meant to ask Mrs. McGowan to let her go to the Sisters' school for a portion of each day.

Mrs. McGowan, who in the meantime had been making her toilet, now appeared, and readily entered into Mrs. Morrison's plans, saying that she would be pleased at and grateful for anything that was done for Mary. She was really fond of the little girl, especially since the affair of the goat, and she consented at once to let her go to school, only bargaining for a short delay.

"When the baby's on his feet," she said, "I can let her go the whole day, ma'am; and it's glad Michael and I will be if she gets some schoolin'."

Mrs. Morrison then asked if there was any objection to Mary's coming for a drive. "And she may bring Jim with her, if she likes."

Mrs. McGowan protested he wasn't dressed fit to go in a grand carriage like that. But the lady assured her that the drive would be principally along a quiet road, and that he could go as he was.

"Mary will give him a bit of her scarf," she said.

The doctor, who had patients to see, declared that, before taking leave of them, he would put Mary safely in the carriage. He stood a moment in conversation with Mrs. Morrison, saying to her in a low tone:

"Who is like you?"

"It is *you*," she responded, "who has introduced me to this new world, and a very wonderful one it is. I have not done exploring it yet."

She said a few kindly words to Teddy Moloney, who had drawn near, promising to make his acquaintance later. As the delighted Mary drove off, with Jim chuckling and crowing in her arms, every one of the rock-dwellers who was in the vicinity came

out to see the departure. There were envious tongues to say bitter things, and to marvel at "some people's luck;" and there were kindly ones to wish them God-speed, and to be glad that "Mary Tracy, the creature, was havin' a holiday for onst."

The drive was a wonderful thing for Mary, up through the great wide Boulevard, and through country roads, where grass and trees, if somewhat faded as to their verdure, still seemed beautiful to the child, who loved the things of nature with intuitive fondness.

Jim was in high good-humor, and pawed Mary's face energetically to show his approbation. After a long, solemn stare at Mrs. Morrison, he put out a chubby hand and stroked her cheek. And Mrs. Morrison suddenly and vividly remembered days when her first-born had sat upon the nurse's knee, opposite to her in the self-same carriage. The remembrance was almost overpowering for an instant, but it augmented the kindly feeling she had begun to entertain for Mary Tracy

and her helpless little charge. She took Jim from Mary, and held him herself for a little while, and the past seemed to come back upon her with a bitter sweetness she had seldom known.

From that hour Mary and Jim had secured a fast friend, and Mary Tracy's fortune had made another stride.

## CHAPTER X.

### LARRY AND THE PEDDLER.

MARY'S new occupation of knitting was a great resource to her. It was pleasant to sit in her favorite place upon the rocks, with Jim, as usual, on the shawl, and to sort the many-colored wools which came in a great parcel from Mrs. Morrison's. Her heart was always full of sunshine now, and she heeded not at all Larry's performances.

That mischievous youth, when informed of what he had missed by Teddy, who took care to tell him of the treasure which had lain so long under his very hands, was filled with rage. It therefore became his custom to annoy Mary by every means in his power. All that he could do covertly he did, for he had no mind to bring down the heavy hand

of his father, nor the no less forcible tongue of his mother, upon him by any overt act. But he danced in and out amongst the rocks, circling that on which Mary sat; now yelling to wake Jim if he slept, now calling out opprobrious epithets, now throwing mud or pebbles at the little girl. Once when he had struck Mary a blow upon the cheek with a piece of mud, he was suddenly assailed from behind. A hand grasped him by the collar, and the earth began to reel beneath his feet, in the increasing violence of the shaking he received.

"One leetle girl you strike!" said a voice. "Mud you throw into the face of a child. A young imp are you, and a leg of Satan! Yes, I say you are one leg of Satan."

This last opprobrious epithet had been lately and somewhat imperfectly learned by the peddler. It seemed to him to convey some mysterious and awful reproach, and he liked it. The manner of his speech very nearly upset Mary's gravity, however, and

to prevent herself from laughing outright she had to bend her face over Jim.

Larry, though, was in no laughing humor. The shaking he had already received and the threats of more which he read in the peddler's eyes, effectually checked all idea of merriment.

"You let me go!" he cried, sulkily.

"Yes, let you go I shall presently. And if it were over the rock, and you shall be broken into morsels, it is what you shall have merited."

Larry, rather confused by the intricacies of the foreigner's verbs, began to howl, fearing that this awful threat might be carried out.

"Eh! you will scream so!" said the man. "You like the musics."

And he began viciously to dance Larry up and down, in and out, always increasing the distance between him and Mary, and proceeding in the direction of the offender's house, Larry kicking and struggling, and holding

back to the best of his power. The peddler finally deposited him at the door of the Moloney homestead, with a parting shake and a final epithet or two.

Larry only waited till the peddler had gone a convenient distance, to begin a series of invectives on his own account, varied by strange howls and hoots. But the man, satisfied with the vengeance he had wrought, went, unheeding, to where Mary sat, pausing an instant beside her. He was well known up on the rocks, where he was a frequent visitor, carrying his stores from shanty to shanty, and supplying the good wives with pins, needles, and other small wares. He had displayed these to Mary's delight, and had been pleased in turn by her outspoken admiration. He had gone so far once, about holiday time, as to give the child a penny ring, which she still wore upon her finger. As he stood beside Mary, rubbing his nose reflectively with his hand, he said:

"You knits much?"

"Yes," said Mary. "I knits for a lady, and she pays me."

She couldn't conceal the pride which swelled her heart as she made this announcement.

"Goot, very goot!" said the peddler, adding slowly, "if some socks there be which you will not sell, mebbe I could make sale of them for you."

Here was a new offer.

"Or I shall wool bring, you will knit, and the profit will divide itself with you and me, is it so?"

Mary declared that she would be glad, indeed, in her leisure moments, when not employed in knitting for Mrs. Morrison, to do some work for him. So with a friendly "good day!" the peddler put his pack on his back, stooping under its load, and, whistling cheerily, passed presently out of sight.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE BANK-BOOKS.

It was upon the very evening of that day that Mary received a little note from Mrs. Morrison, with a small packet. The note contained Mary's first earnings. The sum was only a few shillings, and she had done a great deal of work, but she stood at the shanty window, gazing at it as it lay in the palm of her hand. Her thoughts were literally too deep for words. They came rushing upon her like a mountain torrent.

She would get Jim a new pinny; she would buy Mrs. McGowan a Sunday bonnet, long talked of as hopeless of attainment; and Michael some tobacco, and Teddy a book. Outside of the narrow window the clothes were flapping drearily in the November wind, and a grayness preparatory to the final darkness

had settled upon the rocks. But Mary saw nothing sordid in her surroundings, and her dreams just at that moment were golden ones.

Mrs. McGowan, putting a shawl over her head, had gone forth to call in Teddy's assistance in deciphering Mrs. Morrison's note, preparatory to opening the accompanying packet. Being thus solemnly summoned to the conclave, Teddy entered and seated himself upon the somewhat rickety stool near the fire, with the air of a judge about to give judgment in an important case.

Mrs. McGowan peered over his shoulder at the mystical letters, which were a sealed book to her, while Mary stood by, resting her back against the kitchen table, her eyes fairly devouring the paper which Teddy held. The boy began to read slowly, stopping occasionally to spell a word, and presently he let his hearers know that Mrs. Morrison advised Mary, after giving a certain proportion of her earnings to Mrs. McGowan, to deposit the remainder in bank.

This was something of a blow to Mary, and dispelled her dreams of a moment before. She would like to have spent this first earnings as she pleased, but Mrs. Morrison's advice was not to be disregarded. There was great consolation, however, in the opening of the packet, which proved to be a bank-book, in which appeared the sum of one dollar, credited to Mary Tracy. Teddy read this in a sing-song and somewhat oracular manner, adding the rules of the bank, the rate of interest, and, in fact, everything readable which the book contained. It would have made the smart young bank men stare to hear the interpretation given by Teddy to some of the figures as well as to the rules.

But Mary's eyes, dilated with wonder, grew dim with tears, as they gazed and gazed upon that wonderful thing which Teddy held.

"So that's a bank-book," Mrs. McGowan said, slowly. And she added, with an unconscious pathos, "Michael and I, when we were

first married, used to be schemin' to have one, but we never did."

She sighed deeply, saying almost immediately:

"God's will be done, anyhow, and I'm glad and proud you've got it, Mary."

Into that November grayness stole something of curious intensity, the shadow of that long disappointment, the realization of a hope, and those three gathered about the fire felt something of it.

"It's a pile," said Teddy, at last, breathlessly, arising from his stool.

"It's a great thing for Mary," said Mrs. McGowan, slowly, with still the shadow upon her of what she and Michael had never been able to realize.

As Teddy stood up, something else rustled to the floor. Stooping to pick it up, it proved to be a second bank-book, also giving credit for the sum of one dollar, but this time to Jim. It contained likewise a slip of paper, by which Mrs. Morrison bound herself

to bank this sum yearly for Jim, until he was able to earn for himself. Mrs. McGowan stood still. Teddy cut a caper as his contribution to the general joy. But he was arrested in the act by Mrs. McGowan bursting into tears, in which Mary showed a tendency to join. This was out of his experience, and he looked at them both curiously.

The strain of the situation was growing intense, when the door opened, and Mrs. Moloney walked in. The great news was communicated to her, when in her excitement she sat down upon the rickety stool. This untrustworthy resting-place instantly gave way, with the result that Mrs. Moloney landed in rather undignified fashion upon the floor, whence presently began to issue groans and exclamations of:

"I'm kilt entirely! I'm afeard there's a bone broken."

Teddy clapped his hand to his mouth to conceal his somewhat unfilial laughter, which burst out in gulps as he tried to restrain it.

"I'm afeard to stir," Mrs. Moloney repeated again. "There's a bone broke, I'm sure."

"No, ma'am, no," Mrs. McGowan said, soothingly, as she encouraged her visitor to rise. But Mrs. Moloney seemed to have a preference for a recumbent position.

"Quit laughin', you vagabone," she said, catching sight of Ted's convulsed face, with his hand clasped over his mouth to keep in those outbursts of mirth, which nearly choked him at this address from his prostrate mother. Mary, who had been looking on with solemn eyes, was afraid to look at Teddy, lest she should commit the unpardonable sin of joining in his mirth.

"Get up, now, ma'am dear," said Mrs. McGowan, who began to be a little anxious at her visitor's delay in rising.

"Bad cess to it for a stool," said Mrs. Moloney, turning her wrath upon the instrument of her fall, as she reluctantly consented to make a move, with many a groan.

"I'm surprised that you'd have the likes of it in your house, and me so near the fire that the hair on my head was all but singed. I might have had the face burned off of me. And that villain laughin'!"

She broke off as she again caught sight of Teddy's face, nearly purple in his valiant efforts at self-control. "Get out of my sight this instant!" Teddy thought it prudent to obey, and went out to finish his laugh outside, where the desire for it presently left him, and he regretted his enforced banishment from the comfort of the fire and the absorbing interest of the topic under discussion.

Mrs. Moloney was meanwhile led to a more secure seat, her bones being found in a perfectly solid condition, and was further mollified by the offer of a cup of tea, rather a luxury in those parts.

"It'll do you good after the shock you had," said good-natured Mrs. McGowan.

"It will, indeed," assented Mrs. Moloney.

After which she contented herself with an allusion now and again to the narrow escape she had, and consented to give her attention to the great news of the children's fortune.

"Some folks is born with a silver spoon in their mouth," she said, solemnly, "and it's my belief Mary's one of them. Not that I grudge it to you," she said, and addressing the heiress of all this wealth. "There's not a livin' soul upon the rocks that can say anything against you."

Mary might have made the exception of the lady's younger son, but it did not occur to her. She was simply mute, stunned, as it were, by her good fortune, which was enhanced by that of Jim.

When Mrs. Moloney had at last gone, she went softly up to Mrs. McGowan, and put the half of what she had received into her hands.

"If ever you need the rest," she said, "it'll be there, where the lady puts it; and you can spend it, if you like."

Impulsive little Mary was forever making these great sacrifices. Happy for her that she met with none but disinterested people.

"I'll not touch a penny of your first earnings," said Mrs. McGowan. "When you've earned more, we'll see about it."

"Oh! please, please take it," said Mary, piteously. And perhaps Mrs. McGowan, with the delicacy of her race, saw what was in the child's mind, and took the money.

"I'm sure it'll help us well," she said, tremulously. "And here's Jim beginning with a bank-book, that his father and me were always planning out to have. The ways of God is wonderful!"

Jim gave a shriek from the darkness; for the room had grown entirely dark, lights being lit as late as possible for the sake of economy. Unconscious of his sudden elevation to the possession of a bank-book, he was merely notifying all who were concerned that his slumbers could not last forever. Mary went over to him, while Mrs. McGowan

hastened to light the lamp, which served as a beacon for Michael presently coming up the path. There was great news for him that evening, and Michael heard it with wonder, as he sat down to his supper of boiled beef.

"It's all a reward for the good act you done in taking Mary in," declared his wife.

"Mebbe so," said Michael, "though she's been a help to us every way."

"She has," said Mrs. McGowan, adding after a while, as she went and stood beside her husband's chair, "Think of Jim with a bank-book!"

Husband and wife looked into each other's faces.

"We never could manage it," said Michael, with a sigh; "but I'm heart glad Jim has it, and Mary, too."

Mary, who had stolen away and sat near Jim's crib, whispered to him:

"Ain't it wonderful? I got money, and you got money! Jim, we're rich! Do you hear?"

If he did hear, he seemed indifferent to the fact, and puckered his brows in an effort to see how Mary's chin was constructed.

"If you could only walk," she said, "we'd go to the school together."

Jim beat the air with his fists, as though protesting against fate, which kept him helpless, and presently took to the bottle as an escape from his miseries. And so that wonderful day ended at last in night.

## CHAPTER XII.

### MRS. MORRISON'S GREAT PLAN.

THE doctor was spending the evening with Mrs. Morrison just after she had despatched the little parcel, which had made so great a sensation in the McGowan shanty. Of course, the conversation turned upon this great event.

"So you have made the baby a capitalist, too," said the doctor. "Great must have been the rejoicing. I can see Mary's face when she found herself credited with a whole dollar."

They both laughed, and then Mrs. Morrison said:

"It will soon be Christmas, and I want to make that a great day upon the rocks."

The doctor caught at this idea enthusiastically.

"It would be glorious!" he said.

And his thoughts were not altogether of the rock-people. He was thinking of it in the light of a prescription for this wealthy patient of his.

"If the elder McGowans consent," went on Mrs. Morrison—"and, as they seem good-natured people, I fancy they will—we can have a Christmas-tree at their dwelling, and let all the neighboring children be present at it."

"Even Larry?" asked the doctor, with a wry face.

"Even Larry," said Mrs. Morrison. "That is an important feature in the scheme. I want to see Mary handing Larry something from the Christmas-tree."

"You are right, as usual," said the doctor. "My idea would have been to let him wander in exterior darkness."

"There must be no darkness upon the rocks that day, if I can help it," said Mrs. Morrison—"among the little folk, at least.

Not Mary and Jim alone, but for their sakes, all their neighbors shall rejoice.

"I shall send a turkey to each of the dwellings, and for the McGowan family I shall add a plum-pudding."

"Dear Lady Bountiful, you will introduce dyspepsia among them," said the doctor, laughing.

"All the cases shall be yours," cried Mrs. Morrison, "and the costs mine."

The doctor's professional eye was noting the symptoms of improvement so evident in his patient. The listlessness was disappearing from her manner, as the sadness from her face in the light of this new interest.

"Well, if you are determined to be Queen of Rockdom and appoint me Physician Extraordinary," said the doctor, "of course, I have nothing to say."

"But you will have a great deal to do in carrying out this great scheme."

"You may count on me, as far as my professional duties will permit," said the doc-

tor, assuming a pompous and ultra-professional air.

"Well, you really have got a good many patients now," said Mrs. Morrison.

"Yes, thanks to you chiefly," said the doctor; "but I have some time on my hands, which shall be yours."

"I must think out every detail of that great day, and let you know," said Mrs. Morrison. "What would you think of a drive for all the rock-juveniles as a sort of winding up?"

"It would be first class," cried the doctor, "if Larry would keep the peace."

"I think he would," said Mrs. Morrison. "Once he felt that he was not at war with society, he would act accordingly. Teddy, of course, shall have a place of honor. Indeed, I intend to make him help us in our preparations. As to the drive, I think a great wagon, put on runners, if there be snow, could contain them all. How many do you think there are?"

The doctor shook his head.

"That will be Teddy's department to get a list of them," he said.

"Well, a great wagon, or two if necessary, shall be provided, and Mary shall invite every one," said Mrs. Morrison.

"Mary has found a fairy godmother with a vengeance," cried the doctor.

"She may thank you for that," laughed Mrs. Morrison. "But now I have told you the chief details of my wonderful plan. We have just a month to carry it out."

She took a calendar from the wall and consulted it.

"Christmas will be on Saturday, just four weeks off. I mustn't lose any time."

"Count on me for anything and everything. And now I must be off. I really have a patient to see at five," said the doctor.

"It wants only twenty-five minutes of it, so be off, my busy practitioner," said Mrs. Morrison; "but come and dine with me on Sunday, till we make our final plans."

She watched the doctor as he went down the street, tall and erect, the picture of health and of vigorous manhood.

"Such as *he* was, as *he* would have been," thought the bereaved mother, with a sigh. But the rush and roar of the great metropolis soon shut the figure she was watching from her sight, and on the darkness of the November evening flashed the radiance of the electric light.

The doctor, meanwhile, was thinking once again, as he walked, of how marvellously his perception had benefited Mrs. Morrison, and that she seemed to have taken what is commonly called a new lease of life. He thought of her benefits to himself with a warm sense of gratitude. Thence his thoughts went back to that first day when he had been called in to prescribe for Mary, after she had been injured by the goat. He remembered what an impression had been made upon his mind by the incident, and by that weird place, the pile of desolate rock, where yet human beings

lived and sorrowed and rejoiced, with the same hearts and the same hopes and fears as anywhere in God's universe. He recalled the look of gratitude that had come into Mary's eyes as he had ministered to her in that squalid cabin, with poor people all around her, kind and sympathetic, indeed, but rude and unpolished; and how he had seen her afterward with the baby "Jim" by her side, and had marked her devotion to that little atom of humanity, who had made his way into the world, so to say, on the wrong side of it; for, after all, he might as well have been a millionaire's son.

"I wonder what will become of her?" he said. "The goat has provided against her having hard work to do, for the simple reason that she cannot do it. Poor little waif! What a featherweight she would be against the stream of the world!" His reflections were cut short by his arrival at the dwelling of a patient, who was very different, indeed, from gentle little Mary.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE PEDDLER HAS ANOTHER ENCOUNTER WITH LARRY.

THE days preceding that great Christmas day were full of bustle and excitement. The doctor was very often seen upon the rocks in close consultation with Mary and Teddy, and with an occasional reference to Mrs. McGowan, who, with Michael, gave them full permission to make use of their dwelling in the carrying out of the plans. More than this, the good woman was delighted at the prospect. One day, the peddler chanced to arrive, and was immediately called into the councils. Mary had told the doctor of the man's encounter with Larry, and had won the doctor's sympathy for the vender of small wares at once.

"He's the sort of chap I like," the doc-

tor had decided. And so, having opportunely appeared, he was made a party to the grand scheme. Teddy upon that particular occasion was not yet home from school. So the doctor was free to express himself about the peddler's experience with Larry.

"I want to thank you for your treatment of that fellow the other day," he said. "If he got a few more doses of the same medicine, it would go far to cure him."

The peddler laughed complacently.

"Larry is one rascal, that is true," he said. "And when he annoy that leetle girl and wake up that baby, I set him dancing to his own musics."

"I wish I had been here to see," said the doctor, viciously; for Larry was his special detestation.

"I would with pleasure repeat, if that lad he will but give me a chance," said the peddler, with a humorous look. "But I fear not."

"Has he been annoying you lately?" asked the doctor.

Mary hesitated. She did not wish to bring down the summary vengeance of her two defenders upon the culprit.

"Not so very much."

Which both men interpreting aright, they shook their heads. Then they fell to business. The peddler was invited to make one of the Christmas guests, and to give his help beforehand in the general arrangements. Like most foreigners, anything in the shape of a festivity was grateful to him. He loved the very idea of a merrymaking, and in his solitary, wandering life they were rare enough. He was quite as much pleased with the notion as either Mary or Teddy Moloney, and entered into his part with great enthusiasm, which was rendered very amusing by the number of mistakes he made in trying to express himself.

"One thing will I promise," he said. "I will keep both my eyes upon your Larry. And if he will the mischief do, then shall he dance."

"Good!" said the doctor. "You will be the special constable for Larry."

But this was not to be the only part of the peddler's duties. In fact, they had become quite onerous during the course of the interview. It was decided that he should put aside his pack for the whole day before Christmas, and see that the turkeys and other delicacies were properly distributed. He was to lend his skill, which was by no means trifling, in the erection and decoration of the Christmas tree.

The Christmas dinner was to be served at the McGowans' at an early hour; and it was suggested by Mrs. McGowan—who flitted in and out while they talked as far as her work permitted—that the peddler should eat his dinner with them.

"With all my heart!" he said. "I am one who walks alone all the days, and when comes a festival it is then I feel it in my heart."

After this dinner it was decided that Mrs.

Morrison and the doctor should join the company, and that all the invited guests should be summoned. As soon as it was dark enough the Christmas-tree was to be lighted and shown to the admiring eyes, which had never looked upon such a thing of beauty before.

"We shall all be with joy overflowing," said the peddler. "Even the pestiferous Larry shall be of joy full."

"I hope so," said the doctor, wondering how his new acquaintance had got hold of so long a word.

"But if I would play then I must to work now," said the peddler. "My pack has not much thinner grown while here I stand; so I will say good-by to you."

"Good-by," said the doctor.

But the peddler did not leave the scene as soon as he had expected, and the doctor and Mary were presently the witnesses of what the peddler called "a performance."

Larry, who was concealed, as he thought,

in a clump of rocks, began his customary salute of "Dutchy! Dutchy!" varying the entertainment with a shower of pebbles, which struck upon the peddler's pack as though it had been a drum. The peddler, who was perfectly well aware of Larry's hiding-place, waited until he was within fair reach of it. Being a man of unusual activity, he suddenly dropped his pack, wheeled around, and was beside the offender before he had recovered from his surprise.

Pulling Larry forth, he displayed him to the doctor.

"Here is one leetle lad who would your acquaintance make. Shall I bring him up that you one, two, three kicks will give him?"

"Your own toe will do as well for this time," said the doctor; "but my turn will come if he continues his pranks."

"Shall I not rather let escape the goat?" cried the peddler, by a sudden inspiration, "and then shall we see one rascal hunt."

Mary, terrified, looked up appealingly into

the doctor's face when she heard this awful threat, and the doctor reassured her by saying that the peddler was only in jest.

"Here, my goot Billy—my very goot and amiable beast!" cried the peddler. "I shall that string cut, and we shall see."

"I'll tell pa!" roared Larry.

"Will you so?" cried the peddler. "And I, too, shall tell him many things, and I shall one arrest make, for that he keeps two animals—you and this Billy—to make horrible the rocks. The doctor shall you sew—is it not so, my friend?—when Billy shall have torn you!"

Larry stole a glance into the peddler's apparently ferocious face; but he looked as though he were, indeed, in deadly earnest.

"The goat, she is one gentleman compared with you," said the peddler, urging Larry on in that animal's direction. "She only fight to preserve herself."

"He fought with Mary Tracy, and 'most killed her," whimpered Larry.

"And you would then that amiable beast be like," continued the peddler, "that you might one defenceless child attack. Oh, the goat he will with his cornes punish you!"

They were now drawing near the goat, who seemed in very good trim for the fight, if anything could be judged by the desperate passes he began to make as soon as he got sight of Larry; for the boy had so tormented him that the animal bore him an old grudge.

For a moment the doctor thought of interfering, not knowing how far the peddler might be disposed to go, and seeing how serious matters might become if the goat by any accident broke loose; but on second thought he merely waited. The peddler, still holding Larry, but at a sufficiently safe distance from his enemy, went tolerably close to the goat, and thus addressed him:

"Sharp your cornes, my goat Billy, my worthy beast! This is one wicked lad whom you shall punish."

The peddler seemed to whisper in the ani-

mal's ear. Billy stood quite still, even rubbing his head against the man. Then he suddenly made a spring in Larry's direction, as though he were carrying out the peddler's orders. This proceeding alarmed Larry more than anything else; but just as he had reached a most abject state of terror the peddler said:

"If I save you from the goat's cornes it is lest he may break them against your head, so hard is it."

And so saying, he suddenly released his hold of the boy. Larry was out of sight in the twinkling of an eye, while the peddler called after him:

"Run, my lad, or the beast shall overtake him! Your legs are good, but Billy he has four and shall beat your two."

The peddler joined the doctor in a hearty laugh, and, nodding in a friendly way to Mary, went tranquilly on his way, for neither sight nor sound of Larry disturbed him after that. The boy was beginning to have a real

fear of this terrible peddler man, who could climb rocks as fast as he could himself, and who seemed to enjoy a species of intimacy with the goat.

"I guess he's sold hisself to the devil," said Larry to one of his chums.

But after that he offended the peddler no more, nor did he play any pranks upon Mary when the peddler was likely to be anywhere in the neighborhood.

Mary drew a deep sigh of relief as the doctor and she were left alone, the doctor smiling at her and beginning to talk to the little girl in a quiet and serious way. He liked to hear her views of life, so quaint, so solemn almost, so limited by her narrow surroundings, and yet so wonderfully acute. What would she be, he wondered, when she had known joy and sorrow—when she had seen, if she ever did see, the wider side of life, and had left behind her, if that, too, might be, the rocks, with their squalid and yet picturesque surroundings? For, after all, there

was an individuality in very bleakness and isolation.

This girl, he thought, might be less striking under other circumstances, less different from other people. If that patched frock of two or three colors, brightened on special occasions by the celebrated crimson scarf, were exchanged for more conventional attire—if those scant wisps of hair were cared for and arranged in orderly fashion, much of the weird, elfin look of the face they surrounded would be lost. But those strange eyes must remain under whatever circumstances. Their depths, their softness, and the singular charm they exercised must remain untouched.

"If we could only read the future!" said the doctor, as if thinking aloud.

"Mebbe it's better not, sir," said the little girl, earnestly, with her premature wisdom. "I guess God would ha' told us if He wanted us to know."

"That's right, Mary," he said; but, as

his eyes wandered away from her to where the trees skirting the Park were shivering at the loss of their leaves, he added:

"Now, I'd like to know, for example, what Jim will become, and if, when he grows up, you will be still near him like a guardian spirit."

"I'd hate Jim to be a man," Mary said, with so much energy that the doctor smiled. Perhaps she was thinking of some of the men whom she had seen about the rocks.

"Still he can't always stay a baby," said the doctor, "unless you can get the fairies to bewitch him."

Mary smiled. None of the rock-children believed in fairies. They had known too much of the stern realities of life to have faith left for those gracious personalities who serve to brighten life for wealthier children.

"He won't be a man for a good while," Mary said, with a sudden clear show of her face. Troubles a long way off rarely afflict children much.

"So you don't want to see Jim turned into a real biped, wearing a tall hat, and standing on his own legs?"

"He can stand now," said Mary, with some pride.

"With you to hold him up," said the doctor; "but I mean when he can really stand on his own legs and glory in the ugliness of masculine attire."

Mary couldn't follow all this, but she remarked:

"I knit him a jacket. Mrs. Morrison gave me the wool."

"Well, so long as you're happy seeing him arrayed in worsted jackets and long petticoats, so am I, of course," declared the doctor; "but I should prefer a coat and trousers myself."

"I wish it were Christmas," said Mary, suddenly changing the subject.

"Yes, that will be a glorious day for us all," said the doctor; "but wishing won't make old December take off a single day."

## CHAPTER XIV.

### CHRISTMAS ON THE ROCKS.

THE Christmas Day dawned clear and fair, a result for which Mary, at least, had been ardently praying. It was crisp and cold, and the snow, which had been long heralded by leaden skies and biting winds, was lying, soft and white and comfortable, like wool, upon the ground. Every one of the rock juveniles felt more or less elated, having learned something of the intended festivities, though not all their nature or extent.

As the day wore on savory smells, long unknown to that region, began to emerge from the several cabins. The odor of turkey and goose, with their various "dressings," began to be very perceptible. Hungry lads peered in every once in a while to find out

how the wonderful fowl in the oven was doing. One or two of the rock housewives, who in former days had been cooks in gentlemen's families, revived their half-forgotten lore, and gave their services and advice to less fortunate ones in the all-important cooking of the poultry. This lent a pleasant bustle and excitement to the place, and every habitation upon the rocks shared in this air of festal preparation. Even the most sulky and ill-humored of their inmates succumbed to the general good feeling, and looked forward to the mid-day banquet.

Of course, at the McGowans' the excitement was threefold. Much mystery had to be observed that neither Mary herself nor the other rock-children should see too soon the glories of the Christmas tree. Mary was very careful herself in this respect, walking backward or with eyes shut past the spot which was but scantily protected by a somewhat tattered sheet hung in front of it. But she liked this delightful air

of mystery. It was a novelty in itself, and she had long talks with Jim about "the pooty, pooty things" behind the sheet, and about "little Jesus" and the crib, the angels and the shepherds, and Santa Claus, and, in fact, all the Christmas lore she had been able to get together.

Meanwhile, the peddler and Teddy Moloney came, and with an air of importance. Once during the forenoon the doctor dropped in for a few moments, disappeared behind the sheet, which seemed to swallow up every one, and hurried away again. Mrs. McGowan took a peep in every once in a while, her face happy and smiling as she bustled around the stove. Every time she opened the oven the delicious odor, which was that day all-pervading, came forth intensified, and there was a large saucepan on the fire, in which the plum pudding, which had arrived already boiled, was being heated.

It was a proud moment when she summoned the peddler and Michael to the sump-

tuous repast, which changed the cabin into a palace. Teddy, of course, had to go home, where his own dinner was ready, but Mrs. McGowan had bade him be sure to hasten back in time for a bit of the plum pudding.

Such a meal as it was! The peddler, becoming retrospective under the influence of the good cheer, told many quaint stories, some of which were specially for Mary's ear, about his foreign home or his many wanderings. He even sang various little Christmas songs, which went out through the broken pane in the window, and were carried away over the rocks into the other cabins. The burden of one of these was:

"God gave us Christmas,
That it burn
Sorrow and care and gloom
In its urn.

"God gave Christmas,
That it fall
Joyous and bright,
Merry Christmas to all!"

Michael was also at his best, and his rich Irish humor kept the little company laughing, while Mrs. McGowan's spirits were fairly overflowing. Mary's happiness was always more quiet, but could be read in every line of her face and in the smile that shone away down in the depths of her eyes. The doctor's health was drunk in ginger-pop—for Michael McGowan was a total abstinence man—and, of course, Mrs. Morrison's.

"And God bless them both! Amen!"

The "Amen" was said rather solemnly by all these three grown people, who had seen life so differently, but all in its rougher aspects, and by Mary, who repeated it over and over within herself:

"God bless them both!"

"If all the rich were thus," said the peddler, "no anarchists should there be."

"Faith, you're right!" said Michael. "Though it's myself doesn't know much about any of that kidney, and cares less."

"In my country much is heard," said the

peddler, looking grave. "But it is the idle ones, the bad ones, who shall not be satisfied. It is the bad poor and the bad rich ones who together the trouble make."

"Well, God save us from meddlin' with the likes o' them," said Mrs. McGowan.

"I would that my countrymen would so pray," said the peddler; "but what talk do we make on Christmas Day, and with one leetle girl staring at us, as if her eyes would jump out on the table!"

So the talk turned to brighter themes, and, just as the plum pudding was brought flaming to the table, Teddy's face appeared at the door.

"Come in, Teddy," cried Michael, "and welcome!"

"Here's a place for you," said Mrs. McGowan. And Teddy took his seat, his eyes fixed upon that wonderful pudding, of which he had read indeed but had never tasted.

"The turkey was bully!" whispered Teddy to Mary.

Mary nodded.

"So was ours," she said.

But the pudding clapped the climax. He could scarcely find words to express his appreciation of it, and, truth to tell, it was heartily enjoyed even by the "grown-ups."

Dinner being over, the real business of the day began. Mrs. Morrison and the doctor drove up to the foot of the rocky path in a handsome Russian sleigh, and were greeted by an enthusiastic crowd, who had come forth at the jingling of the sleigh-bells. They passed into the McGowan shanty, and immediately entered into consultation with Mrs. McGowan, Teddy and the peddler. Teddy was presently despatched with invitations, in Mary's name, to every boy and girl upon the rocks. Fortunately, they were not too many, the older ones in each family having drifted away to other scenes and other occupations. They were bidden to assemble at four o'clock precisely, when the early darkness of the winter afternoon would have

set in. Mrs. Morrison had brought up half a dozen lamps to supplement the one or two of the McGowan household. But only one was lit, in order to make the brilliancy of the Christmas tree fully apparent.

Every available chair was brought forth. They were few, and many of them in a sad condition, so that Mrs. McGowan could not help flushing a little with mortification. But the doctor and the peddler between them had contrived to borrow a number of stools, which took up very little room and accommodated the children. Their elders, who had followed the children over, could not fit in, for, though the McGowan shanty was the largest upon the rocks, its available space was very limited. As it was, all sorts of liberties had to be taken with the furniture to enable the children to squeeze in. So that, when they had all assembled and sat rather awe-stricken and quiet, there was a second assembly pressed around the window, one or other occasionally peering in at the

window. And there was a pleasant buzz of conversation, a murmur of laughter and jest kept up out there on the snowy ground, in the clear, sparkling air, lit by moon and stars alike.

In the front row sat Mary, with Jim. Mary's eyes were fairly shining with expectation. She wore a new dress, which was an anticipatory gift of Mrs. Morrison, with her beloved crimson scarf thrown over her shoulders. She saw the familiar figures of the boys and girls she had known from childhood come gliding in to the dimness. Last of all was Larry. He stole in, with a look of mingled fear and defiance upon his face. He was not sure that he would not be ignominiously expelled. But it was worth the chance, and Teddy had certainly said that he was invited. Mary had worked herself up into a state of excitement, and whispered words of wonder and expectancy from the other children began to break the stillness.

To Mary the scene was a wonderful one.

The shanty, full of that air of suppressed excitement, had lost its familiar aspect and was transformed. Everything was changed; the furniture moved out of its place; a bright-colored picture or two put up, with streamers of red, white and blue, festoons of Christmas greens, wreaths of holly and colored flags, the Stars and Stripes, varied by the green and gold of Erin. Even the boys and girls, who sat in rows with staring eyes and open mouths, oppressed by the darkness and strangeness of it all, seemed to Mary to grow likewise unfamiliar. And so they sat and waited, till the doctor, stepping out, gave a signal.

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE CHRISTMAS-TREE.

At the doctor's signal Mrs. Morrison came forth and took her place on a cushioned chair that had been prepared for her. Mrs. McGowan and Michael, with Mary and Jim, sat next, and after that the rows of children.

Presently there were a rustling and a jerking, a dazzle and a brilliancy. The curtain had rolled away, and showed a myriad lights, green, yellow, blue, white, pink, red, candles innumerable shining from dark branches, balls and lumps of shining stuffs, yards and yards of gold and silver and copper tinsel wound in and out and everywhere, the whole surmounted by a luminous star.

Teddy, stepping out, attired in a wonderful costume he had worn at a school-play,

and which his teacher had lent him again for this occasion, recited a pretty piece, in which was told the story of the Star of Bethlehem and of the first Christmas night—that night of nights, when faith was rekindled and hope rewarded, and the world was born anew with the coming of a Saviour. The full force of that great truth came into the minds of those children at that moment, and sank deepest of all into little Mary's soul.

The peddler followed Teddy's recitation with a song, which he rendered with some taste in a not unmusical voice. And the song, too, sang of the joys of Christmas, and of the message which it yearly gives to the world.

Meantime, the children had leisure to examine the details of that wonderful whole: to see the gilded nuts elbowing the many-colored baskets, and the gingerbread men looking as if they desired to leap up on the apples, and monkeys that swung themselves in swings and seemed to jibber at bright-

hued cockatoos, while angels and fairies looked out from the branches and smiled at the toys, the candies and the books.

But why describe a Christmas-tree? Who that shall read this story has not seen one? The peddler had exhausted his ingenuity, and lent to this particular tree a quaint and foreign aspect. Mrs. Morrison had spared no expense, the doctor had spent time and trouble, and Teddy had worked hard for it. Still, to many of our readers it would be but a Christmas-tree. To the rock-children it was a dream, an enchantment. Some of them had heard of such a thing vaguely, but none—none had ever seen one. Jim crowed aloud in a mild exuberance of spirits, as though he wanted it to be distinctly understood that he saw and appreciated all. Mary was simply bewildered. Her nature, which was truly an artistic one despite its imperfect development, was moved to its depth, and she was aroused only when the doctor laid his hand upon her shoulder, and his

kindly voice bade her come and distribute the good things.

Mary's quaint figure stood there beside the tree, when the doctor announced that each boy or girl must come forward when his or her name was called, for Mary Tracy was about to give them each a Christmas gift.

Quite early on the list came Larry Moloney, and it was an impressive moment when his name was called. The doctor, indeed, drew aside at first to avoid any greeting to Larry, for whom he had an unconquerable aversion. Larry, on the other hand, drew back with a quick movement, almost of fear, at sight of the peddler. The peddler, however, stepped briskly forward, holding out his hand.

"Come on, you Larry Moloney," he cried out. "To-day it is to all peace. I will your hand shake."

Larry did not seem very anxious for the honor. He had too recent a memory of the

peddler's power of shaking. Still, he had no recourse but to comply, and awkwardly thrust his hand into the outstretched one of his late antagonist. The peddler's hand closed over it in a friendly grip, and next moment Larry was receiving his share of the good things off the tree from the hand of the little girl he had so long persecuted. He cast one sheepish glance at Mary, who smiled at him, her shining eyes seeming to reflect the lights from the tree, and to glow as they did; then he hung his head and looked no more. All this was a new experience to Larry. Scarcely ever had he joined in any social event whatever. Seldom was he addressed by any one in a friendly manner. He was usually being reproached, found fault with, or, at best, avoided. And all, it must be confessed, through his own fault. Something in the boy's manner and appearance touched the doctor, and he, too, came forward with a friendly greeting, slapping Larry familiarly on the shoulder. The Mc-

Gowans, too, had something pleasant to say. For the first time Larry found himself a member of society. Hitherto he had been, as it were, an outcast, the plague and terror of the rocks. He gathered into his arms all the fine things that had been given him, and went back to his place, sorting them over wonderingly in a mechanical sort of way. But the friendly words which had been spoken to him, and the welcome he had received affected him still more deeply. They seemed to lodge somewhere and to warm and cheer him. To the other children, all this was simply a splendid merry-making, full of details which bordered on the marvellous, and all of them were radiant and shining with the joy and wonder of it. To Larry it was an epoch in his life. Teddy Moloney was foremost everywhere. His services had been most valuable, and he was on quite intimate terms with the peddler, the doctor, and even the great lady herself, while he was the chief friend of Mary, the heroine of the occasion.

Larry was accustomed to see his brother made so much of, and to have the contrast sharply drawn between them. So he did not mind that in the least. What did seem odd was to find himself on an equality with the others, to hear his name called, and to find himself consulted in the games which followed the Christmas-tree, and the supper which followed that again, served to them all standing up or sitting on their stools, as there was no room for a table.

After that it was time for the drive. The jingling of bells was heard, the cracking of a whip, the pawing and neighing of horses, and the sudden stopping of the great wagon upon runners, drawn by four horses. Out into the clear starshine trooped the children, wrapping up as best they might to protect themselves against the cold December air, which soon had their cheeks glowing. Larry was invited to choose his own place in this gorgeous vehicle. He had never had a "ride" before, except when he had stolen one on a

cart or carriage, to be flicked off like a troublesome fly by the whip of the driver. Only the strangeness of everything which kept his spirits in check, prevented him from yelling with delight.

"Ain't it all lovely, Larry?" said a voice beside him, as he stood waiting for his turn to enter the wagon. He turned and saw Mary Tracy beside him, her eyes still full of that glow and her lips smiling. He turned away in confusion, growing very red, and blurting out:

"Oh, yes; I guess so."

He told himself that he never could talk to girls. In fact, as he had no sisters he never did talk to any, except to call them names. But he knew in his heart that there were far stronger reasons for the confusion he felt when Mary addressed him than because of her being a girl.

It was a strange moment there, under the starshine, such as does not often come into a boy's life. Larry, still oppressed by the

novelty of his sensations, found this friendliness of Mary's so disturbing that he had not a word to say. Yet there was something working in his mind which would find its way out:

"Look here!" said he gruffly to Mary, who still stood smiling at his side. "I've got to tell you; so here goes. 'Twas me let loose the goat that day."

It was a moral upheaval—such a confession as could never have been forced from the boy by the harshest of treatment. The kindness of that day and Mary's friendliness had overpowered him, and he felt that he must tell this secret, which had lain so heavily upon his mind. It was one of the contradictions of human nature that all the time it had been tormenting him he had not ceased to persecute Mary. The little girl said nothing for a moment. Larry went on.

"I did it a purpose. 'Twa'n't no accident."

Mary said then, very quietly:

"I guess 'tain't much matter. I can get along."

Larry had no more to say, now that his story was told. Speech did not come very readily to him at any time, and Mary's pretty tranquillity, instead of the outburst of reproach he had expected, left him dumb. What could he say when she merely accepted the fact, and did not upbraid him for it? But, as they stood in a silence which was impressive in the merry bustle all around, Mary added softly:

"So long's nothin' happened to Jim!"

Larry felt a shiver go through him. If something had happened to Jim!

"I didn't know the kid was out," he said, with a lame attempt at an apology, "an' I thought you could run for it."

Mary thought sadly, for just one moment, how fast she could run in those days, but she said no word of this to Larry. Only in her quaint little way, which was oddly impressive, she whispered:

"I'm glad you didn't know Jim was out. It would have been real mean if you had."

Larry felt a queer sensation in his throat at that, and he began to shuffle away. The interview was something altogether out of his ordinary line. He did not know himself, but it was the first step towards making a man of himself. One thing, at least, might be predicted, that he would let Mary alone after that.

"I guess we'd better get into the wagon," he said, awkwardly. And it was he who helped Mary in, awkwardly enough, but still with rough willingness. Mary could scarcely believe it herself, nor Teddy, for that matter, who looked on, with eyes round with wonder. The doctor, for his own reasons, kept in the background.

When all the children were seated, the peddler, Mr. and Mrs. McGowan, and the elder Moloneys were crowded in, and with cheers and yells the whole party drove away. The groups left behind answered the shouts

from the wagon with shouts and yells of their own, and waving of hats, and the ends of shawls, and jests and laughter. It was an occasion long remembered upon the rocks.

Mrs. Morrison and the doctor stood apart, the latter waving his hat until the wagon was out of sight.

"See what you have done," said the doctor. "You have converted this place for the time into Arcadia, and have cheered the hearts of every man, woman, and child in it."

"I hope so," said Mrs. Morrison, with tears in her own eyes.

"The dullest eyes you have brightened, and the heaviest hearts you have lightened," said the doctor.

"All for the sake of those that are gone," said Mrs. Morrison. "I have tried to bring some joy to this little colony."

"You have half converted Larry," said the doctor, "though I won't be surprised to

hear that he is more outrageous than ever to-morrow. But perhaps a seed has been sown that will ripen. I saw him stand and talk to Mary a moment, and I confess that I drew near to listen."

Mrs. Morrison's eyes were upon him, full of inquiry.

"Well?" said she.

"He confessed to her that it was he who had set loose the goat that memorable day, and he attempted an apology. He said he did not know Jim was out, and that he thought she could run for it. Mary, of course, will never say a word; but I couldn't believe Larry was so human if I had not myself heard him."

"I think you are too severe on the boy," said Mrs. Morrison, touched by what she had heard. "Perhaps every one has been."

"I wouldn't have thought till this evening that any one could be half severe enough with him. But I see now your methods are the best. Had he been left out of this day's

sport, he would have been an outcast for life."

They were both silent, standing almost where the two children stood, with this problem in their minds.

"I think Mary enjoyed the day," said Mrs. Morrison, presently.

"She told me she was too happy," said the doctor, laughing. "I told her in return that it was a complaint she was very likely to get over as she grew older."

"I wonder what will become of her," said Mrs. Morrison.

"I have often wondered," said the doctor. "There is something so unusual about her, that one can never guess."

"Shall we forecast a future?" said Mrs. Morrison. "Shall we marry her to Teddy Moloney, when we have given him a good start, and when he is at the head of a snug business? Or shall we reform Larry thoroughly, make him rise to something very good, and reward him with Mary?"

The doctor looked grave a moment.

"The reform will have to be very complete, and little Mary will have to grow very much in strength. I should like to imagine her always a child, always here upon the rocks, with her crimson scarf to light up their dulness."

"You want to give her the best gift of all—perpetual youth!" said Mrs. Morrison. "Oh, what a dream it is, and how we all sigh for it! But do not wish her to stay here always."

She glanced involuntarily around, as if the bleakness of the place in the cold moonlight struck her, and spoke again, in a voice solemn almost as though registering a vow.

"While I live she shall never want, nor after I am gone, either. I shall not make her rich suddenly, but I shall put her constantly in the way of earning. She shall make her own way step by step, for that is best. But if she fails, then she will have me to look to."

The doctor, for only answer, took off his hat, and, bending over, kissed Mrs. Morrison's hand:

"God only can reward you," he said, full of emotion.

"But here we are standing all this time in the cold, while dinner is waiting at home. Yes, there is the sleigh. So tear yourself from your dream-pictures, and during dinner we can talk of Mary and Jim, and what we wish them to be."

"And of how Mary's fortune was made," laughed the doctor.

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