

dozen of the other, which left matters exactly where they were before. Those who chose to believe in the calumny continued to do so, and *vice versa*, the only difference being that Evadne's generous action in the matter brought blame upon herself from one set, and also—what was worse—brought her into a kind of vogue with another which would have caused her to rage had she understood it. For the story that she had "said things which no woman could repeat," added to the fact that she was seen everywhere with a lady whose reputation had been attacked, made men of a certain class feel a sudden interest in her. "Birds of a feather," they maintained; then spoke of her slightly in public places, and sent her bouquets innumerable.

Her next decided action, however, put an effectual stop to this nuisance.

CHAPTER IX

COLONEL COLQUHOUN came to Evadne one day, and asked her if she would not go out.

She put down her work, rose at once, smiling, and declared that she should be delighted.

There had been a big regimental guest night the day before, and Colonel Colquhoun had dined at mess, and was consequently irritable. Acquiescence is as provoking as opposition to a man in that mood, and he chose to take offence at Evadne's evident anxiety to please him.

"She makes quite a business of being agreeable to me," he reflected, while he was waiting for her to put her hat on. "She requires me to be on my good behaviour as if I were a schoolboy out for a half-holiday, and thinks it her duty to entertain me by way of reward, I suppose."

And thereupon he set himself determinedly against being entertained, and accordingly, when Evadne rejoined him and made some cheerful remark, he responded to it with a sullen grunt which did small credit to his manners either as a man or a gentleman, and naturally checked the endeavour for the moment so far as she was concerned.

As he did not seem inclined to converse, she showed her respect for his mood by being silent herself. But this was too much for him. He stood it as long as he could, and then he burst out, "Do you never talk?"

"I don't know!" she said, surprised. "Do you like talkative women?"

"I like a woman to have something to say for herself."

While Evadne was trying in her slow way to see precisely what he meant by this little outbreak, they met one of the officers of the regiment escorting a very showy young woman, and as everybody in Malta knows everybody else in society, and this was a stranger, Evadne asked—more, however, to oblige Colonel Colquhoun by making a remark than because she felt the slightest curiosity on the subject, "Who is that with Mr. Finchley? A new arrival, I suppose?"

"Oh, only a girl he brought out from England with him," Colonel Colquhoun answered coarsely, staring hard at the girl as he spoke, and forgetting himself for once in his extreme irritability. "He ought not to bring her here, though," he added carelessly.

Mr. Finchley had passed them, hanging his head, and pretending not to see them. Evadne flushed crimson.

"Do you mean that he brought out a girl he is

not married to, and is living with her here?" she asked.

"That is the position exactly," Colonel Colquhoun rejoined, "and I'll see him in the orderly room to-morrow and interview him on the subject. He has no business to parade her publicly where the other fellows' wives may meet her; and I'll not have it."

Evadne said no more. But there was a ball that evening, and during an interval between the dances, when she was standing beside Colonel Colquhoun and several ladies in a prominent position and much observed, for it was just at the time when she was at the height of her unenviable vogue—Mr. Finchley came up and asked her to dance.

She had drawn herself up proudly as he approached, and having looked at him deliberately, she turned her back upon him.

There was no mistaking her intention; Colonel Colquhoun's hand paused on its way to twirl his blond moustache, and there was a perceptible sensation in the room.

Captain Beliot shook his head with the air of a man who has been deceived in an honest endeavour to make the best of a bad lot, and is disheartened.

"She took me in completely," he said. "I should never have guessed she was that kind of woman. What is society coming to?"

"She must be deuced nasty-minded herself, you know, or she wouldn't have known Finchley had a woman out with him," said Major Livingston, whom Mrs. Guthrie Brimston called "Lady Betty," because of his nice precise little ways with ladies.

"Oh, trust a prude!" said Captain Brown. "They spy out all the beastliness that's going."

Colonel Colquhoun did not take this last proof of Evadne's peculiar views at all well. He was becoming even more sensitive as he grew older to what fellows say or think, and he was therefore considerably annoyed by her conduct, so much so, indeed, that he actually spoke to her upon the subject himself.

"People will say that I have married Mrs. Grundy," he grumbled.

"I suppose so," she answered tranquilly. "You see I do not feel at all about these things as you do. I wish you *could* feel as I do, but seeing that you cannot it is fortunate, is it not, that we are not really married?"

"It sounds as if you were congratulating yourself upon the fact of our position," he said.

"But don't *you* congratulate yourself?" she answered, in surprise. "Surely you have had as narrow an escape as I had? You would have been miserable too."

He made no answer. It is perhaps easier to resign an inferior husband than a superior wife.

But he let the subject drop then for the moment; only for the moment, however, for later in the day he had a conversation with Mrs. Guthrie Brimston.

That little business about the Clarences had not interrupted the intimacy between Colonel Colquhoun and the Guthrie Brimstons. How could it? Mrs. Guthrie Brimston was as amusing as ever, and Colonel Colquhoun remained in command of a crack regiment, and was a handsome man, well set-up and soldier-like into the bargain. It was Evadne who had caused all the annoyance, and consequently there was really no excuse for a rupture—especially as Evadne met the Guthrie Brimstons herself with as much complacency as ever. Colonel Colquhoun had gone to Mrs.

Guthrie Brimston's that afternoon for the purpose of discussing the advisability of getting some experienced woman of the world to speak to Evadne with a view to putting a stop to her nonsense, and the consultation ended with an offer from Mrs. Guthrie Brimston to undertake the task herself. Her interference, however, produced not the slightest effect on Evadne.

CHAPTER X

THOSE who can contemplate certain phases of life and still believe that there is a Divine Providence ordering all things for the best, will see its action in the combination of circumstances which placed Evadne in the midst of a community where she must meet the spirit of evil face to face continually, and, since acquiescence was impossible, forced her to develop her own strength by steady and determined resistance. But her position was more than difficult; it was desperate. There was scarcely one, even amongst the most indulgent of her friends, who did not misunderstand her and blame her at times. She kept the pendulum of public opinion swaying vehemently during the whole of her first season in Malta. Major Livingston shook his head about her from the first.

"I can't get on with her," he said, as if the fact were not at all to her credit. He was a survival himself, one of the old-fashioned kind of military men who were all formed on the same plan; they got their uniform, their politics, their vices, and their code of honour cut and dried, upon entering the service, and occasionally left the latter with their agents to be taken care of for them while they served.

Evadne gave offence to representatives of the next generation also. Seeing that she was young and attractive, it was clearly her duty to think only of meriting their attention, and when she was discovered time after time during a ball hanging quite affectionately on the arm of Mr. Austin B. Price, "a dried-up old American," and pacing the balcony to and fro with him in the moonlight by the hour together when there were plenty of young fellows who wanted to dance with her; and when, worse still, it was observed that she was serenely happy on these occasions, listening to Mr. Austin B. Price with a smile on her lips, or even and actually talking herself, why, they declared she wasn't womanly—she couldn't be!

Mr. St. John was one of the friends who very much deprecated Evadne's attitude at this time. He did not speak to her himself, being diffident and delicate, but he went to Mr. Price, who was, he knew, quite in her confidence.

"You have influence with her; *do* restrain her," he said. "No good is done by making herself the subject of common gossip."

"My dear fellow," Mr. Price replied, "she is quite irresponsible. Certain powers of perception have developed in her to a point beyond that which has been reached by the people about her, and she is forced to act up to what she perceives to be right. They blame her because they cannot see so far in advance of themselves, and she has small patience with them for not at once recognising the use and propriety of what comes so easily and naturally to her. So far, it is easy enough to understand her, surely? But further than that it is impossible to go, because she is as yet an incomplete creature in a state of progression. With fair play, she should continue on, but, on

the other hand, her development may be entirely arrested. It is curious that priesthoods, while preaching perfection, invariably do their best to stop progress. You will never believe that any change is for the better until it is accomplished, and there is no denying it, and so you hinder for ever when you should be the first to help and encourage; and you are bringing yourselves into disrepute by it. Just try and realise the difference between the position and powers of judgment of women now and that which obtained among them at the beginning of the century! And think, too, of the hard battles they have had to fight for every inch of the way they have made, and of the desperate resolution with which they have stood their ground, always advancing, never receding, and with supernumeraries ready, whenever one falls out exhausted, to step in and take her place, however dangerous it may be. Oh, I tell you, man, women are grand!—grand!"

"But I don't see how we have imposed upon women," Mr. St. John objected.

"I can show you in a minute," Mr. Price rejoined, twitching his face. "It was the submission business, you know, to begin with. Not so many years ago we men had only to insist that a thing was either right or necessary, and women believed it, and meekly acquiesced in it. We told them they were fools to us, and they believed it; and we told them they were angels of light and purity and goodness, whose mission it was to marry and reform us, and above all pity and sympathise with us when we defiled ourselves, because we couldn't help it, and they believed it. We told them they didn't really care for moral probity in man, and they believed it. We told them they had no brains, that they were illogical, unreasoning, and incapable of thought in the true sense of the word, and, by Jove! they took all that for granted, such was their beautiful confidence in us, and never even *tried* to think—until one day, when, quite by accident, I feel sure, one of them found herself arriving at logical conclusions involuntarily. Her brain was a rich soil, although untilled, which began to teem of its own accord; and that, my dear fellow, was the beginning of the end of the old state of things. But I believe myself that all this unrest and rebellion against the old-established abuses amongst women is simply an effort of nature to improve the race. The men of the present day will have a bad time if they resist the onward impulse; but, in any case, the men of the future will have good reason to arise and call their mothers blessed. Good-day to you. Don't interfere with Evadne, and don't think. Just watch—and—and pray if you like!" The old gentleman smiled and twitched his face when he had spoken, and they shook hands and parted in complete disagreement, as was usually the case.

CHAPTER XI

WHEN any difference of opinion arose between Evadne and Colonel Colquhoun they discussed it tranquilly as a rule, and with much forbearance upon either side, and having done so, the subject was allowed to drop. They each generally remained of the same opinion still, but neither would interfere with the other afterward. Had he had anything in him, could he have made her feel him to be superior in any way, she must have grown to love him with passion once more; but as it was, he remained only an erring fellow-

creature in her estimation, for whom she grew gradually to feel both pity and affection, it is true, but toward whom her attitude generally speaking was that of most polite indifference.

She had her moments of rage, however. There were whole days when her patient tolerance of the position gave way, and one wild longing to be free pursued her; but she made no sign on such occasions, only sat

With lips severely placid, felt the knot
Climb in her throat, and with her foot unseen,
Crushed the wild passion out against the floor,
Beneath the banquet, where the meats become
As wormwood—

and uttered not a word. Yet there was nothing in Colonel Colquhoun's manner, nothing in his treatment of her, in the least objectionable; what she suffered from was simply contact with an inferior moral body, and the intellectual starvation inevitable in constant association with a mind too shallow to contain any sort of mental sustenance for the sharing.

The pleasing fact that he and Evadne were getting on very well together dawned on him quite suddenly one day; but it was she who perceived that the absence of friction was entirely due to the restriction which polite society imposes upon the manners of a gentleman and lady in ordinary everyday intercourse when their bond is not the bond of man and wife.

"I should say we are very good friends, Evadne, shouldn't you?" he remarked, in a cheerful tone.

"Yes," she responded cordially.

They were both in evening dress when this occurred—she sitting beside a table with one bare arm resting upon it, toying with the tassel of her fan; he standing with his back to the fireplace, looking down upon her. It was after dinner, and they were lingering over their coffee until it should be time to stroll in for an hour or so to the opera.

"By the way," he said, after a pause, "have you read any of those books I got for you—any of the French ones?"

Her face set somewhat, but she looked up at him, and answered without hesitation, "Yes. I have read the *Nana*, *La Terre*, *Madame Bovary*, and *Sapho*."

She stopped there, and he then waited in vain for her to express an opinion.

"Well," he said at last, "what has struck you most in them?"

"The suffering, George," she exclaimed—"the awful, needless suffering!"

It was a veritable cry of anguish, and as she spoke, she threw her arms forward upon the table beside which she was sitting, laid her face down on them, and burst into passionate sobs.

Colonel Colquhoun bit his lip. He had not meant to hurt the girl—in that way, at all events. He took a step toward her, hesitated, not knowing quite what to do, and finally left the room.

When next Evadne went to her bookshelves she discovered a great gap. The whole of those dangerous works of fiction had disappeared.

CHAPTER XII

COLONEL COLQUHOUN had gradually fallen into the habit of riding out or walking alone with Mrs. Guthrie Brimston continually, and of course people began to make much of the intimacy, and to talk of the way he neglected his poor young wife; but

the only part of the arrangement which was not agreeable to the latter was having to entertain Major Guthrie Brimston sometimes during his lady's absence, and the lady herself when she stayed to tea. For there was really no harm in the flirtation, as Evadne was acute enough to perceive. Mrs. Guthrie Brimston was one of those women who pride themselves upon having a train of admirers, and are not above robbing other women of the companionship of their husbands in order to swell their own following; while many men rather affect the society of these ladies because "They are not a bit stiff, you know," and allow a certain laxity of language which is particularly piquant to the masculine mind when the complacent lady is no relation and is really "all right herself, you know."

Mrs. Guthrie Brimston was "really quite right, you know." She and her husband understood each other perfectly, while Evadne, on her part, was content to know that Colonel Colquhoun was so innocently occupied. For she was beginning to think of him as a kind of big child, of weak moral purpose, for whose good behaviour she would be held responsible, and it was a relief when Mrs. Guthrie Brimston took him off her hands.

No healthy-minded human being likes to dwell on the misery which another is suffering or has suffered, and it is, therefore, a comfort to know that, upon the whole, at this period of her life, Evadne was not at all unhappy. She had her friends, her pleasures, and her occupations; the latter being multifarious. The climate of Malta, at that time of the year, suited her to perfection, and the picturesque place, with its romantic history and strange traditions, was in itself an unfailing source of interest and delight to her.

Dear old Mrs. Beale had kept her heart from hardening into bitterness just by loving her, and giving her a good motherly hug now and then. When Evadne was inclined to rail she would say, "Pity the wicked people, my dear, pity them. Pity does more good in the world than blame, however well deserved. You may soften a sinner by pitying him, but never by hard words; and once you melt into the mood of pity yourself, you will be able to endure things which would otherwise drive you mad."

Mrs. Malcomson helped her too. During that first burst of unpopularity which she brought upon herself by daring to act upon her own perception of right and wrong in defiance of the old-established injustices of society, when even the most kindly disposed hung back suspiciously, not knowing what dangerous sort of a new creature she might eventually prove herself to be—at the earliest mutter of that storm, Mrs. Malcomson came forward boldly to support Evadne, and so also did Mrs. Sillenger.

Mr. St. John was another of Evadne's particular friends. He had injured his health by excessive devotion to his duties, and been sent to Malta in the hope that the warm bright climate might strengthen his chest, which was his weak point, and restore him; but it was not really the right place for him, and he had continued delicate throughout the winter, and required little attentions which Evadne was happily able to pay him; and in this way their early acquaintance had rapidly ripened into intimacy. He was a clever man in his own profession, of exceptional piety, but narrow, which did not, however, prevent him from being congenial to one side of Evadne's nature. She had never doubted her religion. It was a thing apart from all her knowledge and opinions, something to be

felt, essentially, not *known* as anything but a pleasurable and elevating sensation, or considered except in the way of referring all that is noble in thought and action to the divine nature of its origin and influence; and she preserved her deep reverence for the priesthood intact, and found both comfort and spiritual sustenance in their ministrations. She still leaned to ritual, and Mr. St. John was a ritualist, so that they had much in common; and while she was able to pay him many attentions and show him great kindness, for the want of which, as a bachelor and an invalid in a foreign place, he must have suffered in his feeble state of health, he had it in his power to take her out of herself. She said she was always the better for a talk with him; and certainly the delicate dishes and wines and care generally which she lavished upon him had as much to do as the climate with the benefit he derived from his sojourn in Malta. They remained firm friends always; and many years afterwards, when he had become one of the most distinguished bishops on the bench, he was able, from the knowledge and appreciation of her character which he had gained in these early days, to do her signal service, and save her from much stupid misrepresentation.

And last, among her friends, although one of the greatest, was Mr. Austin B. Price. Evadne owed this kind, large-hearted, chivalrous gentleman much gratitude, and repaid him with much affection. He was really the first to discover that there was anything remarkable about her; and it was to him she also owed a considerable further development of her originally feeble sense of humour.

Mr. Price's first impression that she was an uncommon character had been confirmed by one of those rapid phrases of hers which contained in a few words the embodiment of feelings familiar to a multitude of people who have no power to express them. She delivered it the third time they met, which happened to be at another of those afternoon dances, held on board the flagship on that occasion. Colonel Colquhoun liked her to show herself, although she did not dance in the afternoon, so she was there, sitting out, and Mr. Price was courteously endeavouring to entertain her.

"It surprises me," he said, "as an American, to find so little inclination in your free and enlightened country to do away with your—politically speaking—useless and extremely expensive Royal House."

"Well, you see," said Evadne, "we are deeply attached to our Royal House, and we can well afford to keep it up."

It was this glimpse of the heart of the proud and patriotic little aristocrat, true daughter of a nation great enough to disdain small economies, and not accustomed to do without any luxury to which it is attached, that appealed to Mr. Price, pleasing the pride of race with which we contemplate any evidence of strength in our fellow-creatures, whether it be strength of purpose or strength of passion, more than it shocked his utilitarian prejudices.

When it was evident that Evadne had brought a good deal that was disagreeable upon herself by her action in the matter of the Clarences, old Mrs. Beale came to her one day in all kindness to tell her the private opinion of the friends who had stood by her loyally in public.

"I am sure you did it with the best motive, my dear, and it was bravely done," the old lady said, patting her hand; "but be advised by those who know the world, and have had more experience than you have had. Don't interfere again. Interference does no good, and people will say such

things if you do! They will make you pay for your disinterestedness."

"But it seems to me that the question is not *Shall I have to pay?* but *Am I not bound to pay?*" Evadne rejoined. "Neglecting to do what is, to me, obviously the right thing, and making no endeavour but such as is sure to be applauded—working in the hope of a reward, in fact, seems to me to be a terribly old-fashioned idea, miserable remnant of the bribery and corruption of the Dark Ages, when the people were kept in such dense ignorance that they could be treated like children, and told if they were good they should have this for a prize, but if they were bad they should be punished."

"You are quite right, I am sure, my dear," rejoined Mrs. Beale; "but all the same, I don't think I should interfere again, if I were you."

"It seems that I have not done the Clarences any good," Evadne murmured one day to Mr. Price.

"Well, that was hardly to be expected," he answered—at which she raised her eyebrows interrogatively. "Calumnies which attach themselves to a name in a moment take a lifetime to remove, because such a large majority of people prefer to think the worst of each other. The Clarences will have to live down their own little difficulty. And what you have to consider now is, not how little benefit they have derived from your brave defence of them, but how many other people you may have saved from similar attacks. I fancy it will be some time before people will venture to spread scandals of the kind here in Malta again. You have taught them a lesson, you may be sure of that; so don't be disheartened and lose sight of the final result in consideration of immediate consequences. The hard part of teaching is that the teacher himself seldom sees anything of the good he has done."

It was very evident at this time that Evadne's view of life was becoming much too serious for her own good, and, perceiving this, Mr. Price let fall some words one day in the course of conversation which she afterward treasured in her heart to great advantage. "It is our duty to be happy," he said. "Every human being is entitled to a certain amount of pleasure in life. But, in order to be happy, you must think of the world as a mischievous big child; let your attitude be one of amused contempt so long as you detect no vice in the mischief; once you do, however, if you have the gift of language, use it, lash out unmercifully! And don't desist because the creature howls at you. The louder it howls the more you may congratulate yourself that you have touched it on the right spot, which is sure to be tender."

But he did not limit his kindly attentions to the giving of good advice; in fact, he very seldom gave advice at all; what he chiefly did was to devise distractions for her which should take her out of herself; and one of these was a children's party which he induced her to give at Christmas.

The party was to take place on Christmas Eve, and the whole of the day before and far into the night the Colquhoun house was thronged with actors rehearsing charades and tableaux, and officers painting and preparing decorations and putting them up. All were in the highest spirits; the talk and laughter were incessant; the work was being done with a will, and none of them looked as if they had ever had a sorrowful thought in their lives—least of all Evadne, whose gaiety seemed the most spontaneous of all.

Late at night she had come to the hall with

nails for the decorators, and was handing them up as they were wanted by those on the ladders. The men were in their shirt sleeves, the most becoming dress that a gentleman ever appears in; and during a pause she happened to notice Colonel Colquhoun, who had stepped back to judge the effect of some drapery he was putting up. Mr. Price was a little behind him, and two of the younger men, the three making an excellent foil to Colonel Colquhoun. Evadne was struck by the contrast. The outside aspect of the man still pleased her. There was no doubt that he was a fine specimen of his species, a splendid animal to look at; what a pity he should have had a regrettable past, the kind of past, too, which can never be over and done with! A returned convict is always a returned convict, and a vicious man reformed is not repaired by the process. The stigma is in his blood.

Evadne sighed. She was too highly tempered, well-balanced a creature to be the victim of any one passion, and least of all of that transient state of feeling miscalled "Love." Physical attraction, moral repulsion: that was what she was suffering from; and now involuntarily she sighed—a sigh of rage for what might have been; and just at that moment, Colonel Colquhoun, happening to look at her, found her eyes fixed on him with a strange expression. Was there going to be a chance for him after all?

He did not understand Evadne. He had no conception of the human possibility of anything so perfect as her self-control; and when she showed no feeling, he took it for granted that it was because she had none. But during the games next day he obtained a glimpse of her heart which surprised him. She had paid a forfeit, and in order to redeem it, she was requested to state her favourite names, gentlemen's and ladies'.

"Barbara, Evelyn, Julia, Elizabeth, Pauline, Mary, Bertram, and Evrard," she answered instantly. "I do not know if I think them the most beautiful names, but they are the ones that I love the best, and have always in my mind."

Colonel Colquhoun's countenance set upon this. They were the names of her brothers and sisters, whom she never mentioned to him by any chance, and whom he had not imagined that she ever thought of; yet it seemed that they were always in her mind! He had so little conception of the depth and tenderness of her nature, or of her fidelity, that had he been required to put his feelings on the subject into words before this revelation, he would, without a moment's hesitation, have declared her to be cold, and wanting in natural affection, a girl with "views," and no heart. But after this, a few questions and a very little observation served to convince him that she not only cared for her friends, especially her brothers and sisters, but fretted for their companionship continually in secret, and felt the separation all the more because her father's harsh prohibition was still in force, and none of them were allowed to write to her, her mother excepted, whose letters, however, came but rarely now, and were always unsatisfactory. The truth was that the poor lady had relapsed into slavery, and been nagged into an outward show of acquiescence in her husband's original mandate which forbade her to correspond with her recalcitrant daughter; and, in her attempts to conceal her relapse from the latter, and at the same time to keep Mr. Frayling quiet under the conviction that her submission was genuine, the style of her letters suffered considerably, and their numbers tended

always to diminish. But the thing that touched Colonel Colquhoun was the care which Evadne had taken to conceal her trouble from him, the fact that she had not allowed a single complaint to escape her, or made a sign that might have worried him by implying a reproach. He had his moments of good feeling, however, and his kindly impulses too, being, as already asserted, anything but a monster; and under the influence of one of them, he sat down and wrote a sharp remonstrance to Mr. Frayling, which, however, only drew from that gentleman an expression of his sincere admiration for his son-in-law's generous disposition, and of his regret that a daughter of his should behave so badly to one who could show himself so nobly forgiving, with a reiteration of his determination, however, not to countenance her until she should "come to her senses"—so that no actual good was done, although doubtless Colonel Colquhoun himself was the better for acting on the impulse.

It was about this time that he became aware of the fact that Evadne had gradually formed a party of her own, and was making his house a centre of attraction to all the best people in the place. He knew that such support was an evidence of her strength, and would only confirm her in her "views," especially when even those who had opposed her most bitterly at first were caught intriguing to get into the Colquhoun house clique; but naturally he was gratified by a position which reflected credit upon himself; his respect for Evadne increased, and consequently they became, if possible, better friends than ever.

CHAPTER XIII

ON the day following her children's party, Evadne went to see Edith. She always went there when she felt brain-fagged and world-weary, and came away refreshed. Edith's ignorance of life amazed and perplexed her. She thought it foolish, and she thought it unsafe for a mature young woman to know no more of the world than a child does; but still she shrank from sharing the pain of her own knowledge with her, and had never had the heart to say a word that might disturb her beautiful serenity. She showed some selfishness in that. She could be a child in mind again with Edith, and only with Edith, and it was really for her own pleasure that she avoided all serious discussion with the latter, although she firmly persuaded herself that it was entirely out of deference to Mrs. Beale's wishes and prejudices.

She owed a great deal, as has already been said, to Mrs. Beale. When her attitude began to attract attention and provoke criticism, the old lady declined emphatically to hear a word against her from anybody, and so supported her in public; while in private the influence of her sweet old-fashioned womanliness was restraining in the way that Mrs. Orton Beg had foreseen; it was a check upon Evadne, and prevented her from going too far and fast at a time. Argument would not have hindered her; but when Mrs. Beale was present, she often suppressed a firebrand of a phrase, because it would have wounded her.

As she went out that afternoon she met old Lord Groome on the doorstep, just coming to call on her, and hesitated a moment between asking him in or allowing him to accompany her as far as Mrs. Beale's, but decided on the latter because she would get rid of him so much the

sooner. Her attitude toward him, however, was kindly and tolerant as a rule, and she was even amused by his curious conceit. He was always ready to express what he called an opinion on any subject, but more especially when it bore reference to legislation and the government of peoples generally, for he was comfortably confident that he had inherited the brain power necessary for a legislator as well as a seat in the House of Lords and the position of one—a pardonable error, surely, since it is so very common. Socially he lived in a comfortable conception of the fitness of things that were agreeable to him, morally he did not exist at all, religiously he supported the Established Church, and politically he believed in every antiquated error still extant, in which respect most of his friends resembled him.

"Ah, and so you are going to see Miss Beale? That's right," he observed patronisingly. "I like to see one young lady with her work in her hand tripping in to sit and chat with another, and while away the long hours till the gentlemen return. One can imagine all their little jests and confidences. Young ladyhood is charming to contemplate."

The implication that a young lady has no great interest in life but in "the return of the gentlemen," and that, while awaiting them, her pursuits must of necessity be petty and trivial, both amused and provoked Evadne, and she answered with a dry, enigmatical "Yes-s-s."

A few steps farther on, they overtook that soft-voiced person of "singular views," Mrs. Malcomson, from whom Lord Groome would have fled had he seen her in time, for they detested each other cordially, and she never spared him. She was strolling along alone with her eyes cast down, humming a little tune to herself, and thinking. There was a tinge of colour in her cheeks, for the air was fresh for Malta; her eyes were bright; her hair, as usual, had broken from bondage into little brown curls, all crisp and shining, on her forehead and neck; and her lips were parted as if they only waited for an excuse to break into a smile. A healthier, pleasanter, happier, handsomer young woman Lord Groome could not have wished to encounter, and consequently his disapproval of those "absurd new-fangled notions of hers" which were "an effectual bar, sir," as he said himself, "the kind of thing that destroys a woman's charm, and makes it impossible to get on with her," mounted to his forehead in a frown of perplexity.

"What are you so busy about?" Evadne asked her.

"My profession," she answered laconically.

"And what is that?" Lord Groome inquired, with that ponderous affectation of playfulness which he believed to be acceptable to women.

"The Higher Education of Man," she rejoined, then darted down a side street, laughing.

"I am afraid you are too intimate with that lady," Lord Groome observed severely. "You must not allow yourself to be bitten by her revolutionary ideas. She is a dangerous person."

"Not 'revo'—but evolutionary," Evadne answered, smiling. "Yes. Mrs. Malcomson has taught me a great deal. She is a very remarkable person. The world will hear more of her, I am sure, and be all the better for her passage through it. But here we are. Thank you for accompanying me. What a hot afternoon! Good-bye!"

She shook hands with him, then opened the door and walked in, leaving him outside.

He felt the dismissal somewhat summary, but shrugged his shoulders philosophically and walked on, reflecting, *à propos* of Mrs. Malcomson, "That's just the way with women! When they begin to have ideas they spread them everywhere, and all the other women in the neighbourhood catch them, and are spoiled by them."

Evadne's spirits had risen in the open air, but the moment she found herself alone a reaction set in.

The hall was dark and cool, and she stopped there, thinking—Oh, the dissatisfaction of it all!

There were no servants about, and the house seemed curiously still. She heard the ripple of running water from an unseen fountain somewhere, and the intermittent murmur of voices in a room close by; but there is a silence that broods above such sounds, and this it was that Evadne felt.

Close to where she stood was a divan with some tall foliage plants behind it, and she sat down there, and, leaning forward with her arms resting on her knees, began listlessly to trace out the pattern of the pavement with the point of her parasol. She had no notion why she was lingering there alone, when she had come out for the sole purpose of not being alone; but the will to do anything else had suddenly forsaken her. Her mind, however, had become curiously active all at once, in a jerky, disconnected sort of way.

"Lord Groome—thank Heaven for having got rid of him so easily! I was afraid it would be more difficult. Poor foolish old man! Yes. It is ridiculous that the destinies of nations should hang on the size of one man's liver. Where did I hear that now? It seems as old—old—as the iniquity itself. Subjects get into the air—I heard someone say that too, by the way—here—soon after I came out. Who was it? Oh—the dance on the *Abomination*. Mrs. Malcomson and Mr. Price. He said subjects were diseases which got into the air; she said they were more like perfumes. Now, I should not have compared them with either"—

The door of the room where the voices had been murmuring intermittently opened at that moment, and Edith came out, followed by Menteith.

It was a vision which Evadne never forgot.

Edith was dressed in ivory white, and wore a brooch of turquoise and diamonds at her throat, a buckle of the same at her waist, and a very handsome ring, also of turquoise and diamonds, on the third finger of her left hand. Evadne took the ornaments in at a glance. She had seen all that Edith had hitherto possessed, and these were new; but she did not for a moment attach any significance to the fact. It was Edith's radiant face that riveted her attention. A bright flush flickered on her delicate cheek, deepening or fading at every breath; her large eyes floated in light; even the bright strands of her yellow hair shone with unusual lustre; her step was so buoyant she scarcely seemed to touch the ground at all; she was all shy smiles; and as she came, with her slender white right hand she played with the new ring she wore on her left, fingering it nervously. But anyone more ecstatically happy than she seemed it is impossible to imagine. Menteith could not take his eyes off her. He seemed to gloat over every item of her appearance.

"Oh, here is Evadne!" she exclaimed, in a

voice of welcome, running up to the latter and kissing her with peculiar tenderness. Then she turned and looked up at Menteith, then back again at Evadne, wanting to say something, but not liking to.

With a start of surprise, Evadne awoke to the significance of all this, and she knew, too, what was expected of her; but she could not say, "I congratulate you!" try as she would. "I will wait for you in the drawing-room," was all she was able to gasp, and she hastened off in that direction as she spoke.

"How can you care so much for that cold, unsympathetic woman?" Menteith exclaimed.

"She is not cold and unsympathetic," Edith rejoined emphatically. "I am afraid there is something wrong. I must go and see what it is. Oh, Mosley! I feel all chilled! It is a bad omen!"

"This is a bad damp hall," he answered, laughing at her; "you are too sensitive to changes of temperature."

It seemed so really, for her colour had faded, and she had not recovered it when she appeared in the drawing-room.

Evadne was standing in the middle of the room alone, waiting for her.

"Edith! You are not going to marry that dreadful man?" she exclaimed.

Edith stopped short, astonished.

"*Dreadful man!*" she gasped. "You must be mad, Evadne!"

Mrs. Beale came into the room just as Edith uttered these words, and overheard them. She had been on the point of happy smiles and tears, expecting kind congratulations, but at the tone of Edith's voice almost more than at what she had said, and at the sight of the two girls standing a little apart looking into each other's faces in alarm and horror, her own countenance changed and an expression of blank inquiry succeeded the smiles and dried the tears.

"Oh, Mrs. Beale!" Evadne entreated, "you are not going to let Edith marry that dreadful man!"

"Mother! she will keep saying that!" Edith exclaimed.

"My dear child, what *do* you mean?" Mrs. Beale said gently to Evadne, taking her hand.

"I mean that he is bad—thoroughly bad," said Evadne.

"Why! Now tell me, what do you know about him?" the old lady asked, leading Evadne to a sofa, and making her sit down beside her upon it. Her manner was always excessively soothing, and the first heat of Evadne's indignation began to subside as she came under the influence of it.

"I don't know anything about him," she answered confusedly; "but I don't like the way he looks at me!"

"Oh, come, now! that is childish!" Mrs. Beale said, smiling.

"No, it is not! I am sure it is not!" Evadne rejoined, knitting her brows in a fruitless endeavour to grasp some idea that evaded her, some item of information that had slipped from her mind. "I feel—I have a consciousness which informs me of things my intellect cannot grasp. And I *do* know!" she exclaimed, her mental vision clearing as she proceeded. "I have heard Colonel Colquhoun drop hints."

"And you would condemn him upon hints?" Edith interjected contemptuously.

"I know that if Colonel Colquhoun hints that

there is something objectionable about a man it must be something very objectionable indeed," Evadne answered, cooling suddenly.

Edith turned crimson.

"Evadne—*dear*," Mrs. Beale remonstrated, patting her hand emphatically to restrain her. "Edith has accepted him because she loves him, and that is enough."

"If it were love it would be," Evadne answered. "But it is not love she feels. Prove to her that this man is not a fit companion for her, and she will droop for a while, and then recover. The same thing would happen if you separated them for years without breaking off the engagement. Love which lasts is a condition of the mature mind; it is a fine compound of inclination and knowledge, controlled by reason, which makes the object of it, not a thing of haphazard, but a matter of choice. Mrs. Beale," she reiterated, "you will not let Edith marry that dreadful man!"

"My dear child," Mrs. Beale replied, speaking with angelic mildness, "your mind is quite perverted on this subject, and how it comes to be so I cannot imagine, for your mother is one of the sweetest, truest, most long-suffering *womanly* women I ever knew. And so is Lady Adeline Hamilton-Wells—and Mrs. Orton Beg. You have been brought up among womanly women, none of whom ever even *thought* such things as you do not hesitate to utter, I am sure."

"I once heard a discussion between Lady Adeline and Aunt Olive," Evadne rejoined. "It was about a lady who had a very bad husband, and had patiently endured a great deal. 'It is beautiful—pathetic—pitiful to see a woman making the best of a bad bargain in that way,' Aunt Olive said. 'It may be all that,' Lady Adeline answered; '*but is it right?* If this generation would object to bad bargains, the next would have fewer to make the best of.'"

"Ah, that is so like dear Adeline!" Mrs. Beale observed. "But what a memory you have, my dear, to be able to give the exact words!"

Evadne's countenance fell. She was disheartened, but still she persisted.

"It is you good women," she said, clasping Mrs. Beale's hand in both of hers, and holding it to her breast: "It is you good women who make marriage a lottery for us. You, for instance. Because you drew a prize yourself, you see no reason why every other woman should not be equally fortunate."

"I think, when people make *quite* sure beforehand that they love each other, they are safe—even when the man has *not* been all that he ought to have been. Love is a great purifier, and love for a good woman has saved many a man," Mrs. Beale declared with the fervour of full conviction.

"That is presuming that a man 'who has not been all that he ought to have been' is still able to love," said Evadne, "which is not the case. We are all endowed with the power to begin with; but love is a delicate essence, as volatile as it is delicious; and when a man's moral fibre is loosened, his share of love escapes. But this is not the point," she broke off, dropping Mrs. Beale's hand, and gathering herself together. "The trouble now is that you are going to let Edith throw herself away on a man you know nothing about"—

"Ah, my dear, *there* you are mistaken," Mrs. Beale interrupted, comfortably triumphant. "They have known each other all their lives. They used to play together as children; and when I wrote to ask her father's consent to the engage-

ment, he replied that the one thing which could reconcile him to parting with Edith was her choice of a man who had grown up under our own eyes. I can assure you that we know his faults quite as well as his good qualities."

"I thought you would like to have me in the regiment, Evadne," Edith ventured, with timid reproach.

"I would not like to have you anywhere as that man's wife," Evadne answered.

"Well, if he is," said Edith, with a flash of enthusiasm, "if he is *bad*, I will make him good; if he is lost, I will save him!"

"Spoken like a true woman, dearest!" her mother said, rising to kiss her, and then standing back to look up at her with yearning love and admiration.

Evadne rose also with a heavy sigh. "I know how you feel," she said to Edith drearily. "You glow and are glad from morning till night. You have a great yearning here," she clasped her hands to her breast. "You find a new delight in music, a new beauty in flowers; unaccountable joy in the warmth and brightness of the sun, and rapture not to be contained in the quiet moonlight. You despise yourself, and think your lover worthy of adoration. The consciousness of him never leaves you even in your sleep. He is your last thought at night, your first in the morning. Even when he is away from you, you do not feel separated from him as you do from other people, for a sense of his presence remains with you, and you flatter yourself that your spirits mingle when your bodies are apart. You think, too, that the source of all this ecstasy is holy because it is pleasurable; you imagine it will last for ever!"

Edith stared at her. That Evadne should know the entrancement of love herself so exactly, and not reverence it as holy, amazed her.

"And you call it love," Evadne added, as if she had read her thought; "but it is not love. The thresholds of love and hate adjoin, and it—this feeling—stands midway between them, an introduction to either. It is always a question, as marriages are now made, whether, when passion has had time to cool, husband and wife will love or detest each other. But what is the use of talking?" she exclaimed. "You will not heed me. It is too late now." She turned and walked toward the door; but Edith caught her by the arm and stopped her.

"Evadne! Do not go like this!" she entreated, with a sob in her voice. "Wish me well at least!"

"I *do* wish you well," said Evadne. "With what other motive could I have said so much? But I ask again, what is the use? Your parents are content to let you marry a man of whose private life they have no knowledge whatever"—

Mrs. Beale interrupted her: "This is not quite the case," she confessed. "We *do* know that there have been errors; but all that is over now, and it would be wicked of us not to believe the best, and hope for the best. A young man in his position has great temptations"—

"And if he succumbs, he is pardoned because of his position!"

"Oh, come now, Evadne!" Mrs. Beale remonstrated. "You cannot think that such a consideration affects our decision. His position and property are very nice in themselves, and indeed all that we care about in that way for Edith, but we were not thinking about either when we gave our consent. It is the dear fellow himself that we want"—

"I can make him all that he ought to be! I

know I can!" Edith exclaimed fervently, clasping her hands, and looking up, with bright eyes full of confidence and passion.

Evadne said not another word, but kissed them both, and left the house.

"Mother! how strange Evadne is!" Edith ejaculated.

Mrs. Beale shook her head several times. "I heard that she had some trouble at the outset of her own married life," she said. "I don't know what it was; but doubtless it accounts for her manner to-day. Don't think about it, however. She will recover her right-mindedness as she grows older. A little shock upsets a girl's judgment very often; but she is so clever and conscientious, she will certainly get over it. But you are quite agitated yourself, dear. Come! think no more about what she said! Her own marriage quite disproves all her arguments, for Colonel Colquhoun was notoriously just the kind of man she would have us believe Mosley is, and see what she has done for him, and how well they get on together! Think no more about it, dear child, but come out with me. The air will tranquillise us both."

On her way home, Evadne overtook Mr. St. John. He was walking slowly with his chin on his chest, looking down, and his whole demeanour was expressive of deep dejection.

He looked up with a start when Evadne overtook him, and their eyes met.

"You have heard?" she said.

He made an affirmative gesture.

"I never—never dreamt of such a thing," she went on. "I thought—I hoped—pardon me, but I hoped it would be you. She liked you so much. I know she did."

"But not enough, for she refused me," he answered gently. "But doubtless it is all for the best. *His* ways are not our ways, you know, and we suffer because we are too proud to resign ourselves to manifestations of His wisdom, which are beyond our comprehension. When you came up, I was feeling as if I could never say 'Thy will be done' with my whole heart, fervently, in this matter, but since you spoke to me I think I can."

Evadne took his arm, and the gentle pressure of her hand upon it expressed her heartfelt sympathy eloquently.

"If it had been anyone else, I thought at first—but, doubtless, doubtless, it is all for the best!" he added; and then he raised his head, and changed the subject bravely.

But Evadne did not hear what he was saying, for suddenly she found herself on the cliffs at home, and it was a scented summer morning; the air was balmy, the sun was shining, the little waves rippled up over the sand, the birds were singing, and the dewdrops hung on the yellow gorse; but that joy in her own being which lent a charm to these was wanting, and the songs seemed tuneless, the scent oppressive, the sea all sameness, the land a waste, and the sun itself a glaring garish baldness of light, that accentuated her own disconsolation, the length of a life that is not worth living, and the size of a world which contains no corner of comfort in all its pitiless expanse. And it was the same story too. She was witnessing the same mystery of love rejected—the same worthiness for the same unworthiness; the same fine discipline of resignation, which made the pain of it endurable; listening to the same old pulpit platitudes even, which have such force of soothing when reverently expressed. She and Edith were very different types of girlhood, and it seemed a strange coincidence that their opportunities should

have been identical nevertheless ; but not singular that their action should have been the same, because the force of nature which controlled them is a matter of constitution more than of character, and subject only to a training which neither of them had received, and without which, instead of ruling, they are ruled erratically.

Evadne had quite forgotten by this time all her first fine feelings on the subject of a celibate priesthood. She now held that the laws of nature are the laws of God, and marriage is a law of nature which there is no evidence that God has ever rescinded.

Evadne had not heard what Mr. St. John was saying, and she did not care to hear ; she knew that it was not relevant to anything which either of them had in their minds, but still held his arm, and looked up at him sympathetically when he paused for a reply ; and at that moment Colonel Colquhoun, accompanied by Sir Mosley Menteith, turned out of a side street just behind them, and followed on in the same direction. When Menteith saw the two walking so familiarly arm in arm, he glanced at Colonel Colquhoun out of the corners of his eyes to see how he took it. But Colonel Colquhoun's face remained serenely impassive.

"Easy!" he said. "We won't overtake them till we arrive at the house. I expect he is seeing her home, and as Mrs. Colquhoun is only at her best at *tête-à-tête*, it would be a shame to deprive him of the small recompense he will get for his trouble." He twisted his moustache and continued to look at the pair thoughtfully when he had spoken, and Menteith glanced at him again to see if he might not perchance be concealing some secret annoyance under an affectation of easy indifference ; but there was not a trace of anything of the kind apparent.

"There is no doubt that women *do* cling to the clergy," was the outcome of Colonel Colquhoun's reflections—"I mean metaphorically speaking, of course," he hastened to add, with a laugh, perceiving the double construction that might be put on the remark in view of the situation. "Now, there is only one fellow on the island that Evadne cares for as much as she does for her friend there. I think she likes the other better, though."

"You mean yourself, of course," said Menteith.

"No, I don't mean myself, of course," Colonel Colquhoun answered. "Putting myself out of the question. It is Price I mean."

"That dried-up old chap?" Menteith exclaimed.

"Well, he's pretty safe, I should say! And I should never be jealous of a parson myself. Women always treat them *de haut en bas*."

"I believe, sir, that Mrs. Colquhoun is perfectly 'safe' with anyone whom she may choose for a friend," Colonel Colquhoun said, with an emphasis which made Menteith apologise immediately.

Colonel Colquhoun asked Evadne that evening what she thought of the projected marriage.

"I think it detestable," she answered.

"Well, I think it a pity myself," he said.

"She's such a nice-looking girl too."

Evadne turned to him with a flash of hope.

"Can't you do something?" she exclaimed.

"Can't you prevent it?"

"Absolutely impossible," he answered. "And I beg as a favour to myself that you won't try."

"I have done my best already," she said.

"Then you have made your friends enemies for life," he declared. "A girl like that won't give up a man she loves even for such considerations as have made you indifferent to my happiness—and welfare."

Evadne perceived the contradiction involved in commending Edith for doing what he considered it a pity that she *should* do ; but she recognised her own impotence also, and was silent. It was the system, the horrid system, that was to blame, and neither he, nor she, nor any of them.

Colonel Colquhoun ruminated for a little.

"It is rather curious," he finally observed, "that you should both have shied at the parsons, seeing how very particular you are."

"Who told you we had both—refused a clergyman?" Evadne asked.

"Everybody in Malta knows that St. John proposed to Miss Beale," he answered, "and your father told me about the offer you had. He remarked at the time that girls will only have manly men, and that therefore we soldiers get the pick of them."

Evadne was silent. She was thinking of something her father had once remarked in her presence on the same subject : "I have observed," he had said, in his pompous way, "that the clergy carry off all the nicest girls. You will see some of the finest, who have money of their own too, marry quite commonplace parsons. But the reason is obvious. It is their faith in the superior moral probity of churchmen which weighs with them."

The Beales went home the following week to prepare for the wedding, which was to take place immediately. They both wrote to Evadne kindly before they left, and she replied in the same tone, but she could not persuade herself to see them again, nor did they wish it.

END OF BOOK II.

BOOK III

DEVELOPMENT AND ARREST OF DEVELOPMENT

Fury: Blood thou canst see, and fire; and canst hear groans;-
Worse things, unheard, unseen, remain behind.

Prometheus: Worse?

Fury: In each human heart terror survives

The ravin it has gorged. The loftiest fear
All that they would disdain to think were true:

Hypocrisy and Custom make their minds

The fanes of many a worship now outworn.

They dare not devise good for man's estate,

And yet they know not that they do not dare.

The good want power but to weep barren tears:

The powerful goodness want,—worse need for them:

The wise want love: and those who love want wisdom:

And all best things are thus confused to ill.

Many are strong and rich and would be just,

But live among their suffering fellow-men

As if none felt: they know not what they do.

Prometheus Unbound.

CHAPTER I

EDITH was married in the cathedral at Morning-quest, and of course the twins were present at the wedding. From what social gathering were they ever excluded if they chose to be present? Mrs. Beale had not thought of asking them at all, but Angelica intimated, in her royal way, that she wished to be a bridesmaid, and Diavolo must be a page; and Lady Adeline begged Mrs. Beale for Heaven's sake to arrange it so, lest worse should come of it.

But the twins did not enjoy the occasion at all, for the truth was that they were not as they had been. Angelica was rapidly outstripping Diavolo, as was inevitable at that age. He was still a boy, but she was verging on womanhood, and already had thoughts which did not appeal to him, and moods which he could not comprehend, the consequence being continual quarrels between them,—those quarrels in which people are hottest and bitterest, not because of their hate, but because of their love for each other. There is such agony in misunderstanding and blame when all has hitherto been comprehension, approval, and sympathy. The shadow of approaching maturity, which would separate them inevitably for the next few years, already touched Angelica perceptibly; and, although to the onlookers they seemed to treat each other as usual, both children felt that there was something wrong, and their discomfort was all the greater because neither of them could account for the change. Angelica had been for some time in her most hoydenish, least human stage, during which she had given up hugging Diavolo, and taken to butting him in the stomach instead. But she was growing beyond that now, and was in fact just on the borderland, hovering between two states: in the one of which she was a child, all nonsense and mischievous tricks; and in the other

a girl with tender impulses and yearning senses seeking some satisfaction.

She and Diavolo had promised themselves some fun at Edith's wedding, but when the morning came Angelica was moody and irritable, and Diavolo watched her and waited in vain for a suggestion. When they were in the cathedral, during the ceremony, she had a strange feeling that there was something in it all that specially concerned her, and she looked at Edith and listened to the service intently, in an involuntary effort to obtain some clue to her own sensations.

Diavolo, who was all sympathy when there was anything really wrong with her, became alarmed.

"Does your stomach ache?" he whispered. (They were kneeling side by side.)

"No!" she answered shortly.

"Oh, then, I suppose there is something *morally* wrong," he observed, in a satisfied tone, as if he knew from experience that that was a small thing compared with the other complaint.

They sat together at the wedding breakfast, but Angelica continued silently observant.

Diavolo had brought a big boiled shrimp in his pocket.

It was black and of great age, and he managed to fasten it adroitly on the shoulder of the lady who sat next him, so that its long antennæ tickled her neck, and provoked her attention to it.

Glancing down sideways, and catching a glimpse of black eyes and many legs, she thought it was some horrid creature with a sting, and jumped up, shrieking wildly, to everybody's consternation.

Angelica declared it was a stupid trick.

"Well, you put me up to it yourself," Diavolo grumbled.

"Did I?" she snapped. "Then I was wrong."

Somebody began to make a speech, which was all in praise of the lovely bride; and Diavolo, listening to it, and remembering that he had

wished to marry her himself, became intensely sentimental. He recovered his shrimp, and laying it out on the cloth before him, gazed at it in a melancholy way.

"All the nice girls marry," he complained, thinking of Evadne.

"Well, what's that to you?" Angelica demanded, with a jealous flash.

"Only that I suppose you also will marry and leave me some day," he readily responded. Diavolo was nothing if not courtly.

But Angelica knew him, and resented this attempt to impose upon her.

"I despise you!" she exclaimed; and then she turned to Mr. Kilroy of Ilverthorpe, who was her neighbour on the right, and made great friends with him to spite Diavolo; but the latter was engrossed in his breakfast by that time, and took no notice.

When they got back to Hamilton House, Mr. Ellis asked her how she had enjoyed the wedding.

"It made me feel *sick*," she said; and then she got a book, and flinging herself down on a window seat, with her long legs straggling out behind her and her face to the light, made a pretence of reading.

Diavolo hovered about her with a dismal face, trying to devise some method of taking her out of herself.

"My ear does bother me," he said at last, sitting down beside her with his back to the window, and his legs stretched straight out before him close together. "I feel as if I could tear it off."

"No, don't; you might want it again!" Angelica retorted, and then, the observation striking her as ludicrous, she looked up at him and grinned, and so broke the ice.

Mr. Ellis was the first to notice signs of the impending change in Angelica. Although she was over fifteen, she had no coquettish or womanly ways, insisted on wearing her dresses up to her knees, expressed the strongest objection to being grown-up and considered a young lady, and had never been known to look at herself in the glass; but she began to be less teasing and more sympathetic, and sometimes now, if the tutor were tired or worried, she noticed it, and pulled Diavolo up for being a nuisance.

The day after the wedding, in the afternoon, Dr. Galbraith walked over from Fountain Towers to Hamilton House, through the fields, and encountered Lord Dawne in the porch. It was lovely summer weather.

"I am looking for the children," Lord Dawne said. "I have come over from Morne with a message for them from their grandfather. Do you happen to have seen them anywhere?"

"Yes, I have," Dr. Galbraith answered drily, but with a twinkle in his eyes. "I discovered them just now in a field of mine—a hayfield—not that they were making any pretence of hiding themselves, however," he hastened to add, "for they were each sitting on the top of a separate haycock, carrying on an animated discussion in tones as elevated as their position, so that I heard them long before I saw them. They will end the discussion by demolishing my haycocks, I suppose," he concluded resignedly.

"What was it all about?" Lord Dawne asked.

"Well, I believe they started with the vexed question of primogeniture," Dr. Galbraith replied; "but when I came up with them they were quarrelling because they could not agree as to whether they were more their father's or their

mother's children. Angelica maintained the latter, for reasons which she gave at the top of her voice with admirable accuracy. When I appeared they both appealed to me to confirm their opinions, but I fled. I am not so advanced as the Heavenly Twins."

Lord Dawne looked grave: "What will become of the child Angelica?" he said.

"Oh, you needn't be anxious about her," Dr. Galbraith replied, looking full at him with sympathy and affection in his kind grey eyes. "She has no vice in her whatever, and not a trace of hysteria. Her talk is mere exuberance of intellect."

"I don't know," her uncle answered. "*Qui peut tout dire arrive à tout faire*, you know."

"I find that falsified continually in my profession," Dr. Galbraith rejoined. "It depends entirely as a rule upon how the thing is said, and why. If it be a matter of inclination only, controlled by fear of the law or public opinion which is expressed, the aphorism would hold probably; but language which is the outcome of moods or phases that are transient, makes no permanent mark upon the character."

Lord Dawne took Dr. Galbraith to the drawing-room, where they found Lady Adeline with Mr. Hamilton-Wells and the tutor. Mr. Ellis had been a great comfort to Lady Adeline ever since he came to the house. She felt, she said, that she should always owe him a deep debt of gratitude for his patient care of her terrible children.

"You are just in time for tea, George," she said to Dr. Galbraith. "Dawne, you had better wait here for the children. They won't be late this afternoon, I am sure, because Mr. Kilroy of Ilverthorpe is here, and Angelica likes him to talk to."

"Ah, now you do surprise me," said Dr. Galbraith, "for I should have thought that Mr. Kilroy was the last person in the world to interest Angelica."

"And so he is," Mr. Hamilton-Wells observed in his precisest way, "and she does not profess to find him interesting. But what she says is that she must talk, and he does for a target to talk at."

Lady Adeline looked anxiously at the door while her husband was speaking. She was in terror lest Mr. Kilroy should come in and hear him, for Mr. Hamilton-Wells had a habit of threshing his subject out, even when it was obviously unfortunate, and would not allow himself to be interrupted by anybody.

He made his favourite gesture with his hands when he had spoken, which consisted in spreading his long white fingers out as if he wore lace ruffles which were in the way, and was shaking them back a little. He had a long cadaverous face, clean shaven; straight hair of suspicious brownness, parted in the middle and plastered down on either side of his head; and a general air of being one of his own Puritan ancestors who should have appeared in black velvet and lace; and his punctilious manners strengthened this impression. The one trinket he displayed was a ring, which he wore on the forefinger of his right hand, a handsome intaglio carved out of crimson coral. It seemed to be the only part of his natural costume which had survived, and came into play continually.

Mr. Kilroy entered the room in time to hear the concluding remark, but naturally did not take it to himself, and Lord Dawne, seeing his sister's trepidation, came to the rescue by diverting the subject into another channel.

They were all sitting round an open window,

and just at that moment the twins themselves appeared in sight, straggling up the drive in a deep discourse, with their arms round each other's necks, and Angelica's dark head resting against Diavolo's fair one.

"Harmony reigns among the heavenly bodies, apparently," said Dr. Galbraith.

"The powers of darkness plotting evil, more likely," said their uncle Dawne.

"Naughty children! What have they done with their hats?" Lady Adeline exclaimed.

"Discovered some ingenious method of doing damage to my hay with them, most probably," Dr. Galbraith observed.

They all leant forward, watching the children.

"Angelica is growing up," said Lord Dawne.

"She has always been the taller, stronger, and wickeder of the two, and will remain so, I expect," said Dr. Galbraith.

"But how old is she now exactly?" Mr. Kilroy wished to know.

"Nearly sixteen," Lady Adeline answered.

"But a very young sixteen in some ways, I am thankful to say. And I believe we have you to thank, Mr. Ellis, for keeping her so."

The tutor's strong but careworn face flushed sensitively; but he only answered with a deprecating gesture.

"Then how old is Diavolo?" Mr. Kilroy pursued absently.

"About the same age," Mr. Hamilton-Wells replied, without moving a muscle of his face.

Lady Adeline looked puzzled: "Of course they are the same age," she said, as if the point could be disputed.

Mr. Kilroy woke up: "Oh, of course, of course!" he exclaimed, with some embarrassment.

The twins had gone round the house by this time, and presently Diavolo appeared in the drawing-room alone. His thick fair hair stood out round his head like a ruffled mop, his face and hands were not immaculate, and his clothes were creased; but he entered the room with the same courtly yet diffident air and high-bred ease which distinguished his uncle Dawne, whom he imitated as well as resembled in most things.

He took his seat beside him now, and remarked that it was a nice day, and—

But before he could finish the affable phrase, the door burst open from without, and Angelica entered.

"Hollo! Are you all here?" she said. "How are you, Uncle Dawne?"

"I wish you would not be so impetuous," Diavolo remonstrated gently. "You quite startle one."

"You *are* a coon!" said Angelica.

"My dear child"—Lady Adeline began.

"Well, mamma, no matter *what* I do, Diavolo grumps at me," Angelica snapped.

"What expressions you use!" sighed Lady Adeline.

Angelica plumped down on the arm of her uncle's chair, and hugged him round the head with one hand. She smelt overpoweringly strong of hay and hot weather, but he patiently endured the caress, which was over in a moment as it happened, for Angelica caught sight of her cat lurking under a sofa opposite, and bending down double, whistled to it. Then she turned her attention to a huge slice of bread, butter, and jam she held in her hand. Diavolo's soul appeared in his face and shone out of his eyes when she bit it.

"Have some?" said Angelica, going over to him, and edging him half off his chair so as to

make room for herself beside him. She held the bread and butter to his mouth as she spoke, and they finished it together, bite and bite about.

"Now I am ready for tea," said Angelica, when they had done.

"So am I," said Diavolo, with a sigh of satisfaction.

"Let us have afternoon tea with you here to-day, Mr. Ellis," Angelica coaxed. "It's so much more sociable. And I want to talk to Mr. Kilroy."

She jumped up in her impetuous way, plumped down again on a low stool in front of that gentleman, clasped her hands round her knees, and looked up in his face as she spoke.

"That's a nice place you've got at"—she was beginning, but Mr. Ellis interrupted her by throwing up his head and ejaculating "Grammar!"

"*Bother!*" Angelica exclaimed testily. "Now you've put me all out. Oh!—I was going to say *you have* a nice place at Ilverthorpe. We were over there the other day and inspected it."

"Very happy—glad, I am sure, you did not stand upon ceremony," Mr. Kilroy answered.

But this politeness seemed altogether superfluous to Angelica, and she did not therefore acknowledge it in any way.

"I suppose you will go into Parliament now," she pursued.

Mr. Kilroy looked surprised. The idea had occurred to him lately, but he was not aware of having mentioned it to anyone.

"I hope you will, at all events," she continued, "and let me write your speeches for you. That is what Diavolo is going to do. You see I shall want a mouthpiece until I get in myself, and I don't mind having two if you are clever at learning by heart. You've a pleasant voice and good address to begin with, and that is all in your favour. Oh, you needn't exchange glances with papa," she broke off. "He doesn't know how I mean to order my life in the least."

"But you will allow him some voice in the ordering of it—at least until you marry, I suppose," Mr. Kilroy observed.

"That depends," Angelica answered decidedly. "You see, a child comes into the world for purposes of its own, and not in order to carry out any preconceived ideas its father may have of what it is good for. And as to marrying—well, that requires consideration."

"Now, I call that a very proper spirit in which to approach the subject," Mr. Kilroy declared. "You have every right to expect to make the best match possible, and the choice for a young lady in your position will be restricted."

"Not at all," said Angelica bluntly. "Is thy servant a slave of a princess that she should marry a rickety king? I have quite other views for myself. In fact, I think the wisest plan for me would be to buy a nice clean little boy, and bring him up to suit my own ideas. I needn't marry him, you know, if he doesn't turn out well." She slipped from the footstool on to the floor as she spoke, and began to make friendly overtures to the cat.

"I always thought you had designs on Dr. Galbraith!" said Diavolo, meaning to provoke her.

"Did you?" she answered. "Then you must have thought me of a suicidal tendency. Why, he would pound me up in a mortar if I disagreed with him. You have heard him slam a door?"

"He *is* irascible," Diavolo answered, quite as if Dr. Galbraith were not present listening to him. "He called me a little brute on one occasion."

"Which reminds me," said Dr. Galbraith. "What have you done to my decoy? The birds have forsaken it."

"We never did anything to your decoy," rejoined Angelica in a positive tone. "You just went down there yourself one day and exploded some long words at the ducks, and, naturally, they scooted."

"Well, I warn you," said Dr. Galbraith, frowning with decision—"I warn you that I am going to have keys made for everything about the place that will lock up; and, all the same, I shall only allow you to come under escort of the chief constable, and I shall keep a posse of detectives concealed about the grounds to watch for you carefully."

The twins exploded with delight.

"Didn't I promise you I'd draw him this afternoon?" Diavolo exclaimed.

"You did," Angelica responded, with tears in her eyes.

Lord Dawne got up.

"Won't you stay for tea?" Lady Adeline exclaimed. "It is just coming."

"I don't care for any, thank you," he answered. "And I really ought not to have stayed so long. I only came to ask if you would let the children come. Both my father and Fulda have set their hearts upon having them."

"Are we to go to Morne?" cried Angelica.

"For a visit—to stay?" said Diavolo.

"If you behave yourselves," their mother answered.

"Oh, in that case!" said Diavolo, shrugging his shoulders as at an impossibility.

"It would never do for us to be good there," said Angelica. "Grandpapa would be so dreadfully disappointed if we were."

"Quite so," said Diavolo.

And then they scampered out together into the hall, and kicked each other in the exuberance of their spirits, but without ill-will.

CHAPTER II

As soon as the Heavenly Twins were safely settled at Morne, Mr. Hamilton-Wells played them a huge trick. He made Lady Adeline pack up and set off with him for a voyage round the world without them. When their parents were well on the way, and the news was broken to the children, the people at Morne expected storm and trouble; but the Heavenly Twins saw the joke at once, and chuckled immoderately.

"I wonder how long it took him to think it out?" said Diavolo.

"It must have been a brilliant impromptu," Angelica supposed—"because, you know, our coming here was all arranged in a moment. If you remember, we came because they looked so sure that we shouldn't. I expect as soon as we had gone, it was such a relief, that papa said, 'Adeline, my dear, we must prolong this period of peace.' And he's just about hit on the only way to do so."

"I should like to have seen him, though, popping in and out of the train whenever it stopped. He must have been in a perfect fever until they were safe on board and out at sea, fearing we might have heard that they were off, and found some means of following them."

"We might do so still," said Angelica thoughtfully.

"No. Too much bother," said Diavolo. "And, besides, there is a good deal going on here, you know," he added significantly. "But, I say," he demanded, becoming parent-sick suddenly, "do you understand how they could go off like that without saying good-bye to us? I call it beastly unnatural."

"Oh, give them their due!" said Angelica. "They did say good-bye to us. Don't you remember how particularly affectionate they were the last time they came? And all the good advice they gave us? 'Do attend to Mr. Ellis'; 'Don't worry your grandfather,' and that sort of thing. They must have relieved their own feelings thoroughly."

"Well, then, they didn't consider ours much," Diavolo grumbled; "and they might have allowed us, poor grass-orphans, the comfort of bidding them farewell."

"We'll write them a letter," said Angelica.

Diavolo grinned.

And this was how it happened that the Heavenly Twins, who had only gone to Morne for a month, remained a year there, and one of the most important years of their lives, as was afterward evident. It was during this time that they managed to identify themselves completely with their grandfather in the estimation of the people of Morningquest. Charming manners were a family trait, and the Heavenly Twins had always been popular in the city on their own account; their spontaneity and extreme affability having usually been held to balance their monkey tricks. Hamilton House, however, was ten miles distant from Morningquest, and they had hitherto been thought of as Hamilton-Wellses; but after that year at the castle, they became identified with the old stock, the alien Hamilton-Wellses being dropped out of sight altogether.

The duke himself had always been popular. He had, like his ancestors, lived much in his castle on the hill overlooking the city, and had dominated the latter by his personality as well as by his place, so that the people, predisposed by the pressure of hereditary habit to recognise the pre-eminence of one of his family, and being no longer subject to the authority of their duke as in the old days when he was a ruler who must be obeyed, looked up to him involuntarily as an example to be followed.

Which was how it came to pass that, for the last half-century, there had been two influences at work in Morningquest: that of the chime, full fraught with spiritual suggestion; and that of the duke, which was just the opposite. They were the influences of good and evil, and, needless to say, the effect of the latter was much the more certain of the two.

A great change, however, came over the duke toward the end of his life. In his youth he had filled the place with riot and debauchery; in middle age he had concealed his doings under respectable cloaks of excuse, such as the County Club and business; but now he was old and superstitious, and sought to sway the people in another direction altogether. For when his youngest daughter, the beautiful Lady Fulda, became a Roman Catholic, she wrought upon him by her earnestness so as to make him fear the flames, and drove him in that way to seek solace and salvation in the Church as well; and when he had done so himself, he rather expected, and quite intended, that everybody else should do likewise. But the people of Morningquest who had adopted his vices did not fear the flames themselves, and

would have nothing to do with his piety. They were like the children in *Punch*, who, when threatened with the policeman at the corner, exclaimed in derision, "Why, that's father!" And, besides, the times were changing rapidly, and the influence which remained to the aristocracy was already only dominant so long as it went the way of popular feeling and was human; directly it retrograded to past privileges, ideas, superstitions, and tastes, the people laughed at it. They knew that the threatened rule of the priest was a far-fetched anachronism which they need not fear for themselves in the aggregate, and they therefore gave themselves up with interest to the observation of such evidences of its effect on the individual as the duke should betray to them from time to time. Their theory was that, having grown too old for worldly dissipation, he had entered the Church in search of new forms of excitement, and to vary the monotony generally, as so many elderly coquettes do when they can no longer attract attention in any other way. This, the people maintained, was the nature of such religious consolation as he enjoyed; and upon that supposition certain lapses of his were accounted for uncharitably.

But, in truth, the duke was perfectly sincere. He had turned so late in life, however, that he was apt, by force of habit, to get muddled. His difficulty was to disconnect the past from the present, the two having a tendency to mix themselves up in his mind. The great interest of his old age was the building of a Roman Catholic Cathedral in Morningquest, but occasionally—and always at the most inconvenient times—he would forget it was a cathedral, and imagine it was an opera house he was supporting; and when he went to distribute the prizes in the schools, he would compliment the pretty girls on their good looks, instead of lecturing them on the sin of vanity, and promise that they should sing in the chorus, or dance in the ballet if their legs were good, when he should have been discoursing about the dangers of the vain world, and pointing the moral of happy humble obscurity. On these occasions, Lady Fulda, who was always beside him, suffered a good deal. She would pull him up in a whisper, which he sometimes made her repeat until everyone in the place had heard it but himself, and then, at last, when he did understand, he would hasten to correct himself. But, of course, it was the mistake and not the correction which made the most lasting impression.

Lady Fulda was not at all clever. In the schoolroom she was always far behind her sisters, Lady Adeline and Lady Claudia, and before his conversion her father used to say that she had the appearance of a Juno, and the cow-like capacity one would naturally expect from the portraits of that matron now extant. But this was not fair to her intelligence, for she had a certain range which included sympathetic insight, and the knack of saying the right thing both for her own purpose and for the occasion.

She had a full exterior of uncrumpled, lineless, delicately tinted flesh; a voice that made "Good-morning" impressive when she said it; a sincerity which paused upon every expression of opinion to weigh its worth. She would hardly say, "It is a fine day," without first glancing at the weather, just to be sure that it had not changed since she decided to make the remark. And she had a great loving heart. If she did not sigh for husband and children, it was because she was never in the presence of any creature for many minutes without

feeling a flood of tenderness for them suffuse her whole being, so that her affections were always satisfied. Because of her grand presence people expected great things of her, and none of them ever went disappointed away. She filled their hearts, and nobody ever complains of the head when the heart is full. Love was the secret both of her beauty and her power.

The twins arrived late one day at Morne, and immediately afterward the whole castle was pervaded by their presence, and signs of them appeared in the most unlikely places. A mysterious packet, rolled up in a sheet of the *Times*, considerably soiled, and known as "Angelica's work," which nobody had ever seen opened, was found in the oriel room on the seat of the chair sacred to the duke himself; and a cricket cap of Diavolo's was discovered on one of the tall candles which stood on the altar in the private chapel of the castle, as if it had been used as an extinguisher. A peculiar intentness was also observed in the expression of the children's countenances which was thought to betoken mischief, because always hitherto it had been noticed that when the gravity of their demeanour was most exemplary, the wickedness of the design upon which they were engaged was sure to be extreme. But all the old symptoms were misleading at this time, for the twins settled down at once, with lively, intelligent interest, to the innocent occupation of studying the ways of the household, their own conduct being distinguished for the most part by a masterly inactivity. For the truth was, they were thinking. They had lately taken to reading the books and papers and magazines of the day, which they found in the library at Hamilton House; and at Morne they followed the same occupation, and thus had an opportunity of seeing the questions which interested them treated from different points of view. At home all had been Liberal, Protestant, and progressive; but at Morne the tendency of everything was Roman Catholic, Conservative, and retrograde; and they were doing their best, as their conversations with different people at this time showed, to discover the why and wherefore, and right and wrong of the difference. Angelica was naturally the first to draw definite conclusions for herself, and having made up her own mind she began to instruct Diavolo. She was teaching him to respect women, for one thing; when he didn't respect them she beat him; and this made him thoughtful.

"You wouldn't strike me if you didn't know that I can't strike you back, because you're a girl," he remonstrated.

"And you wouldn't say that if you didn't know that the cruellest thing you can do to a woman is to hurt her feelings," she retorted.

"Oh, feelings!" exclaimed Diavolo. "You've got castanets that clack where you should have feelings."

Angelica raised her hand, and then dropped it by her side again, and looked at him.

"What do you mean by this nonsense?" she demanded. "We always *have* fought everything out ever since we were born."

"Yes," he said regretfully, "and you used to be as hard as nails. When I got a good hit at you it made my knuckles tingle. But now you're getting all boggy everywhere. Just look at your arms!"

Angelica ripped her tight sleeve open to the shoulder with one of her sudden jerks, and looked at her arm.

"Now, see mine," said Diavolo, taking off his

coat, and turning his shirt sleeve up in his more deliberate way.

Angelica held out her arm beside his to compare them. Hers was round and white and firm, with every little blue vein visible beneath the fine transparent skin; his was all hard muscle and bone, burnt brown with the sun, and coarse of texture compared with hers.

"You see, now!" he said.

Angelica slowly drew down the tattered remains of her sleeve, and then she looked at Diavolo thoughtfully, and from him to a full-length reflection of herself in a long mirror on the wall.

"We're growing up!" she said, in a surprised sort of tone.

"You are," he said. "I seem to be just about as young as ever I was."

"All the more reason that I should teach you, then," said Angelica. "Education matures the mind, and the principal instrument of education for your sex has always been a stick. Women are open to reason from their cradles, but men have to be whopped. They are thrashed at school, that being, as they have always maintained themselves, the best way to deal with them. 'He that spareth the rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.' And 'Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die.' It is only the boys, you see, that have their minds enlarged in that way, because, if you tell a girl a thing, she understands it at once. And when men grow up and things go wrong they still think they ought to thrash each other. That is also their primitive way of settling the disputes of nations; they just hack each other down in hundreds, sacrificing the lives which are precious to the women they should be loving, for the sake of ideas that are always changing. You certainly *are* the stupid part of humanity!" she concluded. "And how you ever discovered the way to manage each other, I can't imagine. But it was the right one. 'A whip for the horse, a bridle for the ass, and a rod for the fool's back,'"—and so saying, she flounced out of the room, without, however, administering the parting slap of another kind which he expected.

But the episode made a lasting impression on Diavolo, as was apparent in much that he said, and particularly in some remarks which he made during a conversation he had with his grandfather toward the end of the year.

A capital understanding had always existed between Diavolo and his grandfather, a fact which caused Lady Adeline's heart to sink every time she observed it, but had an opposite effect on the duke himself—a quite exhilarating effect, indeed, which was the cause of certain of those lapses which Lady Fulda had so often to deplore—as when, for instance, he aided and abetted Diavolo in some of his worst tricks, and then had to sit sheepishly by, saying nothing, when the boy was found out and corrected. Lady Fulda was puzzled by the intelligent glances that passed between the two at such times, but Diavolo was perfectly loyal, and never once got his grandfather into trouble.

One of the dreams of the old duke's life was to make a good Catholic of Diavolo, and to that end his conversation was often directed—intermittently it is true, because Diavolo was skilled in the art of beguiling him into other subjects when it suited himself.

The duke was turning his attention at this time, under Lady Fulda's direction, to the spiritual welfare of that class of women which in former times he had been accustomed to countenance in

quite another way. Lady Fulda had established a refuge for these in Morningquest, and her father was deeply interested in the success of the undertaking. The Heavenly Twins were also much interested. At first they could not make out why their aunt Fulda so often breakfasted in her outdoor dress, and whether she had just come in or was just going out.

If there were no visitors staying at the castle, the party at breakfast was small, there being only the old duke, Father Ricardo, Mr. Ellis, and the Heavenly Twins, as a rule. When Lady Fulda did appear the meal was usually half over.

The duke sat at the end of the long table, with the twins on either side of him, but he was generally limp and querulous in the morning, and more kindly disposed toward Father Ricardo than to his own flesh and blood, as Angelica pointed out on one occasion.

When Lady Fulda came in she always went up to her father and kissed him. He did not rise to receive the salute, but he invariably held her hand some seconds, and asked, "Any news?" anxiously; to which she always answered "Yes" or "No"; and then he would say, "You must tell me afterward. Go to your seat now. Take plenty of rest and refreshment. Both are necessary; both are necessary!"

The Heavenly Twins were inclined to regard this scene with the scorn and contempt of ignorance at first; but when Lord Dawne came to the castle for a few days, with their widowed aunt Lady Claudia and Ideala, and all these paid the same reverent attention to Lady Fulda's report as the duke and Father Ricardo did, they reserved judgment until they should know more about the matter.

They asked Mr. Ellis for an explanation, but he told them bluntly to mind their own business, and further puzzled them by a remark which they chanced to hear him make about Lady Fulda to Dr. Galbraith. They did not overhear what Dr. Galbraith had said to lead up to it, but Mr. Ellis answered, "Grasp her character? She is not a character at all! She's a beautiful abstraction. Now Ideala is human."

Although the twins were Protestants by education—and also by nature, one may say—it had pleased them to go regularly to certain services in the chapel from the day of their arrival at the castle.

"We enjoy them very much," Angelica said, to the great delight of her aunt and grandfather.

"I am sure the atmosphere of devotion in which we live will have its effect upon the children," the latter said several times.

And so it had. It was never the low mass, however, at which they appeared, but the more sensuous, sumptuous functions, when there was music, of which they both were exceedingly fond, both of them being excellent musicians.

Soon after her arrival at the castle Angelica bought a big drum. She said she couldn't express her feelings on any other instrument on Sunday, her spiritual fervour was so excessive. Her behaviour in chapel, however, was for the most part exemplary. Her aunt noticed that she often knelt all through the service with a book before her, thoroughly absorbed. Lady Fulda was anxious to know what the book was, and on one occasion, when Angelica remained on her knees after the congregation had dispersed, with her handkerchief pressed to her face, apparently deeply moved, her aunt stole up behind her softly, and peeped over her shoulder, expecting to see a

holy *Imitation*, or something of that kind; but, to her horror, she found that the book was Burnand's *Happy Thoughts*, and that Angelica's gurglings were not tears of repentance, but suppressed explosions of hearty laughter.

This happened during what proved to be rather a trying time for Lady Fulda. It was while Lord Dawne, Lady Claudia, and Ideala were at the castle, and the old duke was, as Lady Fulda delicately phrased it to her sister Claudia in private, "inclined to be tiresome." It was at this time that he had several relapses. One of these happened in chapel during benediction.

The choir had been singing *O Salutaris, Hostia!* at the conclusion of which everybody was startled by a senile cheer from the stalls. The duke had dozed off into a dream of the opera, and had awakened suddenly, under the impression that a wooden image of the Blessed Virgin opposite had just completed a lovely solo, and was unexpectedly following it up by an audacious *pas seul*.

"Aren't our ancestors like us?" Diavolo whispered to Angelica enthusiastically. But Angelica damped his ardent admiration of the *coup* by refusing to believe that the diminutive duke had "done it on purpose."

CHAPTER III

THE next day Diavolo happened to stroll into the oriel room about tea-time, and finding his grandfather sitting there alone, looking down upon Morningquest from his accustomed seat in the great deep window, which was open, he carefully chose a soft cushion, placing it on the low sill so that he could rest his back against it, and stretching himself out on the floor, looked up at the old gentleman sociably.

"You're growing a big fellow, sir," the latter observed.

"But not growing so fast as Angelica is," said Diavolo.

"Ah, women mature earlier," said the duke. "But their minds never get far beyond the first point at which they arrive."

"I suppose you mean when they marry at seventeen, or their education is otherwise stopped short for them, just when a man is beginning his properly?" Diavolo languidly suggested.

The duke frowned down at him. "Where is your sister?" he asked.

"That I can't tell you," Diavolo answered.

"Don't you know?" the duke said sharply.

"Yes," was the cool rejoinder; "but I don't happen to have my sister's permission to say."

The old man's face relaxed into a smile.

"That's right, my boy, that's right," he said.

"Loyalty is a grand virtue. Be loyal to the ladies"—he shook his head in search of an improving aphorism, but only succeeded in extracting a familiar saw. "Kiss, but never tell," he said; "it's vulgarly put, my boy, but there's a whole code in it, and a damned chivalrous code too. I tell you, men were gentlemen when they stuck to it."

There was a sound of stealthy footsteps in the room at this moment, and the old duke glanced over his shoulder apprehensively, while Diavolo bent to one side to peer round the chair his grandfather was sitting in, which was between him and the door.

"It's one of the dogs," he said carelessly. "Father Ricardo is out, I think."

The duke looked relieved.

"Well," Diavolo resumed reflectively, "I should have thought myself that it was playing it pretty low down to sneak on a woman. But, I say, sir," he asked innocently, "how would you define a lady-killer?"

"Lady-killer," said the little old gentleman, taking hold of his collar to perk himself up out of his clothes, as it were, on the strength of his past reputation: "A lady-killer is a—eh—a fellow whom ladies—eh—admire."

"Do you mean real ladies, or only pretty women?" said Diavolo.

"Both, my boy, both," the duke answered complacently. He was beginning to enjoy himself.

"You were one, once, were you not, sir?" said Diavolo. "I suppose you had a deuced good time?"

"Ah!" the duke ejaculated, with a sigh of retrospective satisfaction. Then, suddenly remembering his new rôle, he pulled himself up, and added severely, "But keep clear of women, my boy, keep clear of women. Women are the very devil, sir."

"But supposing they run after *you*?" said Diavolo. "Nowadays, you know, a fellow gets so hunted down—they say."

"Oh—ah—then. In that case, you see," said the duke, relapsing, "the principle has always been to take the goods the gods may send you, and be thankful."

There was a pause after this, during which the duke again recollected himself.

"We were talking about women," he sternly recommenced, "and I was warning you that their wiles are snares of the Evil One, who finds them ever ready to carry out his worst behests. Women are bad."

"Are they, now?" said Diavolo. "Well, I should have thought, taking them all round, you know, that they're a precious sight better than *we* are."

"It was a woman, my boy," the duke said solemnly, "who compassed the fall of man."

"Well," Diavolo rejoined, with a calmly judicial air, "I've thought a good deal about that story myself, and it doesn't seem to me to prove that women are weak, but rather the contrary. For you see, the woman could tempt the man easily enough; but it took the very old devil himself to tempt the woman."

"Humph!" said the duke, looking hard at his grandson.

"And, at anyrate," Diavolo pursued, "it happened a good while ago, that business, and it's just as likely as not that it was Adam whom the devil first put up to a thing or two, and Eve got it out of him—for I grant you that women are curious—and then they both came a cropper together, and it was a case of six of one and half a dozen of the other. It mostly is, I should think, in a business of that kind."

"Well, yes," said the duke. "In my own experience, I always found that we were just about one as bad as the other"—and he chuckled.

"Then, we may conclude that there is a doubt about that Garden of Eden story whichever way you look at it, and it's too old for an argument at anyrate," said Diavolo. "But there is no doubt about the redemption. It was a woman who managed that little affair. And, altogether, it seems to me, in spite of the disadvantage of

being classed by law with children, lunatics, beggars, and irresponsible people generally, that in the matter of who have done most good in the world women come out a long chalk ahead of us."

"Why the devil don't you speak English, sir?" the duke burst out testily.

Diavolo started. "Good gracious, grand-papa!" he began, with his customary deliberation, "how sudden you are! You quite made me jump. Is it the slang you don't like?"

"Yes, sir, it *is* the slang I don't like."
"Then you've only got to say so," said Diavolo, in a tone of mild remonstrance. "You really quite upset me when you're so sudden. Angelica will tell you I never could stand being startled. She's tried all kinds of things to cure me. You can't frighten me, you know. It's just the jump I object to."

"Oh, you object, do you?" said the duke, bending his brows upon him. "Then I apologise."

"Oh no! pray don't mention it, sir," said Diavolo. "I didn't mean you to go so far as that, you know. And it's over in a minute."

Angelica burst into the room at this point, followed by two or three dogs, and immediately took up her favourite position on the arm of her grandfather's chair.

"I want some tea," she said.

"It's coming," said Diavolo.

"You say that because you don't want the trouble of getting up to ring," Angelica retorted.

Diavolo looked at her provokingly, and she was about to say something tart, when a footman opened the door wide, and two others entered carrying the tea-things, and at the same time the rest of the party began to assemble.

Lady Fulda was the first to arrive with her widowed sister, Lady Claudia. They presented a great contrast, the one being so perfectly lovely, the other so decidedly plain. Lady Claudia was a tall gaunt woman, hard in manner, with no pretension to any accomplishments, but wise, and of a faithful, affectionate disposition, which deeply endeared her to her friends.

Lord Dawne came in next, with Dr. Galbraith and Mr. Kilroy of Ilverthorpe, and these were followed by Father Ricardo and Mr. Ellis, after whom came Ideala herself, alone.

This was before she made her name, but already people spoke of her; and theoretically men were supposed not to like her "because of her ideas, don't you know," which were strongly opposed in some circles, especially by those who either did not know or could not understand them. There is no doubt that mankind have a rooted objection to be judged when the judge is a woman. If they cannot in common honesty deny the wisdom of her decisions, they attack her for venturing to decide at all.

"Now," said Angelica, skipping over to a couch beside which Mr. Kilroy was sitting, "now, we shall have a little interesting conversation!"

"I hope you will kindly allow us to have a little interesting tea first," said Diavolo, who had risen politely when the other ladies entered the room, a formality which he omitted in Angelica's case because he insisted that she wasn't a lady.

When the tea was handed round, and the servants had withdrawn, he lounged over to the couch where she was, in his deliberate way, sat down beside her, and put his teacup on the floor; and

then they put their arms round each other, slanted their heads together, and sat expectant. This had been a favourite position of theirs from the time they could sit up at all, and when there was a good deal of gossip going on about them it had always been a treat to see them sitting so, with blank countenances and ears open, collecting capital doubtless for new outrages on public decency.

"What do you want to talk about, Angelica?" Ideala asked, smiling.

"Oh, a lot of things," Angelica exclaimed, straightening herself energetically, and giving Diavolo's head a knock with her own to make him move it out of the way. "I've been reading, you know, and I want you to explain. I want to know how people can be so silly."

"In what way?" Ideala asked.

"Well, I'm thinking of Aunt Fulda," said the candid Angelica. "You know, she very much wants to make a Roman Catholic of me, and she gave me some books to read, and of course I read them. They were all about the Church being the true church, and all that sort of thing. And then I got a lot of books about other churches, and each said that *it* was the true church just as positively; and Aunt Fulda told me that anyone who would read about *her* church *must* be convinced that it is the true church, but the difficulty is to get people to read; so when I found these other books I took them to her to show her all about the other true churches, and I told her she ought to read them, because if there were truth in any of them, we could none of us possibly be saved unless we belonged to *all* the different churches. But do you know, she wouldn't look at a book! She said she wasn't allowed to! Now! what do you think of that? and after telling me what a mistake it was not to read!"

Lady Fulda and her father were talking together in the window, and did not therefore overhear these remarks, but Father Ricardo was listening, and Ideala flashed a mischievous glance at him as Angelica spoke.

"Then," the latter continued, before anyone could answer her, "Aunt Fulda is just as good as she possibly *can* be, and Father Ricardo says it is because she has submitted to *his* Holy Church; and Mrs. Orton Beg and mamma are also as good as they possibly can be, and the Bishop of Morningquest says that Mrs. Orton Beg is a holy woman because she is a humble follower of Christ, but he rather shakes his head about mamma. Uncle Dawne, however, and Dr. Galbraith both maintain that mamma is admirable, because she doesn't trouble her head about churches and creeds any longer. She used to do so once, but now she thinks only of what is *morally* right or wrong, and leaves the ecclesiastical muddle for the divines to get out of as best they can. Mamma used to dread bringing us to Morne when we were younger; we were always so outrageous here; and we told her it was Aunt Fulda who made us so, because she is too good, and the balance of nature has to be preserved. But, now, I am sure Aunt Claudia is quite as good as she is, and so are you, and mamma, and Mrs. Orton Beg."

Ideala smiled at her. "And so you are puzzled?" she said. "Well, now, I will explain. Your aunts and mother, and Mrs. Orton Beg, are all of those people born good, who would have been saints in any calendar, Buddhist, Christian, or Jewish. They come occasionally—these good people—to cause confusion on the subject of original sin and overthrow the pride of professors who maintain that their own code of religious

ethics must be the right one because it produces the best specimens of humanity. There was a Chinese lady living at Shanghai a few years ago, a devout Buddhist, who, in her habits of life, her character, her prayers, her penances, and her sweetness of disposition, exactly resembled your aunt Fulda, the only difference between them being the names of the ideal of goodness upon whom they called for help. Their virtues were identical, and the moral outcome of their lives was the same."

"I see what you mean!" Angelica burst out. "And you wouldn't say either 'convert' or 'pervert' yourself, would you?"

"Well, no," Ideala acknowledged. "I always adopt a little pleonasm myself to avoid Christian controversy, and say 'when So-and-so became' a Roman or Anglican Catholic, a Protestant, Positivist, or whatever else it might be; and I let them say 'convert' or 'pervert,' whichever they like, to me, because I know that it really cannot matter, so long as they are agreeable—not that anybody ever expects them to be, poor little people! although they know quite well that they should never let their angry passions rise. They have no sense of humour at all! But just fancy, how silly it must seem to the angels when Miss Protestant throws down a book she is reading and shrieks, 'Convert, indeed!' while Miss Catholic at the same moment groans, 'Pervert,' indignantly! Must be 'something rotten in the state of Denmark,' surely, or one or other of them would have proved their point by this time. Or do you suppose," she added, looking at Lord Dawne, "that the opposition is mercifully preordained by nature to generate the right amount of heat by friction to keep things going so that we do not come to a standstill on the way to human perfection? It is very wonderful any way," she added, "to the looker-on; wonderfully funny!"

"I did not know that Lady Adeline had definitely left the Church of England," Mr. Kilroy observed, "and I am surprised to hear it."

"Are you?" said Ideala. "Now, we were not. Adeline has always been of a deeply religious disposition; but it was not bound to be, and it was never likely to be, the religion of any church which would secure her lasting reverence."

"I wonder what the religion of the future will be?" Mr. Kilroy remarked.

"It will consist in the deepest reverence for moral worth, the tenderest pity for the frailties of human nature, the most profound faith in its ultimate perfectibility," Ideala answered. "The religion of the future must be a thing about which there can be no doubt, and consequently no dispute. It will be for the peace and perfecting of man, not for the exercise of his power to outwit an antagonist in an argument; and there are only the great moral truths, perceived since the beginning of thought, but hard to hold as principles of action because the higher faculties to which they appeal are of slower growth than the lower ones which they should control, and the delights they offer are of a nature too delicate to be appreciated by uncultured palates; but it is in these, the infinite truths, known to Buddha, reflected by Plato, preached by Christ, undoubted, undisputed even by the spirit of evil, that religion must consist, and is steadily growing to consist, while the questionable man-made gauds of sensuous service are gradually being set aside. The religion of the future will neither be a political institution nor a means of livelihood, but an expression of the highest moral attribute, human or divine—disinterested love."

She sat for some time, looking down at the floor, and lost in thought when she had said this; and then, rousing herself, she turned to Father Ricardo. "I had a fit of Roman Catholicism once myself," she said to him pleasantly. "I enjoyed it very much while it lasted. But you do a great deal of harm, you clergy! In the first place, you begin by setting up Christ as an ideal of perfect manhood, and then you proceed to demolish Him as a possible example, by maintaining that He was not a man, but a God, and therefore a being whom it is beyond the power of man to imitate! Oh, you terrible, terrible clergy! You preach the parable of the buried talents, and side by side with that you have always insisted that women should put theirs away; and you have soothed their sensitive consciences with the dreadful cant of obedience—not obedience to the moral law, but obedience to the will of man; for what moral law could be affected by the higher education of women?"

"The Anglican Church is rather countenancing the higher education of women, is it not?" said Mr. Kilroy.

"You don't put it properly," Ideala answered. "Women, after a hard battle, secured for themselves their own higher education, and now that it is being found to answer, the churches are coming in to claim the credit. Dear, how rapidly reforms are carried out when we take them in hand ourselves!" she exclaimed. "All the spiritual power is ours, and while we refuse to know, it must be wasted for want of direction."

"But that is what you reject," said Father Ricardo. "The Church is ever ready to direct her children."

"For her own advantage, and very badly," Ideala answered. "Does her direction ever benefit the human race generally, or anybody but herself in particular? Every great reform has been forced on the Church from outside. Just consider the state of degradation and the dense ignorance of the people of every country upon which the curse of Catholicism rests! 'Wherever churches and monasteries abound the people are backward,' it is written. Just lately, there has been a little revival of Catholicism, a flash in the pan, here in England, due to Cardinal Newman and Cardinal Manning, who introduced some good old Protestant virtues into your teaching; but that cannot last. You carry the instrument of your own destruction along with you in the degrading exercises with which you seek to debase our beautiful, wonderful, perfectible human nature."

"But the Church has done all that is possible for the people," Father Ricardo began lamely. "The Church has always taught, for one thing, that the labourer is worthy of his hire."

"But the Church never used its influence to make the hire worthy of the labourer; instead of that, it has always sought to grind the last penny out of the people, and then it pauperised them with alms," said Ideala.

"Why have the priests done so little good, Uncle Dawne?" Diavolo asked.

"Because they are no better than other people," was the answer, "and when they get money they use it just as everybody else does, to strengthen their own position, and make a display with."

"Ah, the terrible mistake it has been, this making a paid profession of the doing of good!" Ideala exclaimed.

Angelica, who had put her arm round Diavolo again, and was sitting with her head against his, listening gravely, now looked at Ideala: "I want

to know where the true spirit of God is," she said.

"I can tell you," Ideala answered fearlessly. "It is in us *women*. We have preserved it, and handed it down from one generation to another of our own sex unsullied; and very soon we shall be called upon to prove the possession of it, for already"—she turned to Father Ricardo here, and specially addressed him, speaking always in gentle tones, without emphasis—"already I—that is to say Woman—am a power in the land, while you—that is to say Priest—retain ever less and less even of the semblance of power."

"Pardon me, dear lady," the priest replied; "but it shocks me to hear you assume such an arrogant tone."

"I don't think the tone was in the least arrogant," Angelica put in briskly; "and, at any rate, it's your own tone exactly, for I've heard you say as much and more, speaking of the priesthood."

"Not exactly," Diavolo corrected her. "Father Ricardo always says, 'Heaven, for some great inscrutable purpose, has mercifully vouchsafed this wondrous power to us poor'—or humble or unworthy; the first adjective of that kind he can catch—'priests.' I like the short way of putting it myself."

"But why do you always try to make out that it is our duty to be *miserable* sinners?" Angelica asked.

"If we taught ourselves to be happy in this world, we should grow to love it too much, and then we should not strive to win the next."

"And that would impoverish the Church?" Diavolo suggested.

"But why not let *us* be happy, and you raise money in some other way?" Angelica wanted to know. "Miracles—now I should try some miracles; a miracle must be much better than a bazaar to raise the funds."

"Oh, but you forget the nunneries Father Ricardo was telling us about the other day," Diavolo said; "the austere orders where they only live a few years, you know."

"I had forgotten for the moment, but I read up the subject at the time, and found out that when the nuns die all their money remains in the Church; is that what you mean?" said the practical Angelica.

"Yes," said Diavolo. "You see, it would hardly cost ten shillings a week to keep a nun, and of course," he said to Father Ricardo, "the more fasting you counsel the less outlay there would be; so I don't wonder you promise them more goodies in the next world, the more austerities they practise in this."

"It must really work like a provision of nature for the enrichment of Holy Church—so many nuns worked off on the prayer and fasting mill per annum, so many unencumbered fortunes added to the establishment," Angelica observed.

"*Jerusalem!*" said Diavolo. "How easy it is to gull the public!"

The Heavenly Twins had been speaking in a confidential tone, as if they were behind the scenes with Father Ricardo, and now they watched him, seeming to wait for him to wink—at least, that was how Dr. Galbraith afterward interpreted the look. Nothing of this kind coming to pass, however, they both got up, and both together strolled out of the room, yawning undisguisedly.

"That child Angelica will be one of us," Ideala whispered to Lord Dawne.

"Yes," he answered gravely, "they will both be of us eventually; only we must make no move,

but wait in patience, 'Until the day break, and the shadows flee away.'"

CHAPTER IV

THERE was much high talk of doing good and living for others at Morne in these days, to which the twins listened attentively. It is evident from the thoughts they expressed at this time that the minds of both were in a state of fermentation, and that the more active pursuits in which they still indulged occasionally were the mere outcome of habit. When the conversation was interesting, they would sit beside Father Ricardo (whom they insisted on classing with themselves as an inferior being) and watch the speakers by the hour together, and Father Ricardo too, gauging his moral temperature, and noting every sigh of pity or shiver of disapprobation that shook his sensitive frame.

"Where does it hurt you, *dear?*" Diavolo asked him once. "I know you are a bad, bad man, because you say so yourself"—

"I never said so!" Father Ricardo exclaimed, with a puzzled air.

"Well, you said you were a miserable sinner, not worthy, *et cetera*, and it comes to the same thing," Diavolo rejoined; "and I don't wonder you are disheartened when you see how impossible it is for you to be as disinterestedly good as Uncle Dawne and Dr. Galbraith. I feel so myself sometimes."

"Oh, I hope I am disinterested," Father Ricardo protested.

"I can't make it out if you are," said Diavolo, shaking his head. "You don't seem to love goodness for its own sake, but for the reward here and hereafter. The whole system you preach is one of reward and punishment."

Father Ricardo had an innocent hobby. He was fond of old china, and had made a beautiful collection, with the help of such friends as Lord Dawne, Dr. Galbraith, and Lady Adeline Hamilton-Wells, who never failed to bring him back any good specimen they might find in the course of their travels.

One day at this time, after the talk had been running, as usual, upon self-sacrifice and living for others, he invited the whole party to inspect his collection; and they all went, with the exception of the Heavenly Twins, who were not to be found at the moment. When the others reached the room in which Father Ricardo kept his treasures, however, they were surprised to find the cabinets, comparatively speaking, bare, and with great gaps on the shelves as if someone had been weeding them indiscriminately. The good father looked very blank at first; but the windows were wide open, and before he could think what had happened, a noise on the lawn below attracted everybody's attention, and on looking out to see what was the matter, they beheld the Heavenly Twins apparently intent upon organising a revel. They were very busy at the moment, and had been for some hours evidently, for they had collected an organ man with a monkey; a wandering musician with a harp; a man with a hammer, who had been engaged in breaking stones; a Punch and Judy party, consisting of a man, woman, and boy, with their Toby-dog; five christy minstrels in their war paint; a respectable-looking mechanic with his wife and three children, who were tramping from

one place to another in search of work; and a blind beggar; and all these were seated in more or less awkward and constrained attitudes on easy-chairs, covered with satin, velvet, or brocade, about the lawn, with little tables before them, on which was spread all the cooked food, apparently, that the castle contained. When their admiring relatives first caught sight of the twins, Angelica—who had coiled up her hair, and wore a long black dress, borrowed from her aunt Fulda's wardrobe; a white apron with a bib, and a white cap like a nurse's, the property of one of the lady's-maids—was pouring tea out of a silver urn, and Diavolo, in his shirt sleeves, with a serviette under his arm like a waiter in a restaurant, was standing beside her with a salver in his hand, waiting to carry it to the mechanic's lady.

"What on earth are you children doing?" Lord Dawne exclaimed.

"Feeding the hungry, sir," Diavolo drawled cheerfully.

"Well," groaned the poor priest, "you needn't have taken all my best china for that purpose."

"We did that, sir," Diavolo replied, with dignity, "in order that you, all unworthy as you are, might have the pleasure of participating in this good work. But, there!" he said to Angelica, "I told you he wouldn't appreciate it!"

To the credit of the Heavenly Twins and their guests, it must be recorded that no harm happened either to the china or the plate.

The next day was a Saint's day, and the children announced at breakfast that they intended to keep it. They said they were going to compose a religion for themselves out of all the most agreeable practices enjoined by other religions, and they proposed to begin by making that day a holiday.

Mr. Ellis would have remonstrated at the waste of time, and Father Ricardo at the absence of proper intention, but the way the twins had put the proposition happened to amuse the duke, and therefore they gained their point. But, having gained it, they did not know very well what to do with themselves. Angelica wouldn't make plans. She was thinking of the long dress she had worn the day before, and feeling a vague desire to have her own lengthened; and she wanted also to take that mysterious packet known as her "work" to her aunt Fulda's sitting-room, where the ladies usually spent the morning, so as to be with them, but she knew that Diavolo would scorn her if she did; and the outcome of all this vagueness of intention was a fit of excessive irritability. She wanted sympathy, but without being aware of the fact herself, and the way she set about obtaining it was by being excessively disagreeable to everybody. There was a rose in a glass beside her plate, and she took it out, and began to twiddle it between her fingers and thumb impatiently, till she managed to prick herself with the thorns, and then she complained of the pain.

"Oh, that sort of thing doesn't hurt much," Diavolo declared.

"It *does* hurt," she maintained aggressively; "and pain is pain, whether the seat of it be your head, heart, or hindquarters."

"*Angelica!*" Lady Fulda exclaimed, with tragic emphasis. "Someone must really talk to you *seriously!* you are positively *vulgar!*"

"Thank Heaven!" Angelica ejaculated fervently. "I knew I was going to be something!"

She got up as she spoke, and walked out of the room with her head in the air, affecting a proud

consciousness of having had greatness suddenly thrust upon her.

Lady Fulda looked helplessly, first at Father Ricardo, then at Mr. Ellis.

"Can't you do something?" she said to the latter.

Mr. Ellis replied by an almost imperceptible shrug of his shoulders. "We know better than to interfere when she's in one of her bad-language tantrums," Diavolo explained.

When his grandfather left the table, he followed him uninvited on a tour of inspection around the castle and grounds, and, finally, retiring with him to the library, whither the old duke usually went to rest, read, or meditate some time during the morning, he coiled himself up in an arm-chair, took a small book out of his pocket, and began to study it diligently.

His grandfather glanced at him affectionately and with interest from time to time. He was lonely in his old age, and liked to have the boy about. He had nobody left to him now who could touch his heart or take him out of himself as Diavolo did, for nobody else attached themselves to him in the same way, or showed such an unaffected preference for having him all to themselves.

"What are you reading, sir?" he asked him at last.

"Euripides, sir," Diavolo answered, glancing over the top of his book for a moment as he spoke. "I'm just where Hippolytus exclaims, 'O Jove! wherefore indeed didst thou place in the light of the sun that specious evil to men—woman?'"

"Are you reading Euripides with a 'Key'?" his grandfather asked sternly.

"No, I am reading a key to Euripides," Diavolo answered.

"Don't you know your Greek, sir?" his grandfather demanded.

"I'm just looking to see, sir," Diavolo rejoined, returning to his book.

When he had finished the page, he looked up at his grandfather, who was sitting with his hands folded upon a large volume he held open on his knee, meditating, apparently.

"Beastly bad tone about women in the Classics," Diavolo remarked; "don't you think so, sir?"

"Ah, my boy, you don't know women yet!" the old duke responded.

"Then I've not made the most of my opportunities," Diavolo said, with a grin, "for we meet with a fine variety in the houses about here! But what I object to in these classical chaps," he resumed, "is the way they sneaked and snivelled about women's faults, as if they had none of their own! and then their mean trick of going back upon the women, and reproaching them with their misfortunes."

"What do you mean by that?" his grandfather asked.

"Well, sir, I suppose you would call old age a misfortune to a pretty woman?" Diavolo answered. "And just look at the language in which that fellow Horace taunts Lydia and Lyce when they grow old, and after the sickening way he fawned upon them when they were young, too! And here again," he said, holding up his book, "is that fellow Hippolytus. Just because one woman has shocked him, he says ' . . . Never shall I be satisfied in my hatred against women. . . For in some way or other they are always bad.' And a little farther back, too"—he scuffed the leaves over—"he says that

woman is a great evil *because* men squander away the wealth of their houses upon them. If the men were such superior beings, why don't they show it somehow? Horace was as spiteful himself as any old woman; we should have called him a cad nowadays. And all this abuse"—he shook his Euripides—"is beastly bad form whichever way you look at it." He ruffled his thick tow-hair as he spoke, and yawned in conclusion.

"Then you are coming out as a champion of women?" said the duke.

"Oh, by Jove, no!" Diavolo exclaimed, straightening himself. "I haven't the conceit to suppose they would accept such a champion, and besides, I think it's the other way on now; *we* shall want champions soon. You see, in the old days, women were so ignorant and subdued, they couldn't retaliate or fight for themselves in any way; they never thought of such a thing. But now, if you hit a woman, she'll give you one back promptly," he asseverated, rubbing a bump on his head suspiciously. "She'll put you in *Punch*, or revile you in the Dailies; Magazine you; write you down an ass in a novel; black-guard you in choice language from a public platform; or paint a picture of you which will make you wish you had never been born. Ridicule!" he ejaculated, lowering his voice. "They ridicule you. That's the worst of it. Now, there's Ideala; she can make a fellow ridiculous without a word. When old Lord Groome came back from Malta the other day, he called, and began to jeer at Mrs. Churston's feet for being big and ugly. Ideala let him finish; and then she just looked down at his own feet, and you could see in a minute that he wished himself an Eastern potentate with petticoats to hide them under; for they were ugly enough to be indecent."

The duke stretched out one of his own miniature models of feet upon this, and glanced at it complacently.

"Where do you get all these ideas?" he asked.

"At your age I never had any; and if I had, I should have been ashamed to own it. You'll be a prig, sir, if you don't mind."

"I don't mind," Diavolo rejoined. "I've heard you say that ladies dearly love a prig, and therefore I rather think of cultivating that tone."

"You should have been sent to a public school," his grandfather said. "It would have made a man of you."

"Oh, time will do that just as well," Diavolo answered encouragingly.

At that moment the door opened, and Lady Fulda entered.

"Papa, may I speak to you now?" she asked, and Diavolo got up politely and lounged off to look for Angelica. He did not succeed in finding her, however, because she had driven into Morningquest to do some shopping with her Aunt Claudia and Ideala. She hated shopping as a rule, and could seldom be persuaded to do any; but that morning, after breakfast, she had gone to Lady Fulda's room, where the three ladies were sitting, and after fidgeting them to death by wandering up and down, doing nothing, with a scowl on her face, and an ugly look of discontent in her fine dark eyes, she had burst out suddenly, "Aunt Fulda! I want some long dresses." Lady Fulda looked up at her in blank amazement; but Lady Claudia, who was all energy, rolled up her work on the instant, rang

the bell, ordered the carriage, and answered, "Come, then, and get what you like."

And ten minutes afterward they had started.

Several unsuccessful attempts had been made to persuade Angelica to wear long dresses, and Lady Claudia felt that now, when she proposed it herself, it would never do to check the impulse; and accordingly, in less than a week from that day, Angelica, the tomboy, was to all appearance no more, and Miss Hamilton-Wells astonished the neighbourhood.

She came down to the drawing-room quite shyly in her first long dinner-dress, with her dark hair coiled neatly high on her head. She had met Mr. Kilroy on the stairs, and he had looked at her in a strange, startled way, but he said nothing; and neither did anybody else when she entered the room. Her grandfather, however, opened his eyes wide when he saw her, and smiled as if he were gratified. Lord Dawne gave her a second glance, and seemed a little sad; and Ideala went up to her and kissed her, and then looked into her face for a moment very gravely, making her feel as if she were on the eve of something momentous. But Diavolo would not look at her a second time. One glimpse had been enough for him, and during the whole of dinner he never raised his eyes.

His uncle Dawne saw what was wrong with the boy, and glanced at him from time to time sympathetically. He meant to talk to him when the ladies had left the table, but Diavolo escaped unobserved before he could carry out his intention.

Mr. Ellis, however, had seen him go, and followed him. He found him in the schoolroom, crying as if his heart would break, his slender frame all shaken with great convulsive sobs, and the old books and playthings, which had suddenly assumed for him the bitterly pathetic interest that attaches to once loved things when they are carelessly cast aside and forgotten, scattered about him. Mr. Ellis sat down beside him, and touched his hand, and tried to comfort him, but the tutor was sad at heart himself.

Before very long, however, Angelica burst in upon them, with her hair down, and in the shortest and oldest dress she possessed. Her passionate love for her brother had always been the great hopeful and redeeming point of her character, and if she did show it principally by banging his head, she never meant to hurt him. Almost any other sister would have owed him a grudge for not admiring her in her first fine gown, and so spoiling her pleasure; but Angelica saw that he was thinking that the old days were over, and there had come a change now which would divide them, and she thought only of the pain he was suffering on that account. So, when she found that he was not going to join the ladies in the drawing-room, she rushed upstairs to her own room, which her maid was arranging for the night, and relieved her feelings by tearing off her dinner-dress, rolling it in a wisp, and throwing it at the woman. Her petticoats followed it, and then she kicked off her white satin shoes, one of which lit on the mantelpiece, the other on the dressing-table; and tearing out her hairpins, flung them about the floor in all directions.

"My old brown gown, Elizabeth," she demanded, stamping.

"What's the matter, Miss"—

But Angelica had snatched the gown from the wardrobe, put it on, and was halfway downstairs,

buttoning it as she went, before the maid could finish the sentence.

When she entered the schoolroom, she threw herself on her knees beside Diavolo, and hugged him tight, as if she had been going to lose him altogether, or he had just escaped from a great danger.

"I won't wear long dresses if you don't like them," she protested.

"Well, you can't go about like that," he grumbled, recovering himself the moment he felt her close to him again, and struck by a sense of impropriety in her short skirt after the grown-up appearance she had presented in the long one. "You look like a beggar."

"Well, if I *do* wear a long one," she declared, "it shall only be a disguise. I promise you I'll be just as bad as ever in it," and she drew a handkerchief out of her pocket, which had been left there for months and was frowsy, and wiped her own eyes and Diavolo's abruptly. "Your feelings are quite boggy, Diavolo," she said, giving a dry sob herself as she spoke. "You can't touch them at all without coming to water. You cry when you laugh."

Mr. Ellis had stolen softly out of the room as soon as he could do so unobserved, and now the twins were sitting together in their favourite position on the same chair, with their arms around each other, and Angelica's dark head slanted so as to lean against Diavolo's fair one.

He had rewarded her last remark with a melancholy grin; but the clouds had broken, and it now only required time for them to roll away.

"You'll get a moustache in time," Angelica proceeded, in her most matter-of-fact tone. "I can see signs of it now in some lights, only it's so fair it doesn't show much."

"I'll shave it to make it darker," he suggested.

"No, you mustn't do that," she answered, "because that'll make it coarse, and I want you to have one like Uncle Dawne's. But when it comes it will make you look as much grown-up as my long dresses do me, and then we'll study some art and practise it together, and not be separated all our lives."

"We will," said Diavolo.

"But I think we ought to begin at once," Angelica added thoughtfully. "Just give me time to consider. And come out into the grounds for a frolic. I feel smothered in here; and there's a moon!"

CHAPTER V

EDITH BEALE had now been married for more than a year to Sir Mosley Menteith, and the whole of their life together had been to her a painful period of gradual disillusion—and all the more painful because she was totally unprepared even for the possibility of any troubles of the kind which had beset her. Parental opinion and prejudice, ignorance, education, and custom had combined to deceive her with regard to the transient nature of her own feeling for her lover; and it was also inevitable that she should lend herself enthusiastically to the deception; for who would not believe, if they could, that a state so ecstatic is enduring? Even people who do know better are apt to persuade themselves that an exception will be made in their favour, and this being so, it naturally follows that a girl like

Edith, all faith and fondness, is foredoomed by every circumstance of her life and virtue of her nature, to make the fatal mistake. But, as Evadne told her, passion stands midway between love and hate, and is an introduction to either; and there is no doubt that, if Menteith had been the kind of repentant erring sinner she imagined him, her first wild desire would have cooled down into the lasting joy of tranquil love. Menteith, however, was not at all that kind of man, and, consequently, from the first the marriage had been a miserable example of the result of uniting the spiritual or better part of human nature with the essentially animal or most degraded side of it. In that position there was just one hope of happiness left for Edith, and that was in her children. If such a woman so situated can be happy anywhere it will be in her nursery. But Edith's child, which arrived pretty promptly, only proved to be another whip to scourge her. Although of an unmistakable type, he was apparently healthy when he was born, but had rapidly degenerated, and Edith herself was a wreck.

They had been out to Malta for a short time, but had come home, Menteith being invalided, and were now at a bracing seaside place, trying what the air would do for them all.

It was Edith's habit to send the child out with his nurse directly after breakfast, and having done so as usual one morning, she remained alone with her husband in the breakfast-room, which looked out upon the sands. She had her hands idly folded on her lap, and was watching Menteith as she might have watched a stranger about whom she was curious. He sat at some distance from her reading a paper, and there was no perceptible change in him; but she had changed very much for the worse. Why was she not recovering her strength? Why had it pleased Heaven to afflict her? That was what she was thinking; but at the same time she blamed herself for repining, and in order to banish the thought, she rose, and, going over to her husband, laid her hand gently on his shoulder, courting a caress. He had been lavish enough of caresses at first, but all that was over now, and he finished the paragraph he was reading before he noticed Edith at all. Then he glanced at her, but his eyes were cold and critical.

"You certainly are not looking well," he observed, evidently meaning not attractive, as if he were injured by the fact. He got up when he had spoken, so that in the act of rising he dislodged her hand from his shoulder. Then he yawned and lounged over to the window, which was wide open, the weather being warm, and stood there with his legs apart and his hands in his pockets, looking out.

One little loving caress or kindly word would have changed the whole direction of Edith's thoughts; but, wanting that, she stood where he had left her for some moments, lost in pained reflection, and then she followed him listlessly, seated herself in a low easy-chair, and looked out also.

There were crowds of people on the sands, and her dull eyes wandered from group to group, then up to the sky, and down again to the sea and shore. The sun shone radiantly; sparkles of light from the rippling wavelets responded to his ardent caress. The sea-sweet air fanned her face. But neither light nor air nor sound availed to move her pleasurably.

"Is this to be my life?" she thought. The tide was coming in over the sands. Some children with their shoes and stockings off were playing close to the water's edge. They had made a castle, and were standing on the top of it, all crowded together, waiting for a big wave to come and surround them; and when at last it came, it carried half their fortress away with it, and they all hopped off into the water, and splashed up through it helter-skelter, with shouts of laughter, to the dry land.

"I should have enjoyed that once," thought Edith.

A party of grown-up people cantered past upon donkeys, driven by boys with big sticks. The women were clinging to the pommels of their saddles, and shrieking as they bumped along, while the men shouted, and beat and kicked the donkeys with all their might.

"Horrid, common, cruel people!" thought Edith. "How dreadful it would be to have to know them!"

A girl came riding past alone on a hired horse. She wore a rusty black skirt over her petticoats. It was gathered in by a drawing-string at the waist, and made her look ludicrously bunchy. Her stirrup was too short, and she clung desperately with both hands to whip and reins and saddle, only venturing to guide her horse now and then in a timid, half-apologetic sort of way, as if she were afraid he would resent it. She must have felt far from comfortable, but probably the dream of her life had been to ride, and now that she *was* riding she admired herself extremely.

Edith involuntarily drew a mental picture of the contrast she herself presented on horseback. "But that girl is well and happy," she objected, to her own disadvantage.

She became aware at this moment of another girl who was passing on foot. She was one of those good-looking girls of the middle class who throng to fashionable watering-places in the season— young women with senses rampant, and minds undisciplined, impelled by natural instinct to find a mate, and practising every little art of dress and manner which they imagine will help them to that end by making them attractive. Their object is always evident in their eyes, which rove from man to man pathetically, pleadingly, anxiously, mischievously, according to their temperaments, but always with the same inquiry, "Will it be you?"

This girl had made herself by tight-lacing into a notable specimen of the peg-top figure, bulgy at the bust and shoulders, and tapering off at the waist. She had also squeezed her feet into boots that were much too small for them, and fluffed her hair out till her head seemed preposterously large—by which means she had achieved the appearance known to her sex as "stylish."

When Edith first saw her she was walking along very quickly with a dissatisfied look on her face; but as she approached the window she glanced up, and, seeing Menteith, her countenance cleared; and she slackened her speed, seeming suddenly to become uncertain of the direction she wished to take. First, she half stopped, and appeared to be thinking; then she hastily put her hand in her pocket, and looked back the way she had come, as if she had lost something; then shrugged her shoulders, to signify that it didn't much matter, and with a far-away look in her eyes walked slowly into the sea; this was in order that she might spring nimbly out again with a fine pretence of confusion at her affected fit of absent-mindedness.

Menteith watched these manœuvres attentively,

patiently awaiting the inevitable moment when she would look at him again. So far, she had pretended to ignore him, but he understood her tactics, and as he observed them, he twisted first one end and then the other of his little light moustache, with a self-complacency not to be concealed. He had been feeling bored all the morning, but now his interest in life revived. He had only the one interest in life, and when the girl on the beach had done all she could to excite it, she glanced at him again, and saw by the look with which he responded that she had succeeded. Then she sat down on the sand, placing herself so that she could meet his eyes every time she looked up, and taking a letter out of her pocket she began to read it, varying the expression of her countenance the while, to show that she derived great pleasure from the perusal. This was to pique Menteith into supposing that he had a rival.

The girl had not troubled herself about Edith's presence, but the latter had also been watching her wiles—dully enough, however, until all at once a thought occurred to her, a hateful thought.

It was the emotional rather than the intellectual side of her nature which had been developed by early associations. She had been accustomed to feel more than to think, and now, when all food for elevating emotions had been withdrawn from her daily life, others, mostly of a distressing kind, took possession of her mind. She had gone through all the phases of acute misery to which a girl so trained and with such a husband is liable. She had been weakened into dependence by excess of sympathy, and now was being demoralised for want of any. Menteith had hung upon her words at first, had been responsive to her every glance; but latterly he had become indifferent to both, and she knew it, without, however, comprehending the why and wherefore of the change, or of the growing sense of something wanting which was fast becoming her own normal condition. She was still fighting hard to preserve the spiritual fervour which had been the predominant characteristic of her girlhood; but, at this period of their intercourse, she knew better than to attempt to re-arouse in him that semblance of spirituality which had deluded her in their early passion-period. But she had from the first cultivated a passive attitude toward him, and that even when the natural instinct of her womanhood impelled her to war with him. In any case, however, instinct is not safeguard enough for creatures living under purely artificial conditions; they must have knowledge; and Edith had been robbed of all means of self-defence by the teaching which insisted that her only duty as a wife consisted in silent submission to her husband's will. Her intellectual life, such as it was, had stopped short from the time of her intimate association with Menteith, and her spiritual nature had been starved in close contact with him; only her senses had been nourished, and these were now being rendered morbidly active by disease. The shadow of an awful form of insanity already darkened her days. The mental torture was extreme; but she fought for her reason with the fearful malady valiantly, and all the time presented outwardly only the same dull apathy, giving no sign and speaking no word which could betray the fury of the rage within.

This last thought took her unawares as usual, and followed an accustomed course. She had entertained it for a moment, turning it over in her mind with interest before she realised its nature. When she did so, however, her soul sickened,

"What am I coming to?" she mentally ejaculated, recovering herself with an effort; which resulted also in a sudden resolution.

"I want to go home," she said. Her voice was very husky.

Menteith, startled from the absorbing occupation of ogling the girl on the beach, looked at her sharply. Had she noticed what he was up to, and was she jealous by any chance, as these confounded unreasonable women are apt to be? No, he concluded, after carefully scrutinising her face and attitude; there was not a trace of that kind of thing, and she evidently only meant what she had said. "And, by Jove!" he thought, "it's an excellent idea, for she's looking anything but nice at present. Marriage is certainly a lottery! A fellow chooses a girl for her health and beauty, and gives her everything she can want in the world, and in less than a year she's a wreck!" The injury done to himself, implied in this last reflection, caused a certain amount of irritation, which betrayed itself in the politely "nagging" tone of his reply.

"What precisely do you mean by 'home'?" he asked.

"I mean Morningquest," she answered.

"Ah!" he ejaculated. "That was what I inferred."

"I hope I have not said anything to annoy you?" she exclaimed.

"Oh dear no!" he assured her. "I know your sex too well to be annoyed by any of its caprices. But still," he added, "a wife does not usually make her 'home' with her parents."

"But we have no settled home," she remonstrated.

"Do you mean that for a reproach, because my want of means at present obliges me to keep my houses shut up?" he asked.

"No," she answered, with a gleam of spirit, "and you know I do not."

There was a pause after this. It pleased him to make her ask for his permission to go to her mother, in so many words. He perceived that she found it difficult to do so, and there was satisfaction in the respect and fear which he thought were betokened by her hesitation. The sense of power and possession flattered his self-esteem and enlivened him.

"Do you object?" she ventured at last.

"To what, dear?" he asked, without interrupting an exchange of amorous glances which was just then going on between himself and the girl on the beach.

"To my going home?"

"Oh no!" he exclaimed, smiling. "Only to that way of putting it. By the way," he added pleasantly, taking up a pair of opera glasses that were lying on a table beside him, and adjusting the sight, "shall I accompany you?"

Edith had taken it for granted that he would, as they had never yet been separated since their marriage; and the question, striking as it did another note of change, surprised and hurt her. But as it was evident that he would not have asked it had he wished to go, she answered quietly, "Oh no! Why should you trouble yourself?"

"It would be no trouble, I assure you," he answered, confirming her first impression that he did not wish to go.

"Oh no!" she repeated. "I could not think of taking you away from here—if the air is doing you good."

"Ah, well," he answered, catching at the excuse, "I suppose I ought to forego the pleasure,

for I am just beginning at last to feel some benefit from the change, and I should probably lose the little good it has done me if I go away now. Morningquest is relaxing. However, I shall join you as soon as I can, you know!" This was said with a plausible affectation of being impelled by a sense of duty to act contrary to his inclination, which did not, however, impose upon Edith; and the thought that the wish to be with her now was not imperative *although* she was ill became another haunting torment during the short remaining time they were together; but, happily for herself, she never perceived that he did not care to accompany her principally *because* she was ill.

She left that afternoon with her servants and child, and he saw to the preparations for their departure with cheerful alacrity. She was depressed, and he told her she must keep up her spirits for—everybody's—sake! and set her a good example by keeping his own up manfully. He saw her off at the station, and stood smiling and bowing, with his hat in his hand, until she was out of sight; and then he turned on his heel and went with a jaunty air to look for the girl on the beach.

Up to the last moment, Edith would have been thankful for any excuse to change her mind and stay; but when she found herself alone, and the journey had fairly begun, she experienced a sudden sense of relief.

She had not realised the fact: but latterly her husband's presence had oppressed her.

CHAPTER VI

THE Beales had not seen their daughter and grandson for some months, and the appearance of both was a shock to them. They said not a word to each other at first, but neither of them could help looking at Edith furtively from time to time on the evening of her arrival. When the bishop came up to the drawing-room after dinner and had settled himself in his accustomed easy-chair, Edith had crept to his side, and, slipping her hand through his arm, sat leaning her head against his shoulder, and staring straight before her, neither speaking nor listening except when directly addressed. Her father, between whom and herself there had always been a great deal of sympathy, was inexpressibly touched by this silent appeal to his love; and letting the paper lie on his lap, he sat silent also, and serious, feeling, without in any way knowing, that all was not well.

Mrs. Beale was also depressed, although she assured herself again and again that such deep devotion between father and daughter was an elevating and beautiful sight, which it was a privilege to witness; and tried to persuade herself that they were all extremely happy in the tranquil joy of this peaceful evening spent alone together, with the world shut out.

"That child is not right," the bishop said, when Edith had gone to bed. "Have you noticed her face? I don't like the look of it at all; not at all."

"Isn't that rather unkind, dear?" Mrs. Beale replied. "I always recovered in time."

"You never were as ill as the poor child evidently is," he answered; and retired to his library, much disturbed.

But Mrs. Beale determined not to worry herself, and managed to dismiss the subject from her mind until next day, when she was sitting alone with

her daughter in the morning-room upstairs. They were both working, but the conversation flagged, and Mrs. Beale, from wondering why Edith was so uncommunicative, found herself involuntarily repeating the bishop's observation, "That child is not right," and the question, "What is the matter with your face, dearest?" slipped from her unawares.

"I don't know, mother," Edith answered shortly.

She had never before in her life spoken to her mother in that tone, and the latter was surprised and hurt for a moment; but then persuaded herself that some irritability was only natural if the child were out of health, and at once made proper allowances.

Edith got up when she had spoken, and left the room.

She was occupying one of the state apartments of the palace then, but on the way to it she had to pass the room which had been hers as a girl. The door was open, and she went in. Nothing was changed there; but the moment she entered she felt that there was a direful difference in herself. The sad, benignant Christ, with tender, sympathetic eyes, looked down upon her from the picture on the wall; but she returned the glance indifferently at first, and then, remembering the rapture with which she had been wont to kneel at His feet, she looked again. The recollection of the once dear delight tantalised her now, however, because it did not renew it; and, turning from the picture impatiently, she went to the window, and there sank on to the seat from whence she had looked out at the moonlight and the shadows on the night of the day on which it had been arranged that she should winter with her mother at Malta. And here again she endeavoured to recall the glow of sensation which had thrilled her then; but only the lifeless ashes of that fire remained, and they were burnt out past all hope of rekindling them. Even the remembrance of what her feelings had been eluded her, and she could think of nothing but after-experiences—experiences of her married life, and those precisely which it was not wise to recall. They were not exactly thoughts, however, that occupied her, but emotions, to which, looking out on the sunlit garden with rounded eyes and pupils dilated to the uttermost, she had unconsciously lent herself for some time, as on other occasions, before she realised what she was doing. Suddenly, however, she came to her senses, and fled in affright to the morning-room, where she threw herself down on her knees beside her mother impetuously, and buried her face in her lap.

"Take care, dear child!" Mrs. Beale exclaimed. "You will hurt yourself."

"Mother! mother!" Edith cried. "I have such terrible, terrible thoughts! I cannot control them. I cannot keep them away. The torment of my mind is awful. I could kill myself."

Mrs. Beale turned pale. "Pray, dearest!" she ejaculated.

"I do, I do, mother," Edith wailed; "but they mingle with my prayers. God is a demon, isn't He?"

Mrs. Beale threw her arms round her daughter, and almost shook her in her consternation. "Edith, darling, do you know what you are saying?" she demanded.

Edith looked into her face in a bewildered way. "No, mother, what was it?" she answered.

Then all outward sign of Mrs. Beale's agitation subsided. Some shocks stun, and some strengthen

and steady us. The piteous appeal in Edith's eyes, the puzzle and the pain of her face as she made an effort to recall her words and understand them, had the latter effect upon her mother.

"I am afraid you are very weak, dear child," the poor lady bravely responded. "Weakness makes people unhealthy-minded. You must see the doctor, and have a tonic."

"The doctor again!" Edith groaned. "It has been nothing but the doctor and 'tonics' ever since I have been married."

"What does he say is the matter exactly?" Mrs. Beale asked.

"All his endeavour seems to be not to say what is the matter exactly," Edith replied.

Mrs. Beale reflected, caressing her daughter the while, and under the soothing influence of her loving touch Edith's countenance began to relax.

"When is Mosley coming?" her mother said at last.

Edith's face contracted again, and she rose to her feet. "I don't know, mother," she answered coldly.

The chime rang out at this moment, and she frowned as she listened to it.

"I wish those bells could be stopped!" she exclaimed. "They deafen me."

Mrs. Beale had also risen from her chair, smiling mechanically, but with pain and perplexity at her heart. "I am sure it is the journey," she said. "It has quite upset you. Your nerves are all jarred. You must really lie down for a little—see, dearest, here on the couch; and keep quite quiet." She arranged the cushions.

"Come, dear," she urged, "like a good child, and I will cover you up."

Edith had been accustomed to this kind of gentle compulsion all her life, and as she yielded to it now she began to feel more like herself. "I knew I should be better with you, mother," she said, sighing; and then she reached up her arm, and drew her mother's face down to hers. "Kiss me, mother, and tell me you forgive me for being impatient."

"Dear child, you are not impatient," her mother answered, adding to herself, as she returned to her seat, "I hope it is only impatience!"

Edith had turned her face to the wall, and soon appeared to be asleep. Then her mother went down to the library. The bishop rose from his writing-table when she entered. It was a habit of his to be polite to his wife.

"I think you were right last night about Edith," she said. "She is not as she should be. Write to Dr. Galbraith. Ask him to come here tomorrow. Ask him to dine and stay the night, as if it were only an ordinary visit—not to alarm her, you know. But tell him why we want him to come. I am nervous about her."

Mrs. Beale's face quivered, and she burst into tears as she spoke.

"Oh, my dear! I am sure there is no need to agitate yourself," the bishop exclaimed. "Now do—now don't, really! See! I will write at once."

He sat down, and began, "My dear George," and then looked up at his wife to see if she were not already relieved.

Mrs. Beale could not speak, but she stroked his head once or twice in acknowledgment of his great kindness. Then more tears came because he *was* so very kind; and finally she was obliged to go to her own room to recover herself.

As the day wore on, however, she became reassured. Edith seemed much refreshed by her sleep, and, in the afternoon when the three ladies

came from the castle to call upon her, bringing Angelica with them, she quite roused up.

"What, Angelica a grown-up young lady in a long dress!" she exclaimed. "But where is Diavolo?"

"We had a slight difference of opinion this morning," Angelica answered stiffly.

"Dear me! that is a new thing!" Mrs. Beale commented.

"No, it is not," Angelica contradicted, bristling visibly. "Only, when we were younger we used to—settle our differences—at once, and have done with them. But now that I am in long dresses Diavolo won't do that, so we have to sulk like married people."

"But, my dear child, I don't see why you should quarrel at all," Mrs. Beale remonstrated.

"You would if you were with us, I expect," Angelica answered, and then she turned her attention to Edith, but not by a sign did she betray the slightest consciousness of the latter's disfigurement—unless making herself unusually agreeable was a symptom of commiseration; and in this she succeeded so thoroughly that when the others rose to go Edith did not feel inclined to part with her.

"Won't you stay with me here a few days?" she entreated.

Angelica reflected. "It would do him good, I should think," she said at last.

"I should think it would!" Edith agreed, laughing.

"Did I speak?" said Angelica.

"Yes," Edith answered. "You informed me that you are going to stay here in order to punish Diavolo by depriving him of your society for a time."

"I am sure I did not say all that!" Angelica exclaimed.

"Well, not exactly, perhaps," Edith confessed; "but you led me to infer it."

"Well, I will stay," Angelica decided. "Aunt Fulda, I'm going to stay here for a few days with Edith," she answered.

"Very well, dear," her aunt meekly rejoined.

"Are you going to stay now?"

"Yes. Tell Elizabeth to bring me some wearing apparel."

As they drove back to Morne, Lady Claudia scolded Lady Fulda for so weakly allowing Angelica to have her own way in everything.

"I thought you would agree with me that the sweet womanly influence at the palace would do her good," Lady Fulda answered, in an injured tone.

"Sweet womanly nonsense!" said Lady Claudia. "She will twist them all round her little finger, and turn the whole place upside down before she leaves, or I am much mistaken."

"Well, dear, if you would only make Angelica do what you wish while you are here to influence her I should be thankful," Lady Fulda rejoined, with gentle dignity.

Lady Claudia said no more.

Things went merrily at the palace for the rest of the day. Mrs. Orton Beg called, and Mr. Kilroy of Ilverthorpe, between whom and Angelica there was always an excellent understanding; and she entertained him now with observations and anecdotes which so amused Edith that, as Mrs. Beale said to the bishop afterward, "The dear, naughty child quite took her out of herself."

Angelica had never been in the same house with a baby before, and she was all interest. Whatever defects of character the new women may eventually

acquire, lack of maternal affection will not be one of them.

"Have you seen the baby?" she asked Elizabeth, when the latter was brushing her hair for dinner. He had not been visible during the afternoon, but Angelica had thought of him incessantly.

"Yes, miss," Elizabeth answered.

"Is he a pretty baby?" Angelica wanted to know.

Elizabeth pursed up her lips with an air of reserve.

"You don't think so?" Angelica said—she had seen the maid's face in the mirror before her.

"What is he like?"

"He's exactly like the bishop, miss."

Angelica broke into a broad smile at herself in the glass. "What! a little old man baby!" she exclaimed.

"Yes, miss—with a cold in his head," the maid said seriously.

When she was dressed, Angelica went to make his acquaintance. On the way she discovered her particular friend, the bishop, going furtively in the same direction, and slipped her hand through his arm.

"We'll go together," she said confidentially, taking it for granted that his errand was the same as her own.

The nurse was undressing the child when they entered, and Edith sat watching her. She was already dressed for the evening, and looked worse in an elaborate toilet than she had done in her morning dress. A stranger would have found it hard to believe that only the year before she had been radiantly healthy and beautiful. The puzzled, pathetic expression was again in her eyes as she watched the child. She had no smile for him, and uttered no baby words to him—nor had he a smile for her. He was old, old already, and exhausted with suffering, and as his gaze wandered from one to the other it was easy to believe that he was asking each dumbly why had he ever been born?

"Is that Edith's baby?" Angelica exclaimed, in her astonishment and horror, under her breath, slipping her hand from the bishop's arm.

She had seen enough in one momentary glance, and she fled from the room. The bishop followed her. Mrs. Beale was there when they entered, standing behind her daughter's chair, but she did not look at her husband, nor he at her. For the first time in their married life, poor souls, they were afraid to meet each other's eyes.

CHAPTER VII

NEXT day, in the afternoon, Mrs. Beale being otherwise engaged, Edith proposed that she and Angelica should go for a drive together. Edith was feeling better, and Angelica had recovered her equanimity. She suggested that they should drive toward Fountain Towers. Edith had not been on that road since her marriage, and when they passed the place where she and her mother had seen the young French girl lying insensible on the pathway with her baby beside her she was reminded of the incident, and described it to Angelica, adding, "I have so often longed to know what became of her."

"I can tell you," said Angelica. "I know her quite well by sight. She is living with Nurse Griffiths, in Honeysuckle Cottage, on Dr. Galbraith's estate. Nurse Griffiths told us he brought

her there one day in his carriage very ill, and she has been there ever since. He always gets angry and snaps at you if he's bothered about anybody who's ill or unfortunate, and Diavolo and I met him that day coming away from the cottage, and he spoke to us so shortly we were sure there was something bad the matter, so we went to see what it was, and Nurse Griffiths said she was French. I've not been there since, but I expect it's the same girl. Shall we stop and see? We pass the end of the lane where the cottage is."

Edith agreed eagerly. She said it would be a relief to her mind to know that the girl was well cared for and happy.

"Oh, everybody is well cared for and happy on Dr. Galbraith's estate," said Angelica. "His tenants worship him. And they would rather be abused by him than complimented by anybody else."

The cottage, covered with the honeysuckle from which it took its name, stood in a large old-fashioned garden, at the edge of a fir plantation, which sheltered it from the north-east wind at the back, and filled the air about it with balsamic fragrance.

Edith and Angelica left the carriage at the end of the lane and walked up.

"What a lovely spot!" Edith exclaimed. "On a still bright day like this it makes one realise what the saints meant by 'holy calm.' I think I should like to live in such a place, and never hear another echo from the outside world."

"I suppose you would just like to add dear Mosley to the establishment," Angelica suggested.

Edith's heart contracted. She had not thought of her husband, and now when she did it was with a pang, because she could not include him in her idea of Eden.

The French girl was standing at the door of the cottage with a child in her arms.

"Is Nurse Griffiths in?" Angelica asked.

Edith looked at the child. It should have been running about by that time, but it was small and rickety, with bones that bent beneath its weight, slight as it was. Edith had looked at it first with some interest, but its unhealthy appearance repelled her. She managed, however, to speak to the girl about it kindly.

"What is your baby's name?" she asked.

"Mosley Menteith," was the answer.

For a moment it seemed to Edith as if all the world were blotted out, and then again the hum of bees, the chirrup of birds, the fall of a fir-cone, the call of the cock-pheasant in the wood sounded obtrusively, making the girl's voice as she continued speaking appear far-off and indistinct.

"I called him after his father, then, didn't I?" she was saying to the baby in good English, but with a French accent. "And he's to grow up, and be a big strong fellow and beat his father, isn't he, for he's a bad, bad man!"

Nurse Griffiths hearing voices in the porch came out.

"Hush, Louise," she said to the girl. "You've no call to talk in that way now. You must excuse her," she added to the ladies. "She's had a bad bringing up."

"I can't—believe you," Edith faltered. "Tell me—exactly."

"Well, it was in this way," the girl rejoined, speaking in the prosaic tone in which her countrywomen are accustomed to discuss matters that inspire ours with too much disgust to be mentioned. "Menteith came after me, and my sister wanted money, so she made me believe that he couldn't

marry me because there was a law to prevent it. She said he loved me, and if I loved him well enough, it would be a noble thing to disregard the law, and he gave her seventy-five pounds for that. I found her letter to Menteith about it, and I've got it here," tapping the bosom of her gown. "He took me abroad when he wanted to get rid of me, and left me in Paris with five pounds in my pocket; but it was enough to bring me back. I was sick when I landed at Dover, and they sent me to the workhouse; and when I got well again I told them I had friends in Morningquest, and they gave me a little help to get there; but I had to tramp most of the way, and I was weak—I couldn't have got as far as I did if I hadn't wanted to kill them both."

"Now, hush!" said Nurse Griffiths. "The Lord saved you from such a sin."

"The Lord!" said the girl derisively. "If the Lord had been inclined to help me, He wouldn't have waited till I came to murder. It wasn't the Lord saved *me*."

"She will say that, and I can't cure her," Nurse Griffiths declared. "But I'm afraid you're feeling the heat, ma'am, and you are not very strong," she added, addressing Edith, who was clinging to the porch for support, looking strangely haggard. "Won't you come in and sit down a bit?"

"No, thank you, it is nothing," Edith answered steadily, recovering herself.

"Will you come and sit down with me on that seat?" she said to Louise, indicating a rustic bench under an old pear-tree at the end of the garden. "I want to talk to you."

Nurse Griffiths and Angelica remained in the porch.

"Who is that lady, miss?" the nurse asked, when Edith was out of hearing.

"Lady Menteith," Angelica answered.

The woman threw up her hands. "O Lord! have mercy upon her—and upon us! What a cruel, cruel shame! She's showing her the letter. Eh! it's enough to kill her. You generally know all the mischief that's going, miss! Why did you bring her here?"

"I wish I had known this, then," said Angelica, whose heart was thumping painfully. "If any harm comes of it, I shall always think it was my fault."

"Well, there's no call to do that if you didn't know," the woman answered. "I see she was a great lady myself, but I never thought it was *her*. Eh! but it's the dirty men makes the misery."

On the way back, Edith stopped the carriage at the telegraph office, and despatched a message to her husband to come to her, "Come at once."

They only arrived in time to dress hurriedly for dinner, and when they went down to the drawing-room they found Dr. Galbraith there with the bishop and Mrs. Beale.

"Where have you two been the whole afternoon?" the latter asked.

"We had tea in the library at Fountain Towers," Angelica answered easily, "and obtained some useful knowledge from your books."

Dr. Galbraith looked hard at her: "I wonder what devilment you've been up to now?" he thought.

But Angelica's manner was as unconcerned as possible. Edith's was not, however. Her face was flushed, her eyes unnaturally glittering, and she became excited about trifles, and talked loudly at table; and in the drawing-room after dinner she could not keep still. Mrs. Beale asked Angelica to play, and Angelica tried something

soothing at first, but Edith complained impatiently that those things always made her melancholy. Then Angelica played some bars of patriotic music, stirring in the extreme, but Edith stopped her again.

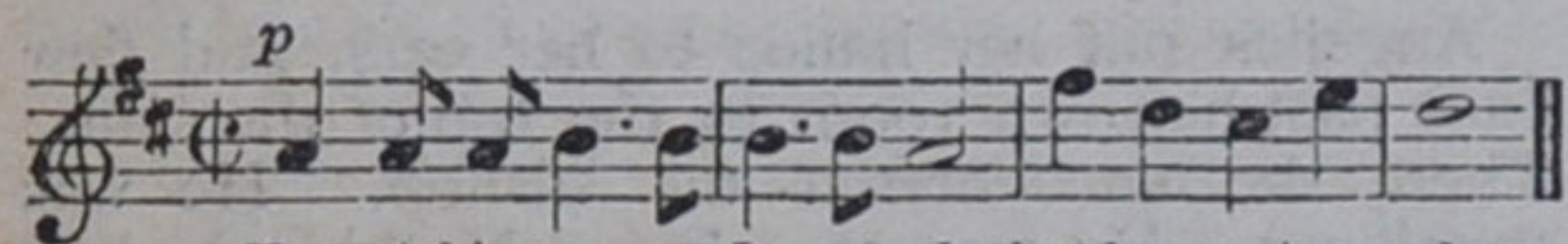
"That wearies my brain," she said, and began to pace about the room, up and down, up and down. Her mother watched her anxiously. Angelica closed the piano. Dr. Galbraith and the bishop came in from the dining-room, and then Edith declared that driving in the open air had made her so sleepy she must go to bed.

Angelica noticed that Dr. Galbraith scrutinised her face sharply as he shook hands with her.

"God bless you, my dear child," the bishop said when she kissed him, and his lips moved afterward for some seconds as if he were in prayer. Her mother followed her out of the room; and then silence settled on the three who were left. The bishop was obviously uneasy. Dr. Galbraith's good-looking plainness was softened by a serious expression which added much to the attractiveness of his strong kind face. Angelica shivered, and was about to break the spell of silence boldly in her energetic way, when suddenly, and apparently overhead, a heavy bell tolled once.

It was only the cathedral clock striking the hour, but it sounded portentously through the solemn stillness of the night, and with quickened attention they all looked up and listened.

Slowly the big bell boomed forth ten strokes. Then came a pause; and then the chime rolled through the room, a deafening volume of sound, in long reverberations, from amidst which the constant message disentangled itself as it were, but distinctly, although to each listener with a different effect:



He, watching o - ver Is - ra - el, slumbers not, nor sleeps.

It awoke Dr. Galbraith from a train of painful reflections; it reassured the bishop; and it made Angelica fret for Diavolo remorsefully.

CHAPTER VIII

ANGELICA must have fallen asleep the moment she got into bed that night, and just as instantly she began to dream. She had never hitherto felt a throb of passion. She had given the best love of her life to her brother, and had made no personal application of anything she had heard, or seen, or read of lovers, so that the possibility of ever having one of her own had never cost her a serious thought. But the excitement of that day and the occupations had so wrought upon her imagination that when she slept she dreamt, and in her dream she saw a semblance, the semblance of a man, a changing semblance, the features of which she could not discern, although she tried with frenzied effort, because she knew that when she saw him fully face to face he would be hers. They were not in this world, nor in the next. They were not even in the universe. They were simply each the centre of a great light which formed a sphere about them, and separated them from one another; and heaven and hell, and earth and sky, and night and day, and life and death were all added to the glory of those spheres of light. And she knew *how*; but there is no word of human speech to express it. She lay on light, she stood on light, she sat on light, she

swam in light; and wallowed, and walked, and ran, and leaped, and soared, rolling along in her own sphere until the monotony made her giddy; and all her endeavour was to reach her lover, not for himself so much as because she knew that if their two lights could be added in equal parts to each other and mingled into one, their combined effulgence would make a pathway to heaven. But try as she would she could not attain her object, and finally she became so exhausted by the struggle that she was obliged to desist. The moment she did so, however, the other sphere turned of its own accord, and rolled up to her. "Dear me!" said Angelica. "How easily things are done when the right time comes!" The semblance now took shape, and kissed her. "How nice!" thought Angelica, returning the kiss. "This is love. Love is life. I am his. He is mine. Most of all he is *mine*!" "No, we can't allow that!" said a chorus of men from the earth. "You're beginning to know too much. You'll want to be paid for your labour next just as well as we are, and that is *unwomanly*!" But Angelica only laughed and kissed her lover. "Talk does no good," she said; "this is the one thing the great man-boy-booby understands at present!" So she kissed him again, and every time she kissed him he changed. He was Samson, Abraham, Lot, Antony, Cæsar, Pan, Achilles, Hercules, Jove; he was Lancelot and Arthur, Percival, Galahad, and Gawaine. He was Henry VIII., Richelieu, Robespierre, Luther, and several popes. He was David the Psalmist, beloved of the man-god of the Hebrews. He was golden-haired Absalom, and St. Paul in his unregenerate days. But he never was Solomon. She saw hundreds of women dividing Solomon among them, and cherishing the little bits in the Woman's Sphere of their day, and they offered her a portion, but she refused to take it. She said she would have the whole of him or none at all, and they were horribly shocked. They said, "Fie! you are no true woman! A woman is satisfied with very little, and silently submits." But Angelica answered, "Rubbish! What do you know of womanhood and truth? you talk like a bishop!" And the clergy were dreadfully offended at this. They said she was all wrong. They said it mildly. They shouted it rudely. They whispered it persuasively, and then they blustered. "We are right and you are wrong!" they maintained. "Well, I have only your word for that," said Angelica, which provoked them again. "We speak in the name of the Lord!" they answered. "Oh, anybody could do that," said Angelica, "but it wouldn't prove that they have the Lord's permission to use His name." Then they reminded her that the true spirit of God had been bestowed upon them for transmission, and she answered, "Yes, but it was taken from you again for your sins, and confided to us; and wherever a virtuous woman is, there is the spirit of God and the will of God, and there only!" Then they drew off a little and consulted, and when they spoke again they had lowered their tone considerably. "But you will allow, I suppose, that we have done some good in the world?" they said collectively. "Oh yes," she answered, "you have done your duty here and there to the best of your ability, but your ability was considerably impaired by vice. However, you have brought the world up out of the dark ages of physical force at our instigation, and helped to prepare it for us; now step down gracefully, take your pensions and perquisites, and hold your tongues. Men are the muscle, the hard-working material of the nation; women are the soul and spirit, the directing intelli-

gence." They were about to reply, but before they could do so, a stentorian voice proclaimed—

"HOME IS THE WOMAN'S SPHERE!"

"Who are you?" said Angelica coolly. "I am the Pope of Rome," he answered, strutting up to her with dignity. "And what do *you* know about the Woman's Sphere?" she said, laughing. "I am informed of God!" he declared. But she answered that she had much later information, and slammed the doors of the Sphere in his face. Then she peeped through the keyhole, and saw that the pope was in consultation with the Archbishops of Canterbury and York and two popular cardinals. They were very quiet at first, but presently they began to quarrel. "Don't make such a noise," she shrieked through the keyhole; "go away and be good, will you? We're very busy in here, and you disturb us. We're revising the moral laws." The shock of this intelligence electrified them, and while they stared at each other helplessly, not knowing what to do, she armed herself with the vulgar vernacular, which was the best weapon, she understood, to level at cant. "Lord," she said to herself, "how Diavolo would enjoy this! I wish he was here!" She found the work of the Sphere very heavy, and she tried to remember the name of some saint, but for the life of her she couldn't think of any, so she called upon Ouida and Rhoda Broughton. Then she peeped through the keyhole again, and finding that the pope was listening, she squirted water into his ear. The other Ecclesiastical Commissioners remained in the background, looking anxious. "We're attending to man the iniquitous now," she called to them kindly, to relieve their minds. "He's been too much for you, it seems, but we'll soon settle him." "You're a nasty-minded woman," said the pope. "Always abusive, old candles and vestments," Angelica retorted. "Candles and vestments—in excess," said the Archbishop of York hurriedly. "Where?" And he went off to see about them. "To the pure all things are pure," a powerful voice proclaimed at that moment. "Ah, that is St. Paul!" said Angelica, surprised and delighted, and then she shook hands with him. "The sacred duties of wife and mother," one of the cardinals began to pipe—"There you are meddling again," Angelica interrupted him rudely; "will you go away, and let us mind our own business?" "This is all your fault," the pope said to the Archbishop of Canterbury. The archbishop defended himself courteously, but another quarrel seemed inevitable nevertheless. Before it could come off, however, it suddenly appeared that if it were anything it was UNWOMANLY! About that they were quite in accord; and having made the discovery they went their several ways, shaking their several heads impressively. "Now I shall have time to consider the state of the Sphere," said Angelica. "Just wait till I can come and teach you your duty," she called to the women there. "I am not Esther, most decidedly! But I am Judith. I am Jael. I am Vashti. I am Godiva. I am all the heroic women of all the ages rolled into one, not for the shedding of blood, but for the saving of suffering." They did not understand her a bit, however, they were so dazed, and they all looked askance at her. "I see," she said; "I shall have to save you in spite of yourselves." But when she had looked a little longer, and seen men, women, and children crowding like loathsome

maggots together, she was disheartened. "All this filth will breed a pestilence," she said, "and I shouldn't be surprised if that pestilence were ME!" But just at that moment the light went out, someone uttered a cry, and Angelica awoke. The room was flooded with moonlight. "I am awake now," she said to herself, "and that was a real cry. It was 'murder!' I think"—and she rose intrepidly to rush to the rescue. She was going off at once, just as she was, in her nightdress; but the house was so still at the moment that she thought she might be mistaken. She was determined to go and see for herself, however, in order to make sure; and having pinned up her hair, she put on her shoes and stockings and a dressing-gown, and opened the door, her heart beating wildly all the time. It was a sickening sensation. But as she listened she became aware of voices speaking naturally, and people moving to and fro, which somewhat reassured her. She left the room, however, and ran down the corridor.

At the farther end a bright shaft of light streamed across it from a half-open door, and she heard Edith speaking wildly.

"My poor child! my poor child!" Mrs. Beale answered, with tears in her voice. "Do try and calm yourself. Won't you tell us this story that is troubling you now? You will feel better if you tell us."

"No, no," Edith answered quickly. "I will not tell you until he comes, any of you. But *when* he comes!" There was a pause, then she asked feebly, "Doctor, what is the matter with my head?" But before he could answer, she broke out into a stream of horrid imprecations.

Angelica put her hands to her ears, and flew back past her own room to the top of the stairs. There she encountered the bishop. He was trembling. He was at a loss. Nothing he had ever studied either in theology or metaphysics had in the slightest degree prepared him for the state of things in society which he was now being forced to consider.

"My dear child!" he exclaimed. "What are you doing here?"

"Oh, I'm frightened! I'm frightened!" Angelica cried, thumping him hard on the chest with both fists. "Let us go away and hide ourselves!" She seized his hand impetuously, and dragged him downstairs after her sideways, a mode of descent which was more rapid than either safe or graceful for a little fat bishop in evening dress.

"Come, come, come to the library with me and talk about God and good angels, and that kind of thing," she cried.

"But this is the middle of the night," the bishop objected.

"Well, and is there any time like the present?" Angelica exclaimed. "Come at once—come and say nice soothing things from the psalms."

As she spoke, she dragged him across the hall and into the library from whence he had just issued, and then slammed the door. The bishop reproved her for this, and wanted her to go to bed, but she refused. "Go to bed, and lie awake in the dark with horrid words about—how can you expect it?" she demanded. "I shall not go to bed unless you come and sit beside me all night long."

Poor Angelica! impetuous, imperious, but in that she was her father's daughter, not saved by her

wonderful intelligence from being fantastical. There must inevitably have been an element of broad farce in the veriest tragedy into which she might have been brought at that time, an element which was rendered all the more conspicuous by her own inability to perceive at the moment that she was behaving ridiculously, and making others ridiculous. But the bishop himself was not conscious of any absurdity or loss of dignity. It was only the inconvenience that he felt just then. For he was fresh from a painful interview with Dr. Galbraith, and every nerve was jarring in response to the horror that had come upon him. His heart was wrung, and his conscience did not acquit him. He did recognise now, however, that Angelica was in no fit state of mind to be left alone, and sitting down beside a little table on which stood his constant companion and friend for many years, a large quarto copy of the Bible, he folded his hands upon it, seeming to pray, while he waited patiently until she should have calmed herself.

Her indignation had driven her to seek a more popular form of relief than the bishop had chosen. As she paced up and down the room in evident agitation, every now and then stopping short to wring her hands when terrible thoughts came crowding, she became in her own mind exceedingly abusive.

She revised and enlarged her reply to that cardinal who had piped to her earlier in the night about the sacred duties of wife and mother. "What do *you* know about 'the Sacred Duties of Wife and Mother'?" she jeered, increasing her pace as her passion waxed. "Wait until you're a wife and mother yourself, and then perhaps you'll be able to give an opinion; and meanwhile, attend to your own 'Sacred Duties.' You *will* come poking your nose into the Sphere where it's not wanted"—she shook her fist at him—"with your theories." She exclaimed, "You meddling priest! What you're afraid of is that there won't be slaves enough in the world to make money for you; or poor enough to bear witness to your Christian charity! You needn't be afraid, though. So long as we have *you* there'll be poverty in plenty!" Here she became conscious of the attitude of her companion. The bishop blotted out the cardinal. His wrinkled hands, meekly folded; his white head bowed; his benign face, expressive of intense mental suffering heroically borne, impressed her. "Resignation? No, not resignation exactly," her thoughts ran on. "To be resigned is to acquiesce. Resistance? Yes. To resist—but not to resist with rage. Be firm, but be gentle." She sat down at last in an easy-chair and leaned back, looking up at the ceiling. In a few minutes she was fast asleep. When she awoke the room was empty, but outside she heard receding footsteps, and springing up with characteristic impetuosity, she followed after "to see for herself."

The shutters were still closed in the library, and the lamps were burning; but it was broad daylight in the hall, and a heavy squall of rain was beating against the windows with mournful effect. Angelica saw a manservant standing beside some baggage as she passed, and wondered who had arrived.

At the foot of the stairs she overtook Dr. Galbraith, and caught his arm.

"Is Edith better?" she exclaimed.

Dr. Galbraith looked down at her, clasped both her hands in one of his as they rested on his arm, and led her upstairs. Before they reached the

top, his firm, cool touch had steadied her nerves, and calmed her.

"This is your room, I think," he said, stopping when they reached it.

Angelica took the hint, and went in, but she did not shut the door. "You might have told me, you pig, and then perhaps I should have been satisfied," she reflected, standing just inside her room, holding her head very high, and straining her ears to listen. She heard Dr. Galbraith go to the end of the corridor, and then, as the sound of his footsteps ceased, she knew that he must have gone into Edith's room. The house was oppressively still. "I suppose I am to be tortured with suspense because I am young," she thought, and then she followed Dr. Galbraith.

The shutters were still closed in Edith's room, and the gas was burning. Nobody had thought of letting the daylight in. The door was open, and a screen was drawn across it, but Angelica could see past the screen. She saw Edith first. She was lying on her bed, still dressed, and sensible now, but exhausted. Her yellow hair, all in disorder, fell over the pillow to one side, and on the same side her mother sat facing her, rocking herself to and fro, and holding Edith's hand, which she patted from time to time in a helpless, piteous sort of way.

Edith was lying on her back, with her face turned toward Angelica. There were deep lines of suffering marked upon it, and her eyes glittered feverishly, but otherwise she was grey and ghastly and old. It was the horrible look of age that impressed Angelica. There were three gentlemen present: the bishop, Dr. Galbraith, and Sir Mosley Menteith.

Edith was looking at her father. "That is why I sent for you all," she was saying feebly—"to tell you, you who represent the arrangement of society which has made it possible for me and my child to be sacrificed in this way. I have nothing more to say to any of you—except"—she sat up in bed suddenly, and addressed her husband in scathing tones—"except to you. And what I want to say to you is—Go! go! Father! turn him out of the house. Don't let me ever see that dreadful man again!"

She fell back on her pillow, white and still, and shut her eyes.

"My darling, you will kill yourself!" her mother exclaimed.

Dr. Galbraith stepped to the side of the bed hurriedly, and bent over her. The bishop stood at the foot, holding on to the rail with both hands, his whole face quivering with suppressed emotion. Menteith gave them a vindictive glance, and then stole quietly away. Angelica had made her escape, and was standing at the head of the stairs, wringing her hands. She was trembling with rage and excitement. "I am Jael—I am Judith—No! I am Cassandra," she was saying to herself. "I must speak!"

"I wish to God I hadn't answered that telegram so promptly—coming to be made an exhibition of by a sick woman in her tantrums," Menteith reflected as he walked down the corridor. "I'm surprised at Edith. But it is so like a woman; you never can count upon them." Here he caught sight of Angelica, and quite started with interest. "That's a deuced fine girl," he thought, and followed her to the library instinctively.

A servant had just opened the shutters. Angelica went to one of the windows and, throwing it up to the top, inhaled a deep breath of the fresh morning air. The rain had stopped. The servant

put out the lamps and withdrew, after standing aside for a moment respectfully to allow Sir Mosley Menteith to enter. The latter glanced round the room, but Angelica was hidden by the curtain in the deep embrasure of the window. Menteith bit his nails and stood still for some time. Then the bishop came, followed by Dr. Galbraith, and walked straight up to him. It was a bad moment for Sir Mosley Menteith. He tried to inspect his father-in-law coolly, but his hand was somewhat tremulous as he raised it to twist the ends of his little light moustache.

"My daughter wishes you to leave the house," the bishop said sternly; "and—eh—I may say that I—that *we*—eh—her father and mother, also wish you to go—eh—now, at once."

Angelica sprang from her hiding-place. "And take that," she cried, "for a present, you father of a speckled toad!" And seizing the heavy quarto Bible from the table, she flung it with all her might full in his face. It happened to hit him on the bridge of his nose, which it broke.

CHAPTER IX

LATER in the day Lord Dawne, who had ridden in, saw Dr. Galbraith's carriage waiting before Mrs. Orton Beg's little house in the Close. He reined in his horse, which was fidgety, and at the same moment Dr. Galbraith came out.

"Nothing wrong here, I hope?" Lord Dawne inquired.

"No," was the curt response, "it is that poor child at the palace. I have been up with her all night."

"What is the matter now?" Lord Dawne inquired.

"Now—it is her brain," the doctor answered; then stepped into his carriage and was driven away.

Lord Dawne dismounted and met Mrs. Orton Beg, who was coming out with her bonnet on.

"No hope, I suppose!" he said, in a tone of deep commiseration.

"Oh, it is worse than death!" she answered. "I am going there now. Dr. Galbraith says I shall be of use."

The bishop and Angelica spent some time in the library together that morning. The bishop had sent for Angelica to talk to her, and she had come to talk to the bishop; and, being quicker of speech than he, she had taken the initiative.

"Did you ever feel like a horse with a bearing rein, champing his bit?" she began, the moment she burst into the room.

"No, I never did," said the bishop severely.

"Ah! then I can never make you understand how I feel now!" she said, throwing herself on to a chair opposite to him, sideways, so that she could clasp the back. "You look very unsympathetic," she remarked.

"It seems to me," the bishop began, with increased severity, "that you have no respect for anybody."

"No, I have not," she answered decidedly—"at least not for bishops and doctors who let Menteith miscreants loose in society to marry whom they please."

The bishop winced.

"I am sorry to have to reprove you seriously," he recommenced, shaking his head. "But I feel that I should not be doing my duty if I neglected to point out to you the extremely reprehensible

nature of your conduct, first in causing grievous distress of mind to Edith, in consequence of which partly she is now lying dangerously ill upstairs"—

Angelica stopped him by suddenly assuming a dignified position on her chair. She looked hard at him, and as she did so great tears came into her eyes, and ran down her cheeks. "If I have done Edith any injury," she exclaimed, "I shall never forgive myself."

"Well, well," said the bishop kindly—

"But do you think I was so much to blame?" Angelica demanded, interrupting him. "I only did what you and Mrs. Beale and everybody else did—took it for granted that she had married a decent man. But go on," said Angelica, throwing herself back in her chair, and folding her arms. "What else have I done?"

"You have grievously injured a fellow-creature."

"Oh, 'fellow' if you like, and 'creature' too," said Angelica; "but the injury I did him was a piece of luck for which I expect to be congratulated."

"You took the sacred Word of God," the bishop began—

"Because of the weight of it," Angelica interrupted again; "figuratively, too, it was most appropriate. I call it poetical justice, whichever way you look at it, and"—she burst into a sudden squall of rage—"if you nag me any more I'll throw Bibles about until there isn't a whole one in the house!"

The bishop looked at her steadily. "I shall say no more," he observed very gently; "but I beg of you to reflect." Then he opened the quarto Bible and began to read to himself. Angelica remained sitting opposite to him, looking moodily at the floor; but now and then they stole furtive glances at each other, and every time the bishop looked at Angelica he shook his head.

"Things have gone wrong in the Sphere," slipped from Angelica at last.

"'The Sphere'?" said the bishop, looking up. "What Sphere?"

"*The Woman's Sphere!*" Angelica answered solemnly, and then she told him her dream. It took her exactly an hour to relate it with such comments and elucidations as she deemed necessary, and the bishop heard her out. When she finished he was somewhat exhausted; but he said that he thought it a very remarkable dream.

"If you had been able to manage the Sphere, you see," Angelica concluded, "and to regulate the extent of it, you would have been able to make it a proper place for us to live in by this time."

"My dear child, you are talking nonsense!" the bishop exclaimed.

"Well, it may sound so to you at present," Angelica answered temperately; "but there is a small idea in my mind which won't be nonsense when it grows up." She was silent for a little after that, and then she ejaculated, "I shouldn't be surprised if that pestilence were Me!"

"Eh?" said the bishop.

"Did I speak?" said Angelica.

"Yes."

"Ah, then, that is because I am tired out. I shall go to bed. Don't, for the life of you, let anybody disturb me."

She got up and left the room, yawning desperately, and very soon afterward her aunts came to take her back to Morne; but the bishop obeyed her last injunction implicitly, and they were obliged to return without her.

The news that Edith had returned to the palace, bringing her little son for the first time, was soon known in the neighbourhood. The arrival of the boy was one of those events of life, originally destined to be a great joy, which soften the heart and make it tender. And very soon carriages came rolling up with ladies leaning forward in them all in a flutter of sympathy and interest, eager to offer their congratulations to the young mother, and to be introduced to the child. And meanwhile Mrs. Beale sat beside her daughter's bed, patting her slender white hand from time to time as it lay upon the coverlet, with that little gesture which had struck Angelica as being so piteous. Edith had not spoken for hours; but suddenly she exclaimed, "Evadne was right!"

Mrs. Beale rocked herself to and fro, and the tears gathered in her eyes and slowly trickled down her cheeks. "Edith darling," she said at last, with a great effort, "do you blame me?"

"Oh no, mother! oh no!" Edith cried, pressing her hand, and looking at her with a last flash of loving recognition. "The same thing may happen now to any mother—to any daughter—and *will* happen so long as we refuse to know and resist." A spasm of pain contracted her face. She pressed her mother's hand again gently, and closed her eyes.

Presently she laughed. "I am quite, quite mad!" she said. "Do you know what I have been doing? I've been murdering him! I've been creeping, creeping with bare feet, to surprise him in his sleep; and I had a tiny knife—very sharp—and I felt for the artery"—she touched her neck—"and then stabbed quickly! and he awoke, and knew he must die—and covered! and it was all a pleasure to me. Oh yes! I am quite, quite mad!"

She did not notice the coming and going of people now, or anything that was done in her room that day. Only once when she heard a servant outside the door whisper, "For her ladyship," she asked what it was, and a silver salver was brought to her covered with visiting cards. She looked at one or two. "Kind messages," she said, "great names! and I am a great lady too, I suppose! I made a splendid match. And now I have a lovely little boy—the one thing wanting to complete my happiness. What numbers of girls must envy me! Ah! they don't know! But tell them—tell them that I'm quite, quite mad!"

Mrs. Beale was at last persuaded to go and rest, and Mrs. Orton Beg replaced her.

"I am glad you have come," said Edith. "I want to show you my lovely little son. Naturally I want to show him to everyone!" and she laughed.

Late in the evening, when the room was lighted up, Edith noticed her father and mother and Dr. Galbraith. Angelica was there too, but in the background.

"Oh-h!" Edith exclaimed, with a sudden shriek, starting up in bed—"I want to kill—I want to kill *him*. I want to kill that monstrous child!"

Dr. Galbraith was in time to prevent her springing out of bed.

"I know I am mad," she moaned, in a broken voice. "I am quite, quite mad! I never hurt a creature in my life—never thought an evil thought of anyone; why must I suffer so? Father, my head." Again she started up. "Can't you—can't you save me?" she shrieked. "Father, my head! my head!"

Angelica stole away to her own room, put on her things, and walked back to Morne alone.

CHAPTER X

ANGELICA had been baptized into the world of anguish. She had assisted at horrid mysteries of life and death, and the experience was likely to be warping.

She had fled from the palace, first, because she could not bear the place any longer, and secondly, because she felt imperatively that she must see Diavolo. He had been in bed and asleep for some time when she went to his room that night and awoke him by flashing a light in his face. He was startled at first, but when he saw who it was, he remembered their last quarrel and the base way she had deserted him by going to stay at the palace, and he thought it due to his wounded heart to snap at her.

"What *do* you mean by disturbing me so late at night?" he drawled plaintively; "bringing in such a beastly lot of fresh air with you too. You make me shiver."

"Don't be a fool, Diavolo," Angelica answered. "You know you're delighted to see me. How nice you look with your hair all tousled! I wish my hair was fair like yours. Oh! I have such a lot to tell you."

"Get on then," he said, lying back on his broad white pillows resignedly; "or go away, and keep your confidences till to-morrow. If you would be so good as to kindly consult my inclinations, that is what I should ask," he added politely.

Angelica curled herself up on the end of his bed, and leant against the foot-rail. The room was large and lofty, and the only light in it was that of the candle which she still held in her hand. She had a walking jacket on over an evening dress, and a hat, but this she took off and threw on the floor.

"I've run away," she said. "I walked home all alone."

"What! up all that long dark hill?" he exclaimed, with interest but without incredulity. The Heavenly Twins never lied to each other.

"Yes," she answered impressively, "and I cut across the pine woods, and the big black shadows fluttered about me like butterfly bogies, and I wasn't afraid. I threw my arms about, and ran, and jumped, and *breathed*! Oh!" she exclaimed, "after holding your breath for twenty-four hours, in a house full of gaslight and groans, you learn what it is to be able to breathe freely out under the stars in the blessed dark. And there was a little crescent moon above the trees," she added.

Diavolo had opened his great grey eyes, and looked out over her head through the wall opposite, watching her with enthusiasm as she "cut across the pine woods." "And how did you get in?" he asked.

"At the back," she answered. They looked into each other's intelligent faces, and grinned. "Everybody is in bed," she added, "and I'm half inclined to return to the palace, and come back to-morrow in the carriage properly."

"I shouldn't do that," said Diavolo, feeling that such a proceeding would be an inartistic anticlimax. "And it's to-morrow now, I should think." He raised himself on his elbow, and peered at the clock on the mantelpiece.

Angelica held up the candle. "It's two," she said. "What do you do when you first wake up in the morning?"

"Turn round and go to sleep again," Diavolo grunted.

"I always look at the clock," said Angelica,

"But I want to tell you. You know after you said I was a cyclone in petticoats?"

Diavolo nodded. "So you are," he remarked.

"Well, I *am*, then," Angelica retorted. "Have it so, only don't interrupt me. I can't think why I cared," she added, upon reflection; "it seems so little now, and such a long way off."

"Is it as far from the point as you are?" Diavolo courteously inquired.

"Ah, I'm coming to that!" she resumed, and then she graphically recounted her late painful experiences, including the bishop's charge to Sir Mosley Menteith, and poor Edith's last piteous appeal to heaven and earth for the relief which she was not to receive.

"And did she die?" Diavolo asked, in an awestruck whisper.

Being less sturdy and more sensitive than Angelica, he was quite shaken by the bare recital of such suffering.

"Not while I was there," Angelica answered. "I heard her as I came out. She was calling on God then."

They were both silent for some moments after this. Angelica fixed her eyes on the candle, and Diavolo looked up to the unanswering heaven, full of the vague wonderment which asks, Why? Why? Why?

"There is no law, you see," Angelica resumed, "either to protect us or avenge us. That is because men made the law for themselves, and that is why women are fighting for the right to make laws too."

"I'll help them!" Diavolo exclaimed.

"Will you?" said Angelica. "That's right! Shake hands!"

Having solemnly ratified the compact, Angelica boldly asserted that all the manly men were helping women now, including Uncle Dawne and Dr. Galbraith.

Then she thought she would go to bed. Of course she had flung the door wide open when she entered, and left it so, and happening to glance toward it now, it seemed to her that there was a horrible peculiar kind of pitchy black darkness streaming in.

"Oh, Diavolo!" she exclaimed, "I'm frightened! I daren't go alone!"

"You frightened!" he jeered, "after dancing home alone in the dark, through the pine woods too!"

"There were only birds, beasts, and bogies there—pleasant creatures," she said. "But here, behind those rows and rows of closed doors, there will be ghosts of tortured women, and I shall hear them shriek!"

Her terror communicated itself to Diavolo's quick imagination, and he glanced toward the door apprehensively. Then he deliberately arose, put on his dressing-gown and slippers, and lit a candle, by which time his face was steadily set. "Come," he said. "I'll see you safely to your room."

"Diavolo, you're a real gentleman!" Angelica protested, "for I know you're in as big a fright as I am."

Diavolo drew himself up and led the way.

Their rooms were far apart, it having been deemed advisable to separate them when they first came to the castle, at which time there had been a curious delusion that distance would do this. The first part of their progress that night was nervous work, but they had not gone far before the new aspect which familiar things took on by the light of their candles arrested their attention.

"The light makes greatgrandpapa wink," said Angelica, looking up at a portrait. "And Venus has put on a cloak."

"She's *wrapt in shadow*," said Diavolo poetically.

They were talking quite unconcernedly by this time, and in their usual somewhat loud tone of voice, fear of discovery not being one of their characteristics. They were bound to have awakened any light sleeper, but it so happened that they passed no occupied rooms but their uncle Dawne's. He, however, being up, heard them, and opened his door on them suddenly. They both jumped.

"What are you two doing?" he said; "and why are you here at all, Angelica?"

"I didn't think it delicate to stay at the palace any longer under the circumstances," she answered glibly.

Lord Dawne was struck by the extreme propriety of this reply. "And may I ask *when* you returned?" he said.

"Yesterday," she answered, "and I've had nothing to eat since."

"Oh!" he observed. "And you've not had time to remove your walking jacket either?" He looked hard at her. "I should like very much to know how you got in," he said, shaking his head.

The Heavenly Twins looked at him affably.

"Well," he concluded, knowing better than to question them, "I suppose you know where to find food, if that is your object!"

They both grinned.

"Come along, Uncle Dawne, and we'll show you!" Angelica burst out sociably.

"Yes, *do!*" Diavolo entreated. "Come and revel!"

The Heavenly Twins never worked on any regular plan; their ideas always came to them as they went on.

Lord Dawne felt that this was really claiming a kinship with him, and a picture which presented itself to his mind's eye, of himself foraging for food in his father's castle with the Heavenly Twins in the small hours of the night, appealed to him. It was an opportunity not to be lost.

"Very well," he said, putting his hands in the pockets of the short velvet jacket he was wearing, and preparing to follow. The twins led the way, holding their candles aloft, and descending the stairs in step. But exactly what the mysteries were into which they initiated their uncle that night nobody knows. Only they were all very late for breakfast next morning, and when Lord Dawne saw his sisters, he listened in silence to such explanations of Angelica's reappearance at the castle as they were able to offer.

Angelica herself forgot she was not at home, and came down to breakfast yawning unconcernedly. The exclamation of surprise with which she was greeted took her aback at first. She had intended to send a carriage, early in the morning, for her maid Elizabeth, and to walk in herself with her hat on when it returned, as if she had come in it; but as she only remembered this intention when Lady Fulda exclaimed, "Why, Angelica, how did you come?" she was obliged to have recourse to the simple truth, and after answering blandly, "I walked, auntie," she left the matter there for others to elucidate at their leisure if they chose to make inquiries.

But the accustomed trouble with the Heavenly Twins seemed insignificant at this time compared with other perplexities which were pending at the castle. The old duke had been very queer lately,

He had "been dreaming and seeing things," as Diavolo explained to Angelica.

"Storms and what dreams, ye holy gods, what dreams!"

Father Ricardo said they were miraculous temptations of the devil, the implication being that the poor old duke's soul was more specially worth wrangling for than those of less exalted sinners. The one dear wish of Father Ricardo's life was to be mixed up in something miraculous. He was too humble to expect anything to be revealed to himself personally, but he had great hopes of the saintly Lady Fulda; and certainly, if concessions are to be wrung from the Infinite to the Finite by perfect holiness of life and mind, she should have obtained some. She had become deeply read in that kind of lore under Father Ricardo's direction, and had meditated so much about occurrences of the kind that it would not have surprised her if she had met "Our Lady" anywhere, bright light, blue cloak, supernatural beauty, indefinite draperies, lilies, sacred heart, and all. She had, in fact, thought too much about it, and was becoming somewhat hysterical, which raised Father Ricardo's hopes, for he was not a scientific man, and knew nothing of the natural history of the human being and of hysteria; and, besides, by dint of long watching, fasting, and otherwise outraging what he believed to have been created in the image of God, namely, his own poor body, and also by the feverish fervour with which he entreated Heaven to vouchsafe them a revelation at Morne for the benefit of Holy Church, he was worn to a shadow, and had become somewhat hysterical himself. The twins had discovered him on his knees before the altar in the chapel at night, and had been much interested in the "vain repetitions" and other audible ejaculations which he was offering up with many contortions of his attenuated form.

"Isn't he enjoying himself?" Diavolo whispered.

"He must be in training to wrestle with the devil when they meet," Angelica surmised.

But all this was having a bad effect upon the old duke. In private, he and Lady Fulda and the priest talked of nothing but apparitions and supernatural occurrences generally. Lord Dawne had obtained a hint of what was going on from some chance observations of the Heavenly Twins, but until the day after Angelica's return from the palace neither his father nor sister had spoken to him on the subject.

That morning, however, he happened to go into the chapel to see how the colours were lasting in some decorative work which he had done there himself years before, and there he found his father standing in the aisle to the right of the altar near the door of the sacristy, gazing up fixedly at a particular panel in the dark oakwork which covered that portion of the wall.

"Anything wrong, father?" he said, going up to him.

"Dawne," the old duke replied in an undertone, touching his son's arm with the point of the forefinger of his left hand, and pointing up to the panel with the stick he held in his right, "Dawne, if it were not for what that panel conceals"—he ended by folding his hands on the top of his stick, looking down at the pavement, and shaking his head. "I saw it in a dream first," he resumed, looking up at the panel. "But now it appears during every service. It comes out. It stretches its baby hands to me. It sobs, it sighs, it begs, it prays; and sometimes it smiles, and then there are dimples about its innocent mouth."

Some disturbance of the atmosphere caused Lord Dawne to look round at this moment, although he had heard nothing, and he was startled to find his sister Fulda standing behind him, looking as awestruck as the duke.

"We must tear down that panel!" the old man exclaimed, becoming excited. "We must exorcise and purify, and cleanse the house. It is that—that"—shaking his stick at the panel—"which hinders the Event! Bury it deep! bury it deep! give it the holy rites, and *then!*" His voice dropped. He muttered something inaudible, and walked feebly down the aisle.

Lady Fulda followed him out of the chapel, but presently she returned. Her brother was still standing as she had left him, looking now at the pavement and now at the panel, and deep in thought. His grave face lighted with tenderness as he turned to meet her. She was very pale.

"I am afraid all this is too much for you, Fulda," he said seriously.

"No. This is nothing," she answered. "Nothing—no *human* excitement ever disturbs me. But, Dawne, I have seen *it* myself!"

"It! What, Fulda?"

"The Child—just as he describes it. It appears there"—looking up at the panel—"and stretches out its little hands to me smiling, but when I move to take it, it is gone!"

"My dear Fulda," Lord Dawne replied, with a shiver which he attributed to the chill of the chapel, "people who live in such an atmosphere as you do are liable to *see things!*"

"It would ease my mind," she said, clasping her hands on his shoulder, and laying her cheek upon them, "it would ease my mind if that panel were removed. There is something behind it."

"It must be solid masonry then," he answered, smiling; and, stepping up to the panel, he tapped it hard with his knuckles; but, contrary to his expectations, the sound it emitted was somewhat hollow. Then he examined it carefully, and discovered that it was not fitted into grooves as the other panels were, but was held in its place by four screws, the heads of which had been carefully concealed by putty, stained and varnished to the colour of the oak. "I will see about this at once," he said.

The message from the palace that morning, sent by Mrs. Orton Beg, had been, "Edith still lingers," and Lord Dawne had intended to go there to see the bishop (in times of sickness and sorrow he was everywhere welcome); but now he went with the further intention of finding Dr. Galbraith. In this he was successful, and they had a long talk about the state of affairs at the castle, and it was finally arranged that Dr. Galbraith should dine there that evening and remain for the night.

"That panel must be removed," he said, "and it should be done with great ceremony. The best time would be midnight. But leave all that to Father Ricardo, and only insist upon one thing, and that is the presence of the Heavenly Twins."

"Are you meditating a *coup de théâtre*?"

"No, not at all," Dr. Galbraith replied. "Only I am quite sure that if there is any exorcism to be done, the Heavenly Twins will accomplish it better than any priest."

Lord Dawne, however, remained somewhat uncertain about the wisdom of this recommendation, but as Dr. Galbraith had always managed his father's foibles and other difficult

matters at the castle with admirable tact and delicacy, he gave in.

The twins themselves soon perceived that there was something in the air. During the day several strange priests arrived, all looking more or less important; but they did not dine with the duke. The demeanour of the latter was portentously solemn; Diavolo tried to take him out of himself, but was reprov'd for his levity; and Father Ricardo and Lady Fulda went about with exalted expressions of countenance, and looking greatly in need of food and rest. Even in the early part of the evening nobody talked much, and as the hours dragged on slowly toward midnight, the silence in the castle became oppressive. The servants stole about on tiptoe and in pairs, being nervous about going into the big empty rooms and down the long shadowy corridors alone. There was, besides, a general inclination to glance about furtively, as the hush of anxious expectancy settled upon everybody. The twins felt it themselves, but they were everywhere all the same, and if any particular preparations had been made, it would have been at the risk of their discovering them. The night was sultry and very dark. Dr. Galbraith and Lord Dawne stood together, stirring their coffee, at an open window in the great drawing-room.

"It is curiously still," said Lord Dawne, looking out. "It reminds me of the legend of Nature waiting breathless for the happy release of an imprisoned soul. I wonder how that poor child Edith is!"

"I would give—I would give anything that anybody could name," Dr. Galbraith said slowly, "to be quite sure that she would pass into peace to-night."

"Ah, poor girl! poor innocent girl!" Lord Dawne ejaculated; and then he said, as if speaking to himself, "How long, O Lord, how long? We are so powerless; we accomplish so little; the great sum of suffering never seems lessened, do what we will!"

They were silent for some time after that, each occupied with painful thoughts, and then Dr. Galbraith spoke with an effort to change the direction of them.

"A storm to-night would be most opportune," he said.

"But things of that kind never do happen opportunely," Lord Dawne rejoined. Just as he spoke, however, a brilliant flash of lightning lit up vividly the precipitous side of the hill and the whole valley beneath them for a moment.

"Let us hope it is a happy omen," said Dr. Galbraith.

Toward midnight, the various members of the household who were privileged to be present at the coming ceremony began to assemble in the chapel; but the very first to arrive found that the Heavenly Twins were before them, and had secured the best seats for seeing and hearing. The chapel was dim and even dark at the corners and at the farther end, there being no light except from the candles which were burning upon the altar. Four priests were kneeling before it at the rails, and a fifth came out of the sacristy presently, and passed in. It was Father Ricardo, and as he made the genuflection, it was seen that his face was irradiated by profound emotion. He remained on his knees before the altar for some moments, then he arose, and at the same instant the chapel glowed in every colour of the prism. It was merely the play of the lightning

through the stained glass windows, but the unexpected effect, combined with the electricity in the atmosphere and the tension of expectancy, wrought upon the nerves of all present.

The Heavenly Twins snuggled up close to each other. Lady Fulda's lips began to move rapidly in fervent prayer. Angelica noticed this, and as she watched her aunt, her own lips began to move in imitation, either involuntarily or in order to see if she could work them as fast.

But now the attention of all present became riveted upon the priests. Father Ricardo descended the altar steps, and two of the others followed him into the sacristy. They returned in the same order, but Father Ricardo was carrying a basin of holy water and an aspergillus, with which he proceeded to sprinkle all present, murmuring some inaudible adjuration the while. One of the strange priests held an open book, and the other carried some common carpenter's tools. During this interval the lightning flashed again, and was seen to play about the chapel in fantastic figures before the black darkness engulfed it. A long irregular roll of distant thunder succeeded, and then, after a perceptible pause, there was a sound as of hundreds of little feet pattering upon the roof. They were the advanced guard of raindrops heralding the approaching storm, and halted instantly, while the air in the chapel became perceptibly colder, and Dr. Galbraith himself began to experience sensations which made him fear it would have been wiser if a less appropriate time had been chosen to lay the ghost.

The priest now approached the panel, upon one corner of which a ray of light from the altar fell obliquely. Father Ricardo sprinkled it liberally from where he stood on the ground, repeating some formula as he did so, and then mounted a small pair of steps which had been placed there for the purpose, and began to search for the screws. As he found them, he cut out the hard putty that concealed them with a knife which one of the priests had handed up to him for the purpose, and when he had accomplished this he exchanged the knife for a screwdriver, and endeavoured to turn the screws; but this required more strength than his ill-treatment of his poor body had left in it, and he was obliged to relinquish the task to one of the other priests. The two who had hitherto knelt at the altar now joined the group in front of the panel. All five looked unhealthy and frightened, but the one who next ascended the steps made a brave effort, and began to remove the screws. He was a muscular man, but it was hard work, requiring his full strength; and those present held their breath, and anxiously watched him straining every sinew. And meanwhile the storm gathered overhead, the lightning and thunder flashed and crashed almost simultaneously, and the rain fell in torrents.

Having removed the screws, the priest descended the steps, which he pushed on one side, and inserting the screwdriver into a crevice, prised the panel outward. It resisted for some time, then, suddenly yielding, fell forward on his head, and crashed noisily to the ground. All present started and stared. The panel had concealed an aperture, a small niche rudely made by simply removing some of the masonry. It was long and low, and there lay in it what was unmistakably the body of a young child fully dressed. The priests fell back, Lady Fulda's parted lips became set in the act of uttering a

word, the duke groaned aloud, while an expression of not being able to believe their own eyes settled upon the countenances of Lord Dawne, Dr. Galbraith, and the tutor, Mr. Ellis.

After the fall of the panel there was a pause, during which the very storm seemed to wait in suspense. Nobody knew what to do next. But before they had recovered themselves, Angelica broke the silence at the top of her voice.

"You pushed me!" she angrily exclaimed.

"I did *not*!" Diavolo retorted.

"You did!"

"I didn't!"

Smack! And Miss Hamilton-Wells stood trembling with rage in the aisle. Then she darted toward the aperture. The priests fell back. "I believe it's all a trick," she said, reaching up and seizing the child by its petticoats. Lady Fulda uttered an exclamation; the duke stood up; Angelica tugged the figure out of the niche, looked at it, and then held it to the light.

It was a huge wax baby-doll, considerably battered, which had once been a favourite of her own. Diavolo came out of his seat, hugging himself, and bursting in eloquent silence.

Father Ricardo wiped the perspiration from his face, Lord Dawne bit his under lip, Lady Fulda gathered herself up from her knees, and stood helpless. Everybody looked foolish, including the duke, whose eyebrows contracted nervously; then suddenly that treacherous memory of his landed him back in the old days. "By Jove!" he exclaimed aloud, "I'm more like Angelica, and less of a damned fool than I thought!"

"Come, Diavolo! this is no place for us!" Angelica cried.

She seized his hand, and they both darted into the sacristy.

There was a bang, a scuffle, and then a dull thud; but the first to follow was only in time to see eight finger-tips clinging for a moment outside to the ledge of one of the narrow windows, which was open.

"They've jumped out!" "It's fourteen feet!" "Hush, listen!"

And then the congregation scattered hurriedly from the sacred precincts, leaving the candles burning on the altar, the doll lying on the pavement, the gaping niche and the fallen panel to bear witness to some of the incredible phases through which the human race passes on its way from incomprehensible nothingness to the illimitable unknown.

CHAPTER XI

THE Heavenly Twins had disappeared for the night. Those who ran round to the outside wall of the sacristy to look for them found only a shred of Angelica's gown hanging on a shrub. Their footsteps could be followed cutting across the grass of a sappy lawn, but beyond that was a walk of hard asphalt, and there all trace of them was lost. But Lady Fulda said they must be found and brought back; and sleepy servants were accordingly aroused and set to search the grounds, while grooms were sent off on horseback to scour the lanes. The storm was still muttering in the distance, but above Morne the sky had cleared, and the crescent moon shone out to facilitate the search. It was quite fruitless, however. From Morne to Morningquest the messengers went, passing backward and forward from the castle the whole night long. Lady Fulda never closed her

eyes, and when the party assembled at breakfast next morning they were all suffering from want of sleep.

The duke, Lord Dawne, Dr. Galbraith, Mr. Ellis, Father Ricardo, and the four strange priests were at table.

"What *can* have become of those children?" Lady Fulda was exclaiming for the hundredth time, when the door opened, and the twins themselves appeared hand in hand, smiling affably.

They looked as fresh as usual, and began to perform their morning salutations with their habitual self-possession.

"Where have you been?" the duke asked sternly.

"In bed, of course," Angelica answered—"till we got up, at least. Where else should we be?" She looked round in innocent inquiry.

"We just ran round to the garden door, you know," Diavolo explained, "and went to bed. You couldn't expect us to stay out on a dripping night like that!"

Lord Dawne afterward expressed the feeling of the whole household when he declared, "Well, it never did and it never would have occurred to me to look for them in their own rooms."

He remained behind with them in the breakfast room that morning when the others withdrew.

"I suppose we shall be sent for directly," said Angelica resignedly.

Diavolo grinned.

"I say, how did you feel last night when it was all going on?" she inquired.

"Awfully nice," he rejoined. "I had little warm shivers all over me."

"So had I," she said, "like small electric shocks; and I believed in the ghost and everything. I expect that is why that kind of supernatural business is kept up, because it makes people feel creepy and nice. You can't get the same sensation in any other way, and I daresay there are lots of people who wouldn't like to lose a whole set of sensations. I should think they're the kind of people who collect the remains of a language to save it when it begins to die out."

"I should say those were intelligent people," her uncle observed. Angelica looked at him doubtfully.

"Well, at anyrate, I should like to believe in ghosts," said Diavolo.

"So should I," said Angelica, "in fun, you know; and I was thinking so last night; but then I could not help noticing what a fool Aunt Fulda was making of herself, and grandpapa looked such a precious old idiot too. They weren't enjoying it a bit. You were the only one of the family, Uncle Dawne, who believed and looked dignified."

"Who told you I believed?" he asked.

"Well, I'm not sure that you did," Angelica answered. "But at all events, your demeanour was respectful—hence the dignity, perhaps!"

"If yours were a little more respectful you would gain in dignity too, I imagine," Diavolo observed.

Angelica boxed his ears promptly, whereupon her uncle took her to task with unusual severity for him: "You are quite grown-up now," he said. "You talk like a mature woman, and act like a badly brought up child of ten. You are always doing something ridiculous too. I should be ashamed to have you at my house."

Angelica looked amazed. "Well, it is your fault as much as anybody's," she burst out, when she had recovered herself. "Why don't you make me something of a life? You can't expect me to go on like this for ever—getting up in the morning,

riding, driving, lessons, dressing, and bed. It's the life of a lapdog."

She got up, and going to one of the windows, which was open, leant out. Dawne and Diavolo followed her. As the former approached, she turned and looked him full in the face for an answer.

"You will marry eventually"—he began.

"Like poor Edith?" she suggested. Dawne compressed his lips. "That was her ideal," Angelica proceeded—"her own home and husband and family, someone to love and trust and look up to. She told me all about it at Fountain Towers under the influence of indignation and strong tea. And she was an *exquisite womanly creature*! No, thank you! It isn't safe to be an *exquisite womanly creature* in this rotten world. The most useful kind of heart for a woman is one hard enough to crack nuts with. Nobody could wring it then."

"You would lose all finer feelings"—Lord Dawne began.

"Including the heartache itself," she supplemented.

"But what *do* you want?" he asked.

"An object," she answered. "Something! something! something beyond the mere getting up in the morning and going to bed at night, with an interval of exercise between. I want to do something for somebody!"

Lord Dawne raised his eyebrows slightly. He had no idea that such a notion had ever entered her head.

At this point, a servant was sent by his Grace to request the twins to be so good as to go to him in the library at once.

"It is the inevitable inquiry," Angelica said resignedly. "Come with us, uncle, *do*," she coaxed. "It is sure to be fun!"

Lord Dawne consented.

On the way, Diavolo remarked ambiguously, "But I don't understand yet how there came to be a ghost as well!"

The inquiry led to nothing. The Heavenly Twins had determined not to incriminate themselves, and they refused to answer a question. They stood together, drawn up in line with their hands behind their backs; changed from one leg to the other when they were tired, and looked exceedingly bored; but they would not speak.

The duke stormed, Lady Fulda entreated, Father Ricardo prayed, even Lord Dawne begged them not to be obstinate; but it was all in vain, and their grandfather, losing all patience, ordered them out of the room at last.

As they retired, Diavolo asked Father Ricardo if he were thinking of thumbscrews.

"I feel quite sure that Angelica did not know the doll was there," Lord Dawne said, when the twins had gone. "I fancy it was a trick Diavolo had played her."

Nobody mentioned the ghost again. It was felt to be a delicate subject. Lady Fulda was made to take rest and a tonic, the duke was rigidly dieted, and Father Ricardo was sent away for change of air. But the twins never ceased from troubling. As soon as the duke's temper was restored, they consulted the party collectively at afternoon tea in the oriel room on the subject of Angelica's dissatisfaction. Diavolo affected to share it, but that was only by way of being agreeable, as he inadvertently betrayed.

"I suppose I shall have to do something myself," he drawled, in his lazy way.

"I should think marriage is the best profession for you!" said Angelica scornfully.

"Thank you. I will consider the question," Diavolo answered.

He was lying on the floor in his habitual attitude, with his head on the window-sill, beaming about him blandly.

"The army is the only possible profession for a gentleman in your position," the duke observed.

"Ah! that would not meet my views at present," Diavolo rejoined. "I am advised that the army is not a career for a man. It is a career for a machine—for a machine with a talent for converting other men into machines, and I haven't the talent. I suppose, if Uncle Dawne *won't* marry, I shall be obliged to go into the House of Lords eventually; but, in the meantime, I should like to be doing some good in the world."

"You might go into Parliament," his uncle suggested.

"Ah, no!" Diavolo answered seriously. "I should never dream of undertaking any of the actual work of the world while there are plenty of good women to do it for me. My modest idea was to be a musician, or philanthropic lecturer, or artist of some kind—something that gives pleasure, you know, and the proceeds to be devoted to the indigent."

"May I ask if you belong to the peace party?" said the duke.

"I am a peace party myself," Diavolo answered. "Anybody who has lived as long with Angelica as I have would be that—if he were not a party in pieces."

"I admire your wit!" said Angelica sarcastically. Diavolo bestowed a grateful smile upon her.

"But everything is easy enough for a man of intellect," she went on, "whatever his position. It is *our* powers that are wasted."

"Vanity! vanity!" said Lady Fulda. "Why do you suppose that your abilities are superior?"

"I can prove that they are!" Angelica answered hotly. Then suddenly her spirits went up, and she began to be sociable.

For a few days after this the Heavenly Twins appeared to be very busy. They both wrote a great deal, and also practised regularly on their violins and the piano; and they made some mysterious expeditions, slipping away unattended into Morningquest. It was suspected that they had something serious on hand, but Father Ricardo being away, the spy-system was suspended, so nobody knew. One morning, however, big placards, which had been printed in London, appeared on every hoarding in Morningquest, announcing in the largest type that Miss Hamilton-Wells and Mr. Theodore Hamilton-Wells would give an entertainment in the theatre for the benefit of certain of the city charities, which were specified. The programme opened with music, which was to be followed by a speech from Mr. Theodore Hamilton-Wells, and to conclude with a monologue, entitled "The Condemned Cell," to be delivered by Miss Hamilton-Wells, who had written it specially for the occasion. This was the news which greeted Mr. Hamilton-Wells and Lady Adeline upon their return from their voyage round the world; and, like everybody else, when they first saw the placard, which was as they drove from the station through Morningquest to the castle, they exclaimed, "Who on earth is Mr. Theodore Hamilton-Wells?"

The old duke was rather taken with the idea of the entertainment. It was something quite in the manner of his youth, and if it had not been for

the inopportune arrival of his son-in-law and daughter, the Heavenly Twins would probably have carried out their programme under his distinguished patronage. Dr. Galbraith was all in favour of letting them do it, Lord Dawne was neutral; but Mr. Hamilton-Wells objected. He caused the announcement to be cancelled, and handsomely indemnified the various charities named to be recipients of the possible proceeds.

Diavolo did not much mind. He was prepared to do all that Angelica required of him, but when the necessity was removed he acknowledged that it would have been rather a bore, and afterward spoke disrespectfully of the whole project as "The Condemned Sell."

Angelica raged.

But the energy which Mr. Hamilton-Wells had collected during his travels was not yet expended. He summoned a family council at Morne to sit upon the twins, and having tried them in their absence they were sent for to be sentenced without the option of appeal. Angelica was to be presented at Court and otherwise "brought out" in proper splendour immediately; while, with a view to going into the Guards eventually, Diavolo was to be sent to Sandhurst, as soon as he had passed the necessary examinations, about which Mr. Ellis said there would be no difficulty *if Diavolo chose*.

Diavolo shrugged his shoulders, and said that *he* didn't mind.

Angelica said nothing, but her brow contracted. Diavolo's indifference was putting an end to everything. It was not that she had any actual objection to going to Court and coming out, but only to the way in which the arrangement had been made—to the coercion, in fact. She was too shrewd, however, not to perceive that, in consequence of Diavolo's attitude, rebellion on her part would be both undignified and ineffectual. So she held her peace, and went to walk off her irritation in the grounds alone; and there she encountered her fast friend of many years' standing, Mr. Kilroy of Ilverthorpe, who was just riding in to lunch at the castle. When he saw her he dismounted, and Angelica snatched the whip from his hand, and clenching her teeth gave the horse a vicious slash with it, which set him off at a gallop into the woods.

Mr. Kilroy let him go, but he was silent for some seconds, and then he asked her, in his peculiarly kindly way, "What is the matter, Angelica?"

"Marry me!" said Angelica, stamping her foot at him—"Marry me, and let me do as I like."

CHAPTER XII

EVADNE spent eighteen months in Malta without going from the island for a change, but at the end of her second cold season she went to Switzerland with the Malcomsons and Sillengers, and Colonel Colquhoun went on leave at the same time alone to some place which he vaguely described as "The Continent."

When they met again, Evadne noticed a change in him, and she feared it was a change for the worse. He was out of health, out of temper, and depressed.

He had spent most of his leave at Monte Carlo, but he did not say so at first; he was waiting for her to question him. Had she done so he would have said something snappy about feminine curi-

osity; as she did not do so, he lost his temper, went off to the mess, and drank too much.

It is a terrible thing for a man to be brought into constant association with a woman who never does anything—in a small way—that he can carp at, or says a word he can contradict. She robs him of all his most cherished illusions; she shakes his confidence in his own infallible strength, discernment, knowledge, judgment, and superiority generally; she outrages his prejudices on the subject of what a woman ought to be, and leaves him nothing with which to compare himself to his own advantage. This is the miserable state to which Evadne was rapidly reducing poor Colonel Colquhoun—not, certainly, of malice prepense, but with the best intentions. He did not like her opinions, therefore she ceased to express opinions in his presence. He took exception to many of her observations, and so she let the words "I think" fall out of her vocabulary, and confined her talk to a clear narrative of occurrences, uninterrupted by comments. It was an art which she had to acquire, for she had no natural aptitude for it, her faculty of observation having hitherto served as an instrument with which she could extract lessons from life; a lens used for the purpose of collecting data on exact scientific principles as matter from which to draw conclusions; but with practice she became an adept in the art of describing the one while at the same time withholding the other, so that her conversation interested Colonel Colquhoun without, however, giving him anything to cavil at. It was like a dish exactly suited to his taste, but delicate to insipidity because his palate was hardened to pepper. When she returned from Switzerland she gave him details of her own doings which were interesting enough to take him out of himself, until one day, when, unfortunately, it occurred to him that she was making an effort to entertain him, and he determined that he would *not* be entertained—like a child, indeed! She might be a deuced clever woman and all that, but he wasn't going to have those feminine airs of superiority; so he snubbed her into silence, and having succeeded, he became exceedingly annoyed because she would not talk. It was opposition he wanted, not acquiescence, but she was not clever enough with all her cleverness, this straightforward nineteenth century young woman, to understand such subtleties. She had always heard that the contrariness of women was a cause of provocation, and she could never have been made to comprehend that the removal of the cause would be even more provoking than the contrariness. The great endeavour of her life had been to cultivate or acquire the qualities in which she understood that women are wanting, and when she succeeded she expected to please; but she found Colonel Colquhoun as "peculiar" on the subject as her father had been when she proved that, although of the imbecile sex, she could do arithmetic. Colonel Colquhoun waited a week to snap at her for asking him how he had spent his leave, but he was obliged at last to give up all hope of being questioned; and then he felt himself aggrieved. She certainly took no interest in him whatever, he reflected; she didn't care a rap if he went to the dogs altogether—in fact, she would probably be rather glad, because then she would be free. She would waste a world of attention and care upon any dirty little child she picked up in the street, but for him she had neither thought nor sympathy. Clearly she wanted to get rid of him; and she should get rid of him. He felt he was

going to the bad ; he *would* go to the bad ; it was all her fault, and she should know it. He had treated her with every possible consideration ; she had never had the slightest cause for complaint. He had even stuck up for her against his own interests with her old ass of a father—and, by Jove ! while she was treating him, Colonel Colquhoun, commanding a crack corps, and one of the smartest officers in Her Majesty's service, with studied indifference, she was thinking affectionately of the same dear old pompous portly papa, to whom, in fact, she had never borne the slightest ill-will, Colonel Colquhoun was sure, although he had done her the injury of allowing her to marry herself to the kind of man whom it was against her principles even to countenance.

But at this point his irritation overflowed. He could contain himself no longer.

"Do you know where I spent most of my leave?" he asked one morning at breakfast.

"No," Evadne answered innocently.

"At Monte Carlo," he said, with emphasis.

"I hope you enjoyed it. I have always heard it is a very beautiful place," she responded tranquilly.

"Its effect on my exchequer has not been beautiful," he observed grimly.

"Indeed," she answered. "Is it so expensive?"

"Gambling is, when you lose," he declared.

"Ah, yes. I forgot the tables at Monte Carlo," she remarked quite cheerfully. "I suppose you can lose a great deal there?"

"You can lose all you possess."

"Well, yes—of course you could if you liked ; but I am quite sure you would never do anything so stupid."

He looked at her curiously. "You don't disapprove of gambling, then?" he asked.

"I? Oh—of course, I disapprove. But then you see I have no taste for it"—this was apologetically said to signify that she did not in the least mean to sit in judgment upon him.

"You have a fine taste for driving people to such extremities then," he asserted.

She looked at him inquiringly.

"What I mean is this," he explained : "that if I could have been with you, I should not have gone to Monte Carlo."

Evadne kept her countenance—with some difficulty ; for just as Colonel Colquhoun spoke she recollected a conversation they had had at breakfast one morning under precisely similar circumstances, that is to say, each in their accustomed place and temper, she placidly content, he politely striving to bottle up the chronic form of irritation from which he suffered at that time of the day so as to keep it nice and hot for the benefit of his officers and men ; for Colonel Colquhoun in the presence of a lady was one person, but Colonel Colquhoun in his own orderly room or on parade was quite another. While in barracks he was in the habit of swearing with the same ease and as unaffectedly as he made the responses in church. He probably did it from a sense of duty, because he had been brought up in that school of colonel, and in the course of years would naturally come to consider that a volley of oaths on parade, although not laid down in the "Drill Book," was as much a part of his profession of arms as "Good Lord, deliver us!" is of the Church service. At all events, he did both punctually at the right time and place, and never mixed his week-day oaths with his Sunday responses, which was creditable. In fact, he seemed to have the power of changing his frame of mind completely for the different occasions, and would be prepared in advance, as

was evident from the fact that if a glove went wrong just as he was starting for church, he would send up for another pair amiably ; but if a similar accident happened when he was on his way to parade, he would swear at his man till he surprised him—the man not being a soldier servant.

But what very nearly made Evadne smile was the distinct recollection she had of having asked him earnestly to join her party in Switzerland when he went on leave, and of his answering "No," he should not care about that, and suggesting that she should meet him at Monaco instead. She fancied he must have a bad memory, but of course she said nothing ; what is the use of saying anything? She thought, however, that had she been under his orders, the invitation to go to Monaco would have been a command, and the present implied reproach a direct accusation.

She was most anxious that he should understand perfectly that she quite shrank from interfering with him in any way.

One night—not knowing if he were at home or not—she had occasion to go downstairs for a book she had forgotten. There was no noise in the house, and consequently when she opened the drawing-room door she was startled to find that the room was brilliantly lighted, and that there was a party assembled there, consisting of three strange ladies, loud in appearance, one or two men she knew, and some she had not seen before. The majority were seated at a card-table playing ; while the rest stood round looking on ; and they must have reached a momentous point in the game, for Evadne had not heard a sound to warn her of their presence before she saw them.

Colonel Colquhoun was one of those looking on at the game, and one of the first to see her. He changed countenance, and came forward hastily, conscious of the strange contrast she presented to those women, flushed with wine and horrid excitement, gambling at the table, as she stood there, rooted to the spot with surprise, in her gold-embroidered, ivory-white draperies, with a half-inquiring, half-bewildered look on her sweet, grave face. It was a vision of holiness breaking in upon a scene of sin, and his one thought was to get her away. There was always that saving grace of the fallen angel about him, he never depreciated what he had lost, but sometimes sighed for it sorrowfully.

"I beg your pardon for this intrusion," Evadne said, looking at him pointedly so as to ignore the rest of the party. "I did not even know that you were at home. I had forgotten a book and came for it. Will you kindly give it to me? It is called"—she hesitated. "But it does not matter," she added quickly. "I will read something else. Good-night!" and she turned, smiling, without seeming to have seen anyone but Colonel Colquhoun, and calmly swept from the room.

"St. Monica the Complacent, I should say," one of the men suggested.

"Or Vengeance smiling with murder in her mind," said another.

"No, a saint for certain," jeered one of the women.

"Why not say an angel at once?" cried another.

"I shouldn't have thought Colquhoun could keep either upon the premises," laughed the third.

"The lady you are pleased to criticise is my wife, gentlemen," said Colonel Colquhoun, lashing out at them suddenly, his face blazing with rage.

The women tried not to be abashed ; the men

apologised; but the game was over for that night, and the party broke up abruptly.

When they had gone, Colonel Colquhoun looked about for Evadne's book, and found it—not a difficult matter, for she had a bad habit of leaving the book she was reading open and face downward on any piece of furniture not intended to hold books, by preference a chair, where somebody might sit down upon it. This one happened to be upon the piano stool. Colonel Colquhoun glanced at the title as he picked it up, and reading *A Vision of Sin*, understood why she had shrunk from naming it. He appreciated her delicacy, but he feared the discernment which had shown her the necessity for it, and he determined to disarm her resentment next day by making her a proper apology at once.

He went down late to breakfast, expecting black looks at least, and was surprised to find her calm and equable as usual, and busy, keeping his breakfast hot for him.

"I wish to apologise to you for the scene you witnessed last night," he began ceremoniously.

"I think I owe *you* an apology for taking you unawares like that," she interrupted cheerfully, giving her best attention to a very full cup of coffee she was carefully carrying round the table to him.

"But I hope you understand it was an accident."

"I quite understand," he answered sullenly.

"But I want to explain that those people were also here by accident—at least, I was not altogether responsible for their presence. They were a party from one of the yachts in the harbour. I met them here at the door, just as I was coming in last night, and they forced themselves in uninvited. I hope you believe that I would not willingly bring anyone to the house whom I could not introduce to you."

"Oh, I quite believe it," she answered cordially.

"You are always most kind, most considerate. But I fear," she added, with concern, "that my being here must inconvenience you at times. Pray, pray do not let that be the case. I should regret it infinitely if you did."

When Evadne left Colonel Colquhoun he threw himself into a chair, and sat, chin on chest, hands in pockets, legs stretched out before him, giving way to a fit of deep disgust. He had always had a poor opinion of women, but now he began to despair of them altogether. "And this comes of letting them have their own way, and educating them," he reflected. "The first thing they do when they begin to know anything is to turn round upon us, and say we aren't good enough. And, by Jove! if we aren't, isn't it their fault? Isn't it their business to keep us right? When a fellow's had too good a time in his youth, and suffered for it, what is to become of him if he can't find some innocent girl to believe in him and marry him? But there soon won't be any innocent girls. Here am I now, a most utter bad lot, and Evadne knows it, and what does she do? apologises for appearing at an inopportune time! Now, Beston's wife would have brought the house about his ears if she'd caught him with that precious party I had here last night; and that's what a woman ought to do. She ought to *care*. She ought to be jealous, and cry her eyes out. She ought to go down on her knees and take some trouble to save a fellow's soul,"—it may be mentioned, by the way, that if Evadne *had* done so, Colonel Colquhoun would certainly have sworn at her "for meddling with things she'd no business to know anything about"; it was, however, not what he *would* but what she *should* have done that he was

considering just then. "That's the proper thing to do," he concluded; "and I don't see what's to be gained by this *cursed* cold-blooded indifference."

Articulation ceased here, because the startling theory that a vicious, dissipated man is not a fallen angel easily picked up, but a frightful source of crime and disease, recurred to him, with the charitable suggestion that a repentant woman of his own class would be the proper person to reform him, ideas which settled upon his soul and silenced him, being full-fraught for him with the cruel certainty that the end of "all *true* womanliness" is at hand.

CHAPTER XIII

COLONEL COLQUHOUN'S first interest in Evadne lasted longer than might have been expected, but the pleasure of hanging about her palled on him at last, and then he fell off in his kind attentions. This did not happen, however, as soon as it would have done by many months, had their relations been other than they were. It began in the usual way. Little acts to which she had become accustomed were omitted, resumed again, and once more omitted, intermittently, then finally allowed to drop altogether. When the change had set in for certain, Evadne regretted it. The kindly feeling for each other which had come to exist between them was largely due to her appreciation of the numberless little attentions which it had pleased him to pay her at first; they had not palled upon her, and she missed them—not as a wife would have done, however, and that she knew; so that when the fact that there *was* to be a falling-off became apparent, she found in it yet another cause for self-congratulation, and one that was great enough to remove all sting from the regret. What she was prepared to resent, however, was any renewal of the gush after it had once ceased; she required to be held in higher estimation than a toy which could be dropped and taken up again upon occasion—and Colonel Colquhoun gave her an opportunity, and, what was worse, provoked her into saying so, to her intense mortification when she came to reflect.

There was to be a ball at the palace one night, a grand affair, given in honour of that same fat foreign prince who had stayed with her people at Fraylingay, just before she came out, and had been struck by the promise of her appearance. In the early days of their acquaintance, Colonel Colquhoun had given her some very beautiful antique ornaments of Egyptian design, and she determined to wear them on this occasion for the first time; but when she came to try them with a modern ball-dress, she found that they made the latter look detestably vulgar. She therefore determined to design a costume, or to adapt one, which should be more in keeping with the artistic beauty of her jewels; and this idea, with the help of an excellent maid, she managed to carry out to perfection—which, by the way, was the accident that led her finally to adopt a distinctive style of dress, always a dangerous experiment, but in her case, fortunately, so admirably successful, that it was never remarked upon as strange by people of taste; only as appropriate.

Colonel Colquhoun dined at mess on the night of the ball, and did not trouble himself to come back to escort her. He said he would meet her at the palace, and if he missed her in the crowd there were sure to be plenty of other men only too glad

to offer her an arm. He had been most particular never to allow her to go anywhere alone at first—rather inconveniently so sometimes, but that she had endured. She was reflecting upon the change as she sat at her solitary dinner that evening, and she concluded by cheerfully assuring herself that she really was beginning to feel quite as if she were married. But afterward, when she found herself in the drawing-room, it seemed big and bare, and all the more so for being brilliantly lighted; and suddenly she felt herself a very little body all alone. There was no bitterness in the feeling, however, because there was no one neglecting her whose duty it was to keep her heart up; but it threatened to grow upon her all the same, and in order to distract herself she went downstairs to choose a bouquet. She had several sent her for every occasion, and they were always arranged on a table in the hall so that she might take the one that pleased her best as she went out. There were more than usual this evening. There was one from the Grand Duke, which she put aside. There was one from Colonel Colquhoun; he always ordered them by the dozen for the different ladies of his acquaintance. She picked it up and looked at it. It was beautiful in its way, but sent at the florist's discretion, not chosen to suit her gown, and it did not suit it, so that she could not have used it in any case; yet she put it down with a sigh. The next was of yellow roses, violets, and maidenhair fern, very sweet: "With Lord Groome's compliments," she read on the card that was tied to it. "He is back then, I suppose," she thought. "Funny old man! Very sorry, but you won't do." The next was from one of the survivors, a man she loathed. She thought it an impertinence for him to have sent her flowers at all, and she threw them under the table. The rest she took up one after the other, reading the cards attached, and admiring or disapproving of the different combinations without gratitude or sentiment; she knew that self-interest prompted all of the offerings that were not merely sent just because it was the right thing to do. There was one unconventional bunch, however, that caught her eye. It was a mere handful of scarlet flowers, tied loosely together with ribbons of their own colour and the same tint of green as their leaves. It was from a young subaltern in the regiment, a boy whom she had noticed first because he was the same age and somewhat resembled her brother Bertram, and had grown to like afterward for himself. His flowers were the first to arouse her to any expression of pleasure. The arrangement was new at the time, but it has since become common enough.

"He has done that for me himself," she thought. "The boy respects me; I shall wear his flowers. They are beautiful too," she added, holding them off at arm's length to admire them—"the most beautiful of them all."

Almost immediately after she returned to the drawing-room Mr. Price was shown in. He was the person of all others at that moment in Malta whom she would most have liked to see could she have chosen, and her face brightened at once when he entered.

"I have been dining with your husband's regiment to-night," he explained, "and I found that he could not come back for you to take you to the ball, and that therefore you would have to go alone; and so I ventured to come myself and offer you my escort."

"Ah, how good you are," Evadne cried, feeling fully for the first time how much she had in

heart been dreading the ordeal of having perhaps to enter the ballroom alone.

The old gentleman surveyed her some seconds in silence.

"That's original," he said at last, with several nods, approvingly. "And that is a glorious piece of colour you have in your hand."

"Is it not?" she said. "More beautiful, I think, than all my jewels."

"Yes," he agreed. "The flowers are the finishing touch."

The ball had begun when Evadne arrived, and the first person she encountered was the Grand Duke, who begged for a dance and took her to the ballroom. A dance was just over, however, when they entered; the great room was pretty clear, and the prince led her toward the farther end, where their hostess was sitting. There also was Colonel Colquhoun and some other men, with Mrs. Guthrie Brimston. He had forgotten Evadne for the moment, and she was so transformed by the beautiful lines of her dress that he had looked at her hard and admiringly before he recognised her.

"Who's the lady with the Grand Duke?" Major Livingston exclaimed.

"Someone with a figure, by Jove!" said old Lord Groome.

"Loyal Egypt herself!" said Mrs. Guthrie Brimston, always apt at analogy.

"Why—it's Evadne," said Colonel Colquhoun.

"Didn't know his own wife, by Jove!" Lord Groome exclaimed.

"Well, I hope I may be pardoned at that distance," rejoined Colonel Colquhoun, confused.

"Royal Egypt is more audacious than ever," Mrs. Guthrie Brimston observed. "This is a new departure. The reign of ideas is over, I fancy, and a season of social success has begun."

Evadne danced till daylight, unconscious of the sensation she had made, and rose next morning fresh for the usual occupations of the day; but her success of the night before had so enhanced her value in Colonel Colquhoun's estimation that he was inclined to be effusive. He returned to lunch, and hung about her the whole afternoon, much to her inconvenience, because he had not been included in her arrangements for some months now, and she could not easily alter them all at once, just to humour a whim of his. But wherefore the whim? A very little reflection explained it. Looks and tones and words of her partners of the previous night, not heeded at the time, recurred to her now, and made her thoughtful. But she could not feel flattered, for it was obviously not her whom Colonel Colquhoun was worshipping, it was success; and the perception of this truth suggested a possible parallel which made her shudder. It was a terrible glimpse of what might have been, what certainly *would* have been, had not the dear Lord vouchsafed her the precious knowledge which had preserved her from the ultimate degradation and the insult which such an endeavour as that of a woman she had in her mind, to win back a wandering husband, would have resulted in. "I do not care," was her happy thought, when she began to see less of Colonel Colquhoun; "but a wife would feel differently, and it would have been just the same had I been his wife."

He was not surprised to find her submit to his extra attentions in silence that afternoon, because that was her way, but he found her looking at him once or twice with an expression of deep thought in her eyes which provoked him at last to ask what it was all about. "I was thinking," she

answered, "of that painful incident in *La Femme de Trente-ans*, where Julie so far forgot her self-respect as to try to re-awaken her husband's admiration for her by displaying her superior accomplishments at the house of that low woman Mme. de Sèricy. You remember she made quite a sensation by her singing, 'Et son mari, réveillé par le rôle qu'elle venait de jouer, voulut l'honorer d'une fantaisie, et la prit en goût, comme il eût fait d'une actrice.' I was thinking, when she became aware of what she had done, of the degradation of the position in which she had placed herself, how natural it was that she should despise herself, cursing marriage which had brought her to such a pass, and wishing herself dead."

Colonel Colquhoun became moody upon this. "My having stayed at home with you this afternoon suggests a parallel, I suppose, after your success of last night?" he inquired. "And you have been congratulating yourself all day," he proceeded, summing up judicially, "upon having escaped the degradation of being the wife *de facto* of a man whose admiration for you could cool, under any circumstances, and be revived again by a vulgar success in society?"

She was silent, and he got up and walked out of the house. From where she sat she saw him go, twirling his blond moustache with one hand and viciously flipping at the flowers as he passed with the stick he carried in the other; a fine, soldier-like man in appearance certainly, and not wanting in intelligence, since he could comprehend her so exactly; but oh, how oppressive when in an admiring mood! This was her first feeling when she got rid of him; but a better frame of mind supervened, and then she suffered some mortification for having weakly allowed herself to be betrayed into speaking so plainly. Yet it proved in the long-run to have been the kindest thing she could have done, for Colonel Colquhoun was enlightened at last, and they were both the better for the understanding.

But the house seemed full of him still after he had gone that day, and she therefore put on her things, and hurrying out into the fresh air, walked quickly to the house of a friend, where she knew she would find a fresh moral atmosphere also. She was soul-sick and depressed. Life felt like the end of a ball, all confusion, and every carriage up but her own; torn gowns, worn countenances, spiteful remarks, ill-natures evident that were wont to be concealed, disillusion generally, and headache threatening. But, fortunately, she found a friend at home to whom she instinctively went for a moral tonic. This was a new friend, Lady Clan, the widow of a Civil Service official, who wintered all over the world as a rule, but had passed that year at Malta. She was a cheery old lady, masculine in appearance, but with a great, kind, womanly heart, full of sympathetic insight—and a good friend to Evadne, whom she watched with fear as well as with interest, doubting much what would come of all that was unaccustomed about the girl. The sweet, grave face and half-shut eyes appealed to her pathetically that afternoon in particular, as Evadne sat silently beside her, busy with a piece of work she had brought. Lady Clan thought her lips too firm; as she grew older, she feared her mouth would harden in expression if she were not happy—and the old lady inwardly prayed Heaven that she might be saved from that; prayed that little arms might come to clasp her neck, and warm little lips shower kisses upon

her lips to keep them soft and smiling, lest they settled into stony coldness and forgot the trick.

CHAPTER XIV

MALTA was enlivened that winter by a joke which Mrs. Guthrie Brimston made without intending it.

Mrs. Malcomson had written a book. She was thirty years of age, and had been married to a military man for ten, and in that time she had seen some things which had made a painful impression upon her, and suggested ideas that were only to be got rid of by publishing them. Ideas cease to belong to an author as soon as they are made public; if they are new at all, somebody else appropriates them; and if they are old, as, alas! most of them must be at this period of the world's progress, the mistaken reproducer is relieved of the horrid responsibility by kindly critics promptly. Blessed is the man who never flatters himself with the delusion that he can do anything original; for, verily, he shall not be disappointed.

Mrs. Malcomson made no such vain pretension. She was quite clever enough to know her own limitations exactly. Out of everyday experiences everyday thoughts had come to her, and when she began to embody such thoughts in words she did not suppose that their everyday character would be altered by the process. She had not met any of those perfect beings who inhabit the realms of ideal prose fiction, and make no mistakes but such as are necessary to keep the story going; nor any of the terrible demons, without a redeeming characteristic, who haunt the dim confines of the same territory for purposes invariably malign; and it never occurred to her to pretend that she had. She was a simple artist, educated in the life-school of the world, and desiring above everything to be honest—a naturalist, in fact, with positive ideas of right and wrong, and incapable of the confusion of mind or laxity of conscience which denies, on the one hand, that wrong may be pleasant in the doing, or claims, on the other, with equal untruth, that because it is pleasant it must be, if not exactly right, at all events excusable. So she endeavoured to represent things as she saw them—things real, not imaginary; and when her characters spoke they talked of the interests which were daily discussed in her presence, and expressed themselves as human beings do. She was too independent to be conventional, and it was therefore inevitable that she should bring both yelp and bray upon herself, and be much misunderstood. When asked why she had written the book, she answered candidly, "For my own benefit, of course," which caused a perfect howl of disapprobation; for, if that were her object, there could be no doubt that she would attain it, as the book had been a success from the first; but as people had hastily concluded that she was setting up for a social reformer, and would fail, they were naturally disgusted. They had been prepared to call the supposed attempt great presumption on her part; but when they found that she had merely her own interests in view, and had not let their moral welfare cost her a thought, they said she was not right-minded; whereupon she observed: "I don't mind having my morals attacked; but I should object to be pulled up for my grammar"—meaning that she was sure of her morals, but was half afraid that her grammar might be shaky.