

BARR AMELIA

E.

WINTER EVENING TALES

Amelia Barr

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PREFACE

In these "Winter Evening Tales," Mrs. Barr has spread before her readers a feast that will afford the rarest enjoyment for many a leisure hour. There are few writers of the present day whose genius has such a luminous quality, and the spell of whose fancy carries us along so delightfully on its magic current. In these "Tales"—each a perfect gem of romance, in an artistic setting—the author has touched many phases of human nature. Some of the stories in the collection sparkle with the spirit of mirth; others give glimpses of the sadder side of life. Throughout all, there are found that broad sympathy and intense humanity that characterize every page that comes from her pen. Her men and women are creatures of real flesh and blood, not deftly-handled puppets; they move, act and speak spontaneously, with the full vigor of life and the strong purpose of persons who are participating in a real drama, and not a make-believe.

Mrs. Barr has the rare gift of writing from heart to heart. She unconsciously infuses into her readers a liberal share of the enthusiasm that moves the people of her creative imagination. One cannot read any of her books without feeling more than a spectator's interest; we are, for the moment, actual sharers in the joys and the sorrows, the misfortunes and the triumphs of the men and women to whom she introduces us. Our sympathy, our love, our admiration, are kindled by their noble and attractive qualities; our mirth is excited by the absurd and incongruous aspects of some characters, and our hearts are thrilled by the frequent revelation of such goodness and true human feeling as can only come from pure and noble souls.

In these "Tales," as in many of her other works, humble life has held a strong attraction for Mrs. Barr's pen. Her mind and heart naturally turn in this direction; and although her wonderful talent, within its wide range, deals with all stations and conditions of life, she has but little relish for the gilded artificialities of society, and a strong love for those whose condition makes life for them something real and earnest and definite of purpose. For this reason, among many others, the Christian people of America have a hearty admiration for Mrs. Barr and her work, knowing it to be not only of surpassing human interest, but spiritually helpful and inspiring, with an influence that makes for morality and good living, in the highest sense in which a Christian understands the term.

G.H. Sandison.

New York, 1896.

CASH

A problem of profit and loss, worked by David Lockerby

Part I

"Gold may be dear bought."

A narrow street with dreadful "wynds" and "vennels" running back from it was the High street of Glasgow at the time my story opens. And yet, though dirty, noisy and overcrowded with sin and suffering, a flavor of old time royalty and romance lingered amid its vulgar surroundings; and midway of its squalid length a quaint brown frontage kept behind it noble halls of learning, and pleasant old courts full of the "air of still delightful studies."

From this building came out two young men in academic costume. One of them set his face dourly against the clammy fog and drizzling rain, breathing it boldly, as if it was the balmiest oxygen; the other, shuddering, drew his scarlet toga around him and said, mournfully, "Ech, Davie, the High street is an ill furlong on the de'il's road! I never tread it, but I think o' the weary, weary miles atween it and Eden."

"There is no road without its bad league, Willie, and the High street has its compensations; its prison for ill-doers, its learned college, and its holy High Kirk. I am one of St. Mungo's bairns, and I'm not above preaching for my saint."

"And St. Mungo will be proud of your birthday yet, Davie. With such a head and such a tongue, with knowledge behind, and wit to the fore, there is a broad road and an open door for David Lockerby. You may come even to be the Lord Rector o' Glasgow College yet."

"Wisdom is praised and starves; I am thinking it would set me better to be Lord Provost of Glasgow city."

"The man who buried his one talent did not go scatheless, Davie; and what now if he had had ten?"

"You are aye preaching, Willie, and whiles it is very untimeous. Are you going to Mary Moir's to-night?"

"Why should I? The only victory over love is through running away."

David looked sharply at his companion but as they were at the Trongate there was no time for further remark. Willie Caird turned eastward toward Glasgow Green, David hailed a passing omnibus and was soon set down before a handsome house on the Sauchiehall Road. He went in by the back door, winning from old Janet, in spite of herself, the grimmest shadow of a smile.

"Are my father and mother at home, Janet?"

"Deed are they, the mair by token that they hae been quarreling anent you till the peacefu' folks like mysel' could hae wished them mair sense, or further away."

"Why should they quarrel about me?"

"Why, indeed, since they'll no win past your ain makin' or marring? But the mistress is some kin to Zebedee's wife, I'm thinking, and she wad fain set you up in a pu'pit and gie you the keys o' St. Peter; while maister is for haeing you it a bank or twa in your pouch, and add Ellenmount to Lockerby, and—"

"And if I could, Janet?"

"Tut, tut, lad! If it werna for 'if' you might put auld Scotland in a bottle."

"But what was the upshot, Janet?"

"I canna tell. God alone understan's quarreling folk."

Then David went upstairs to his own room, and when he came down again his face was set as dourly against the coming interview as it had been against the mist and rain. The point at issue was quite familiar to him; his mother wished him to continue his studies and prepare for the ministry. In her opinion the greatest of all men were the servants of the King, and a part of the spiritual power and social influence which they enjoyed in St. Mungo's ancient city she earnestly coveted for her son.

"Didn't the Bailies and the Lord Provost wait for them? And were not even the landed gentry and nobles obligated to walk behind a minister in his gown and bands?"

Old Andrew Lockerby thought the honor good enough, but money was better. All the twenty years that his wife had been dreaming of David ruling his flock from the very throne of a pulpit, Andrew had been dreaming of him becoming a great merchant or banker, and winning back the fair lands of Ellenmount, once the patrimonial estate of the house of Lockerby. During these twenty years both husband and wife had clung tenaciously to their several intentions.

Now David's teachers—without any knowledge of these diverse influences—had urged on him the duty of cultivating the unusual talents confided to him, and of consecrating them to some noble service of God and humanity. But David was ruled by many opposite feelings, and had with all his book-learning the very smallest intimate acquaintance with himself. He knew neither his strong points nor his weak ones, and had not even a suspicion of the mighty potency of that mysterious love for gold which really was the ruling passion in his breast.

The argument so long pending he knew was now to be finally settled, and he was by no means unprepared for the discussion. He came slowly down stairs, counting the points he wished to make on his fingers, and quite resolved neither to be coaxed nor bullied out of his own individual opinion. He was a handsome, stalwart fellow, as Scotchmen of two-and-twenty go, for it takes about thirty-five years to fill up and perfect the massive frames of "the men of old Gaul." About his thirty-fifth year David would doubtless be a man of noble presence; but even now there was a sense of youth and power about him that was very attractive, as with a grave smile he lifted a book, and comfortably disposed himself in an easy chair by the window. For David knew better than begin the conversation; any advantages the defendant might have he determined to retain.

After a few minutes' silence his father said, "What are you reading, Davie? It ought to be a guid book that puts guid company in the background."

David leisurely turned to the title page. "Selections from the Latin Poets," father."

"A fool is never a great fool until he kens Latin. Adam Smith or some book o' commercial economics wad set ye better, Davie."

"Adam Smith is good company for them that are going his way, father: but there is no way a man may take and not find the humanities good road-fellows."

"Dinna beat around the bush, guidman; tell Davie at once that you want him to go 'prentice to Mammon. He kens well enough whether he can serve him or no."

"I want Davie to go 'prentice to your ain brither, guid wife—it's nane o' my doing if you ca' your ain kin ill names—and, Davie, your uncle maks you a fair offer, an' you'll just be a born fool to refuse it."

"What is it, father?"

"Twa years you are to serve him for £200 a year; and at the end, if both are satisfied, he will gie you sich a share in the business as I can buy you—and, Davie, I'se no be scrimping for such an end. It's the auldest bank in Soho, an' there's nane atween you and the head o' it. Dinna fling awa' good fortune—dinna do it, Davie, my dear lad. I hae look it to you for twenty years to finish what I hae begun—for twenty years I hae been telling mysel' 'my Davie will win again the bonnie braes o' Ellenmount.'"

There were tears in old Andrew's eyes, and David's heart thrilled and warmed to the old man's words; in that one flash of sympathy they came nearer to each other than they had ever done before.

And then spoke his mother: "Davie, my son, you'll no listen to ony sich temptation. My brither is my brither, and there are few folk o' the Gordon line a'thegither wrang, but Alexander Gordon is a dour man, and I trow weel you'll serve hard for ony share in his money bags. You'll just gang your ways back to college and tak' up your Greek and Hebrew and serve in the Lord's temple instead of Alexander Gordon's Soho Bank; and, Davie, if you'll do right in this matter you'll win my blessing and every plack and bawbee o' my money." Then, seeing no change in David's face, she made her

last, great concession—"And, Davie, you may marry Mary Moir, an' it please you, and I'll like the lassie as weel as may be."

"Your mither, like a' women, has sought you wi' a bribe in her hand, Davie. You ken whether she has bid your price or not. When you hae served your twa years I'se buy you a £20,000 share in the Gordon Bank, and a man wi' £20,000 can pick and choose the wife he likes best. But I'm aboon bribing you—a fair offer isna a bribe."

The concession as to Mary Moir was the one which Davie had resolved to make his turning point, and now both father and mother had virtually granted it. He had told himself that no lot in life would be worth having without Mary, and that with her any lot would be happy. Now that he had been left free in this matter he knew his own mind as little as ever.

"The first step binds to the next," he answered, thoughtfully. "Mary may have something to say. Night brings counsel. I will e'en think over things until the morn."

A little later he was talking both offers over with Mary Moir, and though it took four hours to discuss them they did not find the subject tedious. It was very late when he returned home, but he knew by the light in the house-place that Janet was waiting up for him. Coming out of the wet, dark night, it was pleasant to see the blazing ingle, the white-sanded floor, and the little round table holding some cold moor-cock and the pastry that he particularly liked.

"Love is but cauldrie cheer, my lad," said Janet, "an' the breast o' a bird an' a raspberry tartlet will be nane out o' the way." David was of the same opinion. He was very willing to enjoy Janet's good things and the pleasant light and warmth. Besides, Janet was his oldest confidant and friend—a friend that had never failed him in any of his boyish troubles or youthful scrapes.

It gave her pleasure enough for a while to watch him eat, but when he pushed aside the bird and stretched out his hand for the raspberry dainties, she said, "Now talk a bit, my lad. If others hae wared money on you, I hae wared love, an' I want to ken whether you are going to college, or whether you are going to Lunnon amang the proud, fause Englishers?"

"I am going to London, Janet."

"Whatna for?"

"I am not sure that I have any call to be a minister, Janet—it is a solemn charge."

"Then why not ask for a sure call? There is nae key to God's council chamber that I ken of."

"Mary wants me to go to London."

"Ech, sirs! Sets Deacon Moir's dochter to send a lad a wrang road. I wouldna hae thocht wi' her bringing up she could hae swithered for a moment—but it's the auld, auld story; where the deil canna go by himsel' he sends a woman. And David Lockerby will tyne his inheritance for a pair o' blue e'en and a handfu' o' gowden curls. Waly! waly! but the children o' Esau live for ever."

"Mary said,"—

"I dinna want to hear what Mary said. It would hae been nae loss if she'd ne'er spoken on the matter; but if you think makin' money, an' hoarding money is the measure o' your capacity you ken yousel', sir, dootless. Howsomever you'll go to your ain room now; I'm no going to keep my auld e'en waking just for a common business body."

Thus in spite of his father's support, David did not find his road to London as fair and straight as he could have wished. Janet was deeply offended at him, and she made him feel it in a score of little ways very annoying to a man fond of creature comforts and human sympathy. His mother went about the necessary preparations in a tearful mood that was a constant reproach, and his friend Willie did not scruple to tell him that "he was clean out o' the way o' duty."

"God has given you a measure o' St. Paul's power o' argument, Davie, and the verra tongue o' Apollos—weapons wherewith to reason against all unrighteousness and to win the souls o' men."

"Special pleading, Willie."

"Not at all. Every man's life bears its inscription if he will take the trouble to read it. There was James Grahame, born, as you may say, wi' a sword in his hand, and Bauldy Strang wi' a spade, and

Andrew Semple took to the balances and the 'rithmetic as a duck takes to the water. Do you not mind the day you spoke anent the African missions to the young men in St. Andrews' Ha'? Your words flew like arrows—every ane o' them to its mark; and your heart burned and your e'en glowed, till we were a' on fire with you, and there wasna a lad there that wouldna hae followed you to the vera Equator. I wouldna dare to bury such a power for good, Davie, no, not though I buried it fathoms deep in gold."

From such interviews as these Davie went home very miserable. If it had not been for Mary Moir he would certainly have gone back to his old seat by Willie Caird in the Theological Hall. But Mary had such splendid dreams of their life in London, and she looked in her hope and beauty so bewitching, that he could not bear to hint a disappointment to her. Besides, he doubted whether she was really fit for a minister's wife, even if he should take up the cross laid down before him—and as for giving up Mary, he would not admit to himself that there could be a possible duty in such a contingency.

But that even his father had doubts and hesitations was proven to David by the contradictory nature of his advice and charges. Thus on the morning he left Glasgow, and as they were riding together to the Caledonian station, the old man said, "Your uncle has given you a seat in his bank, Davie, and you'll mak' room for yoursel' to lie down, I'se warrant. But you'll no forget that when a guid man thrives a' should thrive i' him; and giving for God's sake never lessens the purse."

"I am but one in a world full, father. I hope I shall never forget to give according to my prosperings."

"Tak the world as it is, my lad, and no' as it ought to be; and never forget that money is money's brither—an' you put two pennies in a purse they'll creep thegither.

"But then Davie, I am free to say gold won't buy everything, and though rich men hae long hands, they won't reach to heaven. So, though you'll tak guid care o' yoursel', you will also gie to God the things that are God's."

"I have been brought up in the fear of God and the love of mankind, father. It would be an ill thing for me to slink out of life and leave the world no better for my living."

"God bless you, lad; and the £20,000 will be to the fore when it is called for, and you shall make it £60,000, and I'll see again Ellenmount in the Lockerby's keeping. But you'll walk in the ways o' your fathers, and gie without grudging of your increase."

David nodded rather impatiently. He could hardly understand the struggle going on in his father's heart—the wish to say something that might quiet his own conscience, and yet not make David's unnecessarily tender. It is hard serving God and Mammon, and Andrew Lockerby was miserable and ashamed that morning in the service.

And yet he was not selfish in the matter—that much in his favor must be admitted. He would rather have had the fine, handsome lad he loved so dearly going in and out his own house. He could have taken great interest in all his further studies, and very great pride in seeing him a successful "placed minister;" but there are few Scotsmen in whom pride of lineage and the good of the family does not strike deeper than individual pleasure. Andrew really believed that David's first duty was to the house of Lockerby.

He had sacrificed a great deal toward this end all his own life, nor were his sacrifices complete with the resignation of his only child to the same purpose. To a man of more than sixty years of age it is a great trial to have an unusual and unhappy atmosphere in his home; and though Mrs. Lockerby was now tearful and patient under her disappointment, everyone knows that tears and patience may be a miserable kind of comfort. Then, though Janet had as yet preserved a dour and angry silence, he knew that sooner or later she would begin a guerilla warfare of sharp words, which he feared he would have mainly to bear, for Janet, though his housekeeper, was also "a far-awa cousin," had been forty years in his house, and was not accustomed to withhold her opinions on any subject.

Fortunately for Andrew Lockerby, Janet finally selected Mary Moir as the Eve specially to blame in this transgression. "A proud up-head lassie," she asserted, "that cam o' a family wha would sell their share o' the sunshine for pounds sterling!"

From such texts as this the two women in the Lockerby house preached little daily sermons to each other, until comfort grew out of the very stem of their sorrow, and they began to congratulate each other that "puir Davie was at ony rate outside the glamour o' Mary Moir's temptations."

"For she just bewitched the laddie," said Janet, angrily; and, doubtless, if the old laws regarding witches had been in Janet's administration it would have gone hardly with pretty Mary Moir.

Part II

"God's work is soon done."

It is a weary day when the youth first discovers that after all he will only become a man; and this discovery came with a depressing weight one morning to David, after he had been counting bank notes for three hours. It was noon, but the gas was lit, and in the heavy air a dozen men sat silent as statues, adding up figures and making entries. He thought of the college courts, and the college green, of the crowded halls, and the symposia, where both mind and body had equal refection. There had been days when he had a part in these things, and when to "strive with things impossible," or "to pluck honor from the pale-faced moon," had not been unreasonable or rash; but now it almost seemed as if Mr. Buckle's dreary gospel was a reality, and men were machines, and life was an affair to be tabulated in averages.

He had just had a letter from Willie Caird, too, and it had irritated him. The wounds of a friend may be faithful, but they are not always welcome. David determined to drop the correspondence. Willie was going one way and he another. They might never see each other again; and—

If they should meet one day,
If *both* should not forget
They could clasp hands the accustomed way.

For by simply going with the current in which in great measure, subject yet to early influences, he found himself, David Lockerby had drifted in one twelve months far enough away from the traditions and feelings of his home and native land. Not that he had broken loose into any flagrant sin, or in any manner cast a shadow on the perfect respectability of his name. The set in which Alexander Gordon and his nephew lived sanctioned nothing of the kind. They belonged to the best society, and were of those well-dressed, well-behaved people whom Canon Kingsley described as "the sitters in pews."

In their very proper company David had gone to ball and party, to opera and theatre. On wet Sundays they sat together in St. George's Church; on fine Sundays they had sailed quietly down the Thames, and eaten their dinner at Richmond. Now, sin is sin beyond all controversy, but there were none of David's companions to whom these things were sins in the same degree as they were to David.

To none of them had the holy Sabbath ever been the day it had been to him; to none of them was it so richly freighted with memories of wonderful sermons and solemn sacraments that were foretastes of heaven. Coming with a party of gentlemanly fellows slowly rowing up the Thames and humming some passionate recitative from an opera, he alone could recall the charming stillness of a Scotch Sabbath, the worshiping crowds, and the evening psalm ascending from so many thousand hearthstones:

O God of Bethel, by whose hand
Thy people still are led.

He alone, as the oars kept time to "aria" or "chorus," heard above the witching melody the solemn minor of "St. Mary's," or the tearful tenderness of "Communion."

To most of his companions opera and theatre had come as a matter of course, as a part of their daily life and education. David had been obliged to stifle conscience, to disobey his father's counsels and his mother's pleadings, before he could enjoy them. He had had, in fact, to cultivate a taste for

the sin before the sin was pleasant to him; and he frankly told himself that night, in thinking it all over, that it was harder work getting to hell than to heaven.

But then in another year he would become a partner, marry Mary, and begin a new life. Suddenly it struck him with a new force that he had not heard from Mary for nearly three weeks. A fear seized him that while he had been dancing and making merry Mary had been ill and suffering. He was amazed at his own heartlessness, for surely nothing but sickness would have made Mary forget him.

The next morning as he went to the bank he posted a long letter to her, full of affection and contrition and rose-colored pictures of their future life. He had risen an hour earlier to write it, and he did not fail to notice what a healthy natural pleasure even this small effort of self-denial gave him. He determined that he would that very night write long letters to his mother and Janet, and even to his father. "There was a good deal he wanted to say to him about money matters, and his marriage, and fore-talk always saved after-talk, besides it would keep the influence of the old and better life around him to be in closer communion with it."

Thus thinking, he opened the door of his uncle's private room, and said cheerily, "Good morning, uncle."

"Good morning, Davie. Your father is here."

Then Andrew Lockerby came forward, and his son met him with outstretched hands and paling cheeks. "What is it, father? Mother? Mary? Is she dead?"

"Deed, no, my lad. There's naething wrang but will turn to right. Mary Moir was married three days syne, and I thocht you wad rather hear the news from are that loved you. That's a', Davie; and indeed it's a loss that's a great gain."

"Who did she marry?"

"Just a bit wizened body frae the East Indies, a'most as yellow as his gold, an' as auld as her father. But the Deacon is greatly set up wi' the match—or the settlements—and Mary comes o' a gripping kind. There's her brother Gavin, he'd sell the ears aff his head, an' they werena fastened on."

Then David went away with his father, and after half-an-hour's talk on the subject together it was never mentioned more between them. But it was a blow that killed effectually all David's eager yearnings for a loftier and purer life. And it not only did this, but it also caused to spring up into active existence a passion which was to rule him absolutely—a passion for gold. Love had failed him, friendship had proved an annoyance, company, music, feasting, amusements of all kinds were a weariness now to think of. There seemed nothing better for him than to become a rich man.

"I'll buy so many acres of old Scotland and call them by the Lockerby's name; and I'll have nobles and great men come bowing and becking to David Lockerby as they do to Alexander Gordon. Love is refused, and wisdom is scorned, but everybody is glad to take money; then money is best of all things."

Thus David reasoned, and his father said nothing against his arguments. Indeed, they had never understood one another so well. David, for the first time, asked all about the lands of Ellenmount, and pledged himself, if he lived and prospered, to fulfill his father's hope. Indeed, Andrew was altogether so pleased with his son that he told his brother-in-law that the £20,000 would be forthcoming as soon as ever he choose to advance David in the firm.

"I was only waiting, Lockerby, till Davie got through wi' his playtime. The lad's myself o'er again, an' I ken weel he'll ne'er be contented until he settles cannily doon to his interest tables."

So before Andrew Lockerby went back to Glasgow David was one of the firm of Gordon & Co., sat in the directors' room, and began to feel some of the pleasant power of having money to lend. After this he was rarely seen among men of his own age—women he never mingled with. He removed to his uncle's stately house in Baker street, and assimilated his life very much to that of the older money maker. Occasionally he took a run northward to Glasgow, or a month's vacation on the Continent, but nearly all such journeys were associated with some profitable loan or investment.

People began to speak of him as a most admirable young man, and indeed in some respects he merited the praise. No son ever more affectionately honored his father and mother, and Janet had been made an independent woman by his grateful consideration.

He was so admirable that he ceased to interest people, and every time he visited Glasgow fewer and fewer of his old acquaintances came to see him. A little more than ten years after his admission to the firm of Gordon & Co. he came home at the new year, and presented his father with the title-deeds of Ellenmount and Netherby. The next day old Andrew was welcomed on the City Exchange as "Lockerby of Ellenmount, gentleman." "I hae lived lang enough to hae seen this day," he said, with happy tears; and David felt a joy in his father's joy that he did not know again for many years. For while a man works for another there is an ennobling element in his labor, but when he works simply for himself he has become the greatest of all slaves. This slavery David now willingly assumed; the accumulation of money became his business, his pleasure, the sum of his daily life.

Ten years later both his uncle and father were dead, and both had left David every shilling they possessed. Then he went on working more eagerly than ever, turning his tens of thousands into hundreds of thousands and adding acre to acre, and farm to farm, until Lockerby was the richest estate in Annandale. When he was forty-five years of age fortune seemed to have given him every good gift except wife and children, and his mother, who had nothing else to fret about, worried Janet continually on this subject.

"Wife an' bairns, indeed!" said Janet; "vera uncertain comforts, ma'am, an' vera certain cares. Our Master Davie likes aye to be sure o' his bargains."

"Weel, Janet, it's a great cross to me—an' him sae honored, an' guid an' rich, wi' no a shilling ill-saved to shame him."

"Tut, tut, ma'am! The river doesna' swell wi' clean water. Naeboddy's charged him wi' wrangdoing—that's enough. There's nae need to set him up for a saint."

"An' you wanted him to be a minister, Janet."

"I was that blind—ance."

"We are blind creatures, Janet."

"Wi' *excepts*, ma'am; but they'll ne'er be found amang mithers."

This conversation took place one lovely Sabbath evening, and just at the same time David was standing thoughtfully on Princes street, Edinburgh, wondering to which church he had better turn his steps. For a sudden crisis in the affairs of a bank in that city had brought him hurriedly to Scotland, and he was not only a prudent man who considered public opinion, but was also in a mood to conciliate that opinion so long as the outward conditions were favorable. Whatever he might do in London, in Scotland he always went to morning and evening service.

He was also one of those self-dependent men who dislike to ask questions or advice from anyone. Though a comparative stranger he would not have allowed himself to think that anyone could direct him better than he could choose for himself. He looked up and down the street, and finally followed a company which increased continually until they entered an old church in the Canongate.

Its plain wooden pews and old-fashioned elevated pulpit rather pleased than offended David, and the air of antiquity about the place consecrated it in his eyes. Men like whatever reminds them of their purest and best days, and David had been once in the old Relief Church on the Doo Hill in Glasgow—just such a large, bare, solemn-looking house of worship. The still, earnest men and women, the droning of the precentor, the antiquated singing pleased and soothed him. He did not notice much the thin little fair man who conducted the services; for he was holding a session with his own soul.

A peculiar movement among the congregation announced that the sermon was beginning, and David, looking up, saw that the officiating minister had been changed. This man was swarthy and tall, and looked like some old Jewish prophet, as he lifted his rapt face and cried, like one crying in

the wilderness, "Friends! I have a question to ask you to-night: '*What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?*'"

For twenty-three years David had silenced that voice, but it had found him out again—it was Willie Caird's. At first interested and curious, David soon became profoundly moved as Willie, in clear, solemn, thrilling sentences, reasoned of life and death and judgment to come. Not that he followed his arguments, or was more than dimly conscious of the moving eloquence that stirred the crowd as a mighty wind stirs the trees in the forest: for that dreadful question smote, and smote, and smote upon his heart as if determined to have an answer.

What shall it profit? What shall it profit? What shall it profit? David was quick enough at counting material loss and profit, but here was a question beyond his computation. He went silently out of the church, and wandered away by Holyrood Palace and St. Anthony's Chapel to the pathless, lonely beauty of Salisbury Crags. There was no answer in nature for him. The stars were silent above, the earth silent beneath. Weariness brought him no rest; if he slept, he woke with the start of a hunted soul, and found him asking that same dreadful question. When he looked in the mirror his own face queried of him, "What profit?" and he was compelled to make a decided effort to prevent his tongue uttering the ever present thought.

But at noon he would meet the defaulting bank committee, "and doubtless his lawful business would take its proper share of his thought!" He told himself that it was the voice and face of his old friend that had affected him so vividly, and that if he went and chatted over old times with Willie, he would get rid of the disagreeable influence.

The influence, however, went with him into the creditors' committee room. The embarrassed officials had dreaded greatly the interview. No one hoped for more than bare justice from David Lockerby. "Clemency, help, sympathy! You'll get blood out o' a stane first, gentlemen," said the old cashier, with a dour, hopeless face.

And yet that morning David Lockerby amazed no one so much as himself. He went to the meeting quite determined to have his own—only his own—but something asked him, "*What shall it profit?*" and he gave up his lawful increase and even offered help. He went determined to speak his mind very plainly about mismanagement and the folly of having losses; and something asked him, "*What shall it profit?*" and he gave such sympathy with his help that the money came with a blessing in its hand.

The feeling of satisfaction was so new to him that it embarrassed and almost made him ashamed. He slipped ungraciously away from the thanks that ought to have been pleasant, and found himself, almost unconsciously, looking up Willie's name in the clerical directory, "Dr. William Caird, 22 Moray place." David knew enough of Edinburgh to know that Moray place contained the handsomest residences in the city, and therefore he was not astonished at the richness and splendor of Willie's library; but he was astonished to see him surrounded by five beautiful boys and girls, and evidently as much interested in their lessons and sports as if he was one of them.

"Ech! Davie man! but I'm glad to see you!" That was all of Willie's greeting, but his eyes filled, and as the friends held each other's hands Davie came very near touching for a moment a David Lockerby no one had seen for many long years. But he said nothing during his visit of Willie's sermon, nor indeed in several subsequent ones. Scotsmen are reticent on all matters, and especially reticent about spiritual experience; and though Davie lingered in Edinburgh a week, he was neither able to speak to Willie about his soul, nor yet in all their conversations get rid of that haunting, uncomfortable influence Willie had raised.

But as they stood before the Queen's Hotel at midnight bidding each other an affectionate farewell, David suddenly turned Willie round and opened up his whole heart to him. And as he talked he found himself able to define what had been only hitherto a vague, restless sense of want.

"I am the poorest rich man and the most miserable failure, Willie Caird, that ever you asked yon fearsome question of—and I know it. I have achieved millions, and I am a conscious bankrupt

to my own soul. I have wasted my youth, neglected my talents and opportunities, and whatever the world may call me I am a wretched breakdown. I have made money—plenty of it—and it does not pay me. What am I to do?"

"You ken, Davie, my dear, dear lad, what advice the Lord Jesus gave to the rich man—'distribute unto the poor—and come, follow me!'"

Then up and down Princes street, and away under the shadow of the Castle Hill, Willie and David walked and talked, till the first sunbeams touched St. Leonard's Crag. If it was a long walk a grand work was laid out in it.

"You shall be more blessed than your namesake," said Willie, "for though David gathered the gold, and the wood, and the stone, Solomon builded therewith. Now, an' it please God, you shall do your ain work, and see the topstone brought on with rejoicing."

Then at David's command, workmen gathered in companies, and some of the worst "vennels" in old Glasgow were torn down; and the sunshine flooded "wynds" it had scarcely touched for centuries, and a noble building arose that was to be a home for children that had no home. And the farms of Ellenmount fed them, and the fleeces of Lockerby clothed them, and into every young hand was put a trade that would win it honest bread.

In a short time even this undertaking began to be too small for David's energies and resources, and he joined hands with Willie in many other good works, and gave not only freely of his gold, but also of his time and labor. The old eloquence that stirred his classmates in St. Andrew's Hall, "till they would have followed him to the equator" began to stir the cautious Glasgow traders to the bottom of their hearts, and their pocketbooks; and men who didn't want to help in a crusade against drunkenness, or in a crusade for the spread of the Gospel, stopped away from Glasgow City Hall when David Lockerby filled the chair at a public meeting and started a subscription list with £1000 down on the table.

But there were two old ladies that never stopped away, though one of them always declared "Master Davie had fleeced her last bawbee out o' her pouch;" and the other generally had her little whimper about Davie "waring his substance upon ither folks' bairns."

"There's bonnie Bessie Lament, Janet; an' he would marry her we might live to see his ain sons and daughters in the old house."

"Deed, then, ma'am, our Davie has gotten him a name better than that o' sons an' dochters; and though I am sair disappointed in him—"

"You shouldn't say that, Janet; he made a gran' speech the day."

"A speech isn't a sermon, ma'am; though I'll ne'er belittle a speech wi' a £1000 argument."

"And there was Deacon Moir, Janet, who didna approve o' the scheme, and who would therefore gie nothing at a'."

"The Deacon is sae godly that God doesna get a chance to improve his condition, ma'am. But for a' o' Deacon Moir's disapproval I'll count on the good work going on."

"Deed yes, Janet, and though our Davie should ne'er marry at a'—"

"There'll be generations o' lads an' lasses, ma'am, that will rise up in auld Scotland an' go up an' down through a' the warld a' ca' David Lockerby 'blessed.'"

FRANZ MÜLLER'S WIFE

"Franz, good morning. Whose philosophy is it now? Hegel, Spinoza, Kant or Dugald Stewart?"

"None of them. I am reading *Faust*."

"Worse and worse. Better wrestle with philosophies than lose yourself in the clouds. At any rate, if the poets are to send the philosophers to the right about, stick to Shakespeare."

"He is too material. He can't get rid of men and women."

"They are a little better, I should think, than Mephisto. Come, Franz, condescend to cravats and kid gloves, and let us go and see my cousin Christine Stromberg."

"I do not know the young lady."

"Of course not. She has just returned from a Munich school. Her brother Max was at the Lyndons' great party, you remember?"

"I don't remember, Louis. In white cravats and black coats all men look alike."

"But you will go?"

"If you wish it, yes. There are some uncut reviews on the table: amuse yourself while I dress."

"Thanks, I have my cigar case. I will take a smoke and think of Christine."

For some reason quite beyond analysis, Franz did not like this speech. He had never seen Christine Stromberg, but yet he half resented the careless use of her name. It fell upon some soul consciousness like a familiar and personal name, and yet he vainly recalled every phase of his life for any clew to this familiarity.

He was a handsome fellow, with large, clearly-cut features and gray, thoughtful eyes. In a conversation that interested him his face lighted up with a singularly beautiful animation, but usually it was as still and passionless as if the soul was away on a dream or a visit. Even the regulation cravat and coat could not destroy his individuality, and Louis looked admiringly at him, and said, "You are still Franz Müller. No one is just like you. I should think Cousin Christine will fall in love with you."

Again Franz's heart resented this speech. It had been waiting for love for many a year, but he could not jest or speculate about it. No one but the thoughtless, favored Louis ever dared to do it before Franz, and no one ever spoke lightly of women before him, for the worst of men are sensitive to the presence of a pure and lofty nature, and are generally willing to respect it.

Franz dreamed of women, but only of noble women, and even for those who fell below his ideal he had a thousand apologies and a world of pity. It was strange that such a man should have lived thirty years, and never have really loved any mortal woman. But his hour had come at last. As soon as he saw Christine Stromberg he loved her. A strange exaltation possessed him; his face was radiant; he talked and sung with a brilliancy that amazed even those most familiar with his rare exhibitions of such moods. And Christine seemed fascinated by his beauty and wit. The hours passed like moments; and when the girl stood watching him down the moon-lit avenue, she almost trembled to remember what questions Franz's eyes had asked her and how strangely familiar the clasp of his hand and the sound of his voice had seemed to her.

"I wonder where I have seen him before," she murmured—"I wonder where it was?" and to this thought she slowly took off one by one her jewels, and brushed out her long black hair; nay, when she fell asleep, it was only to take it up again in dreams.

As for Franz, he was in far too ecstatic a mood to think of sleep. "One has too few of such godlike moments to steep them in unconsciousness," he said to himself. And so he sat smoking and thinking and watching the waning moon sink lower and lower, until it was no longer night, but dawning day.

"In a few hours now I can go and see Christine." At this point in his love he had no other thought. He was too happy to speculate on any probability as yet. It was sufficient at present to know

that he had found his love, that she lived at a definite number on a definite avenue, and that in six or seven hours more he might see her again.

He chose the earlier number. It was just eleven o'clock when he rung Mr. Stromberg's bell. Mrs. Stromberg passed through the hall as he entered, and greeted him pleasantly. "Christine and I are just going to have breakfast," she said, in her jolly, hearty way. "Come in Mr. Müller, and have a cup of coffee with us."

Nothing could have delighted Franz so much. Christine was pouring it out as he entered the pretty breakfast parlor. How beautiful she looked in her long loose morning dress! How, bewitching were its numerous bows of pale ribbon! He had a sense of hunger immediately, and he knew that he made an excellent breakfast; but of what he ate or what he drank he had not the slightest conception.

A cup of coffee passing through Christine's, hands necessarily suffered some wonderful change. It could not, and it did not, taste like ordinary coffee. In the same mysterious way chicken, eggs and rolls became sublimated. So they ate and laughed and chatted, and I am quite sure that Milton never imagined a meal in Eden half so delightful as that breakfast on the avenue.

When it was over, it came into Franz's heart to offer Christine a ride. They were standing together among the flowers in the bay window, and the trees outside were in their first tender green, and the spring skies and the spring airs were full of happiness and hope. Christine was arranging and watering her lilies and pansies, and somehow in helping her Franz's hands and hers had lingered happily together. So now love gave to this mortal an immortal's confidence. He never thought of sighing and fearing and trembling. His soul had claimed Christine, and he firmly believed that sooner or later she would hear and understand what he had to say to her.

"Shall we ride?" he said, just touching her fingers, and looking at her with eyes and face glowing with a wonderful happiness.

Alas, Christine could think of mamma, and of morning calls and of what people would say. But Franz overruled every scruple; he conquered mamma, and laughed at society; and before Christine had decided which of her costumes was most becoming, Franz was waiting at the door.

How they rattled up the avenue and through the park! How the green branches waved in triumph, and how the birds sang and gossiped about them! By the time they arrived at Mount St. Vincent they had forgotten they were mortal. Then the rest in the shady gallery, and the subsidence of love's exaltation into love's silent tender melancholy, were just as blissful.

They came slowly home, speaking only in glances and monosyllables, but just before they parted Franz said, "I have been waiting thirty years for you, Christine; to-day my life has blossomed."

And though Christine did not make any audible answer, he thought her blush sufficient; besides, she took the lilies from her throat and gave them to him.

Such a dream of love is given only to the few whom the gods favor. Franz must have stood high in their grace, for it lasted through many sweet weeks and months for him. He followed the Strombergs to Newport, and laid his whole life down at Christine's feet. There was no definite engagement between them, but every one understood that would come as surely as the end of the season.

Money matters and housekeeping must eventually intrude themselves, but the romance and charm of this one summer of life should be untouched. And Franz was not anxious at all on this score. His father, a shrewd business man, had early seen that his son was a poet and a dreamer. "It is not the boy's fault," he said to his partner, "he gets it from his grandfather, who was always more out of this world than in it."

So he wisely allowed Franz to follow his natural tastes, and contented himself with carefully investing his fortune in such real estate and securities as he believed would insure a safe, if a slow increase. He had bought wisely, and Franz's income was a certain and handsome one, with a tendency rather to increase than decrease, and quite sufficient to maintain Christine in all the luxury to which she had been accustomed.

So when he returned to the city he intended to speak to Mr. Stromberg. All he had should be Christine's and her father should settle the matter just as he thought best for his daughter. In a general way this was understood by all parties, and everyone seemed inclined to sympathize with the happy feeling which led the lovers to deprecate during these enchanted days any allusion which tended to dispel the exquisite charm of their young lives' idyl.

Perhaps it would have been better if they had remembered the ancient superstition and themselves done something to mar their perfect happiness. Polycrates offered his ring to avert the calamity sure to follow unmitigated pleasure or success, and Franz ought, perhaps, to have also made an effort to propitiate his envious Fate.

But he did not, and toward the very end of the season, when the October days had thrown a kind of still melancholy over the world that had been so green and gay, Franz's dream was rudely broken—broken by a Mr. James Barker Clarke, a blustering, vulgar man of fifty, worth *three millions*. In some way or other he seemed to have a great deal of influence over Mr. Stromberg, who paid him unqualified respect, and over Mrs. Stromberg, who seemed to fear him.

Mr. Stromberg's "private ledger" alone knew the whole secret; for of course money was at the foundation. Indeed, in these days, in all public and private troubles, it is proper to ask, not "Who is she?" but "How much is it?" Franz Müller and James Barker Clarke hated each other on sight. Still Franz had no idea at first that this ugly, uncouth man could ever be a rival to his own handsome person and passionate affection.

In a few days, however, he was compelled to actually consider the possibility of such a thing. Mr. Stromberg had assumed an attitude of such extreme politeness, and Mrs. Stromberg avoided him if possible, and if not possible, was constrained and unhappy in the familiar relations that she had accepted so happily all summer. As for Christine, she had constant headaches, and her eyes were often swollen and red with weeping.

At length, without notice, the family left Newport, and went to stay a month with some relative near Boston. A pitiful little note from Christine informed him of this fact; but as he received no information as to the locality of her relative's house, and no invitation to call, he was compelled for the present to do as Christine asked him—wait patiently for their return.

At first he got a few short tender notes, but they were evidently written in such sorrow that he was almost beside himself with grief and anger. When these ceased he went to Boston, and without difficulty found the house where Christine was staying. He was received at first very shyly by Mrs. Stromberg, but when Franz poured out his love and misery, the poor old lady wept bitterly, and moaned out that she could not help it, and Christine could not help it, and that they were all very miserable.

Finally she was persuaded to let him see Christine, "just for five minutes." The poor girl came to him, a shadow of her gay self, and, weeping in his arms, told him he must bid her good-by forever. The five minutes were lengthened into a long, terrible hour, and Franz went back to New York with the knowledge that in that hour his life had been broken in two for this life.

One night toward the close of November his friend Louis called. "Franz," he said, "have you heard that Christine Stromberg is to marry old Clarke?"

"Yes."

"No one can trust a woman. It is a shame of Christine."

"Louis, speak of what you know. Christine is an angel. If a woman appears to do wrong, there is probably some brute of a man behind her forcing her to do it."

"I thought she was to be your wife."

"She is my wife in soul and feeling. No one, thank God, can help that. If I was Clarke, I would as willingly marry a corpse as Christine Stromberg. Do not speak of her again, Louis. The poor innocent child! God bless her!" And he burst into a passion of weeping that alarmed his friend for his reason, but which was probably its salvation.

In a week Franz had left for Europe, and the next Christmas, Christine and James Barker Clarke were married, and began housekeeping in a style of extravagant splendor. People wondered and exclaimed at Christine's reckless expenditure, her parents advised, her husband scolded; but though she never disputed them, she quietly ignored all their suggestions. She went to Paris, and lived like a princess; Rome, Vienna and London wondered over her beauty and her splendor; and wherever she went Franz followed her quietly, haunting her magnificent salons like a wretched spectre.

They rarely or never spoke. Beyond a grave inclination of the head, or a look whose profound misery he only understood, she gave him no recognition. The world held her name above reproach, and considered that she had done very well to herself.

Ten years passed away, but the changes they brought were such as the world regards as natural and inevitable. Christine's mother died and her father married again; and Christine had a son and a daughter. Franz watched anxiously to see if this new love would break up the icy coldness of her manners. Sometimes he was conscious of feeling angrily jealous of the children, but he always crushed down the wretched passion. "If Christine loved a flower, would I not love it also?" he asked himself; "and these little ones, what have they done?" So at last he got to separate them entirely from every one but Christine, and to regard them as part and portion of his love.

But at the end of ten years a change came, neither natural nor expected. Franz was walking moodily about his library one night, when Louis came to tell him of it, Louis was no longer young, and was married now, for he had found out that the beaten track is the safest.

"Franz," he said, "have you heard about Clarke? His affairs are frightfully wrong, and he shot himself an hour ago."

"And Christine? Does she know? Who has gone to her?"

"My wife is with her. Clarke shot himself in his own room. Christine was the first to reach him. He left a letter saying he was absolutely ruined."

"Where will Christine and the children go?"

"I suppose to her father's. Not a pleasant place for her now. Christine's step-mother dislikes both her and the children."

Franz said no more, and Louis went away with a feeling of disappointment. "I thought he would have done something for her," he said to his wife. "Poor Christine will be very poor and dependent."

Ten days after he came home with a different story. "There never was a woman as lucky about money as Cousin Christine," he said. "Hardy & Hall sent her notice to-day that the property at Ryebeach settled on her before her marriage by Mr. Clarke was now at her disposal. It seems the old gentleman anticipated the result of his wild speculations, and in order to provide for his wife, quietly bought and placed in Hardy's charge two beautifully furnished cottages. There is something like an accumulation of sixteen thousand dollars of rentage; and as one is luckily empty, Christine and the children are going there at once. I always thought the property was Hardy's own before. Very thoughtful in Clarke."

"It is not Clarke one bit. I don't believe he ever did it. It is some arrangement of Franz Müller's."

"For goodness' sake don't hint such a thing, Lizzie! Christine would not go, and we should have her here very soon. Besides, I don't believe it. Franz took the news very coolly, and he has kept out of my way since."

The next day Louis was more than ever of his wife's opinion. "What do you think, Lizzie?" he said. "Franz came to me to-day and asked if Clarke did not once loan me two thousand dollars. I told him Clarke gave me two thousand about the time we were married."

"Say *loaned*, Louis," he answered, "to oblige me. Here is two thousand and the interest for six years. Go and pay it to Christine; she must need money." So I went."

"Is she settled comfortably?"

"Oh, very. Go and see her often. Franz is sure to marry her, and he is growing richer every day."

It seemed as if Louis's prediction would come true. Franz began to drive out every afternoon to Ryebeach. At first he contented himself with just passing Christine's gate. But he soon began to stop for the children, and having taken them a drive, to rest a while on the lawn, or in the parlor, while Christine made him a cup of tea.

For Franz tired very easily now, and Christine saw what few others noticed: he had become pale and emaciated, and the least exertion left him weary and breathless. She knew in her heart that it was, the last summer he would be with her. Alas! what a pitiful shadow of their first one! It was hard to contrast the ardent, handsome lover of ten years ago with the white, silently happy man who, when October came, had only strength to sit and hold her hand, and gaze with eager, loving eyes into her face.

One day his physician met Louis on Broadway. "Mr. Curtin," he said, "your friend Müller is very ill. I consider his life measured by days, perhaps hours. He has long had organic disease of the heart. It is near the last."

"Does he know it?"

"Yes, he has known it long. Better see him at once."

So Louis went at once. He found Franz calmly making his last preparations for the great event. "I am glad you are come, Louis," he said; "I was going to send for you. See this cabinet full of letters. I have not strength left to destroy them; burn them for me when—when I am gone.

"This small packet is Christine's dear little notes: bury them with me: there are ten of them, every one ten years old."

"Is that all, dear Franz?"

"Yes; my will has long been made. Except a legacy to yourself, all goes to Christine—dear, dear Christine!"

"You love her yet, then, Franz?"

"What do you mean? I have loved her for ages. I shall love her forever. She is the other half of my soul. In some lives I have missed her altogether let me be thankful that she has come so near me in this one."

"Do you know what you are saying, Franz?"

"Very clearly, Louis. I have always believed with the oldest philosophers that souls were created in pairs, and that it is permitted them in their toilsome journey back to purity and heaven sometimes to meet and comfort each other. Do you think I saw Christine for the first time in your uncle's parlor? Louis, I have fairer and grander memories of her than any linked to this life. I must leave her now for a little. God knows when and where we meet again; but *He does know*; that is my hope and consolation."

Whatever were Louis's private opinions about Franz's theology it was impossible to dissent at that hour, and he took his friend's last instructions and farewell with such gentle, solemn feelings as had long been strange to his-heart.

In the afternoon Franz was driven out to Christine's. It was the last physical effort he was capable of. No one saw the parting of those two souls. He went with Christine's arms around him, and her lips whispering tender, hopeful farewells. It was noticed however, that after Franz's death a strange change came over Christine—a beautiful nobility and calmness of character, and a gentle setting of her life to the loftiest aims.

Louis said she had been wonderfully moved by the papers Franz left. The ten letters she had written during the spring-time of their love went to the grave with him, but the rest were of such an extraordinary nature that Louis could not refrain from showing them to his cousin, and then at her request leaving them for her to dispose of. They were indeed letters written to herself under every circumstance of her life, and directed to every place in which she had sojourned. In all of them she was addressed as "Beloved Wife of my Soul," and in this way the poor fellow had consoled his breaking, longing heart.

To some of them he had written imaginary answers, but as these all referred to a financial secret known only to the parties concerned in Christine's and his own sacrifice, it was proof positive that he had written only for his own comfort. But it was perhaps well they fell into Christine's hands: she could not but be a better woman for reading the simple records of a strife which set perfect unselfishness and child-like submission as the goal of its duties.

Seven years after Franz's death Christine and her daughter died together of the Roman fever, and James Barker Clarke, junior, was left sole inheritor of Franz's wealth.

"A German dreamer!"

Ah, well, there are dreamers and dreamers. And perchance he that seeks fame, and he that seeks gold, and he that seeks power, may all alike, when this shadowy existence is over, look back upon life "as a dream when one awaketh."

THE VOICE AT MIDNIGHT

"It is the King's highway that we are in; and know this, His messengers are on it. They who have ears to hear will hear; and He opens the eyes of some, and they see things not to be lightly spoken of."

It was John Balmuto who said these words to me. John was a Shetlander, and for forty years he had gone to the Arctic seas with the whale boats. Then there had come to him a wonderful experience. He had been four days and nights alone with God upon the sea, among mountains of ice reeling together in perilous madness, and with little light but the angry flush of the aurora. Then, undoubtedly, was born that strong faith in the Unseen which made him an active character in the facts I am going to relate.

After his marvelous salvation, he devoted his life to the service of God by entering that remarkable body of lay evangelists attached to the Presbyterian Church in Highland parishes, called "The Men," and he became noted throughout the Hebrides for his labors, and for his knowledge of the Scriptures.

Circumstances, that summer, had thrown us together; I, a young woman, just entering an apparently fortunate life; he, an aged saint, standing on the borderland of eternity. And we were sitting together, in the gray summer gloaming, when he said to me, "Thou art silent to-night. What hast thou, then, on thy mind?"

"I had a strange dream. I cannot shake off its influence. Of course it is folly, and I don't believe in dreams at all." And it was then he said to me, "It is the King's highway that we are in, and know this, His messengers are on it."

"But it was only a dream."

"Well, God speaks to His children 'in dreams, and by the oracles that come in darkness.'"

"He used to do so."

"Wilt thou then say that He has ceased so to speak to men? Now, I will tell thee a thing that happened; I will tell thee just the bare facts; I will put nothing to, nor take anything away from them.

"'Tis, five years ago the first day of last June. I was in Stornoway in the Lews, and I was going to the Gairloch Preachings. It was rough, cheerless weather, and all the fishing fleet were at anchor for the night, with no prospect of a fishing. The fishers were sitting together talking over the bad weather, but, indeed, without that bitterness that I have heard from landsmen when it would be the same trouble with them. So I gathered them into Donald Brae's cottage, and we had a very good hour. I noticed a stranger in the corner of the room, and some one told me he was one of those men who paint pictures, and I saw that he was busy with a pencil and paper even while we were at the service. But the next day I left for the Preachings, and I thought no more of him, good or bad.

"On the first of September I was in Oban. I had walked far and was very tired, but I went to John MacNab's cottage, and, after I had eat my kippered herring and drank my tea, I felt better. Then I talked with John about the resurrection of the body, for he was in a tribulation of thoughts and doubts as to whether our Lord had a permanent humanity or not.

"And I said to him, John, Christ redeemed our whole nature, and it is this way: the body being ransomed, as well as the spirit, by no less a price than the body of Christ, shall be equally cleansed and glorified. Now, then, after I had gone to my room, I was sitting thinking of these things, and of no other things whatever. There was not a sound but that of the waves breaking among the rocks, and drawing the tinkling pebbles down the beach after them. Then the ears of my spiritual body were opened, and I heard these words, '*I will go with thee to Glasgow!*' Instead of saying to the heavenly message, 'I am ready!' I began to argue with myself thus: 'Whatever for should I go to Glasgow? I know not anyone there. No one knows me. I have duties at Portsee not to be left. I have no money for such a journey—'

"I fell asleep to such thoughts. Then I dreamed of—or I saw—a woman fair as the daughters of God, and she said, '*I will go with thee to Glasgow!*' With a strange feeling of being hurried and pressed I awoke—wide awake, and without any conscious will of my own, I answered, 'I am ready. I am ready now.'

"As I left the cottage it was striking twelve, and I wondered what means of reaching Glasgow I should find at midnight. But I walked straight to the pier, and there was a small steamer with her steam up. She was blowing her whistle impatiently, and when the skipper saw me coming, he called to me, in a passion, 'Well, then, is it all night I shall wait for thee?'

"I soon perceived that there was a mistake, and that it was not John Balmuto he had been instructed to wait for. But I heeded not that; I was under orders I durst not disobey. She was a trading steamer, with a perishable cargo of game and lobsters, and so she touched at no place whatever till we reached Glasgow. One of her passengers was David MacPherson of Harris, a very good man, who had known me in my visitations. He was going to Glasgow as a witness in a case to be tried between the Harris fishers and their commission house in Glasgow.

"As we walked together from the steamer, he said to me, 'Let us go round by the court house, John, and I'll find out when I'll be required.' That was to my mind; I did not feel as if I could go astray, whatever road was taken, and I turned with him the way he desired to go. He found the lawyer who needed him in the court house, and while they talked together I went forward and listened to the case that was in hand.

"It was a trial for murder, and I could not keep my eyes off the young man who was charged with the crime. He seemed to be quite broken down with shame and sorrow. Before MacPherson called me the court closed and the constables took him away. As he passed me our eyes met, and my heart dirdled and burned, and I could not make out whatever would be the matter with me. All night his face haunted me. I was sure I had seen it some place; and besides it would blend itself with the dream which had brought me to Glasgow.

"In the morning I was early at the court house and I saw the prisoner brought in. There was the most marvelous change in his looks. He walked like a man who has lost fear, and his face was quite calm. But now it troubled me more than ever. Whatever had I to do with the young man? Yet I could not bear to leave him.

"I listened and found out that he was accused of murdering his uncle. They had been traveling together and were known to have been at Ullapool on the thirtieth of May. On the first of June the elder man was found in a lonely place near Oban, dead, and, without doubt, from violence. The chain of circumstantial evidence against his nephew was very strong. To judge by it I would have said myself to him, 'Thou art certainly guilty.'

"On the other side the young man declared that he had quarreled with his uncle at Ullapool and left him clandestinely. He had then taken passage in a Manx fishing smack which was going to the Lews, but he had forgotten the name of the smack. He was not even certain if the boat was Manx. The landlord of the inn, at which he said he stayed when in the Lews, did not remember him. 'A thing not to be expected,' he told the jury, 'for in the summer months, what with visitors, and what with the fishers, a face in Stornoway was like a face on a crowded street. The young man might have been there'—

"The word *Stornoway* made the whole thing clear to me. The prisoner was the man I had noticed with a pencil and paper among the fishers in Donald Brae's cottage. Yes, indeed he was! I knew then why I had been sent to Glasgow. I walked quickly to the bar, and lifting my bonnet from my head, I said to the judge, 'My lord, the prisoner *was* in Stornoway on the first of June. I saw him there!'

"He gave a great cry of joy and turned to me; and in a moment he called out: 'You are the man who read the Bible to the fishers. I remember you. I have your likeness among my drawings.' And I said, 'I am the man.'

"Then my lord, the judge, made them swear me, and he said they would hear my evidence. For one moment I was a coward. I thought I would hide God's share in the deliverance, lest men should doubt my whole testimony. The next, I was telling the true story: how I had been called at midnight—twice called; how I had found Evan Conochie's boat waiting for me; how on the boat I had met David MacPherson, and been brought to the court house by him, having no intention or plan of my own in the matter.

"And there was a great awe in the room as I spoke. Every one believed what I said, and my lord asked for the names of the fishers who were present in Donald Brae's cottage on the night of the first of June. Very well, then, I could give many of them, and they were sent for, and the lad was saved, thank God Almighty!"

"How do you explain it, John?"

"No, I will not try to explain it; for it is not to be hoped that anyone can explain by human reason the things surpassing human reason."

"Do you know what became of the young man?"

"I will tell thee about him. He is a very rich young man, and the only child of a widow, known like Dorcas of old for her great goodness to the Lord's poor. But when his mother died it did not go well and peaceably between him and his uncle; and it is true that he left him at Ullapool without a word. Well, then, he fell into this sore strait, and it seemed as if all hope of proving his innocence was over.

"But that very night on which I saw him first, he dreamed that his mother came to him in his cell and she comforted him and told him, 'To-morrow, surely, thy deliverer shall speak for thee.' He never doubted the heavenly vision. 'How could I?' he asked me. 'My mother never deceived me in life; would she come to me, even in a dream, to tell me a lie? Ah, no!'"

"Is he still alive?"

"God preserve him for many a year yet! I'll only require to speak his name"—and when he had done so, I knew the secret spring of thankfulness that fed the never-ceasing charity of one great, good man.

"And yet, John," I urged, "how can spirit speak with spirit?"

"*How?*" I will tell thee, that word 'how' has no business in the mouth of a child of God. When I was a boy, who had dreamed 'how' men in London might speak with men in Edinburgh through the air, invisible and unheard? That is a matter of trade now. Can thou imagine what subtle secret lines there may be between the spiritual world and this world?"

"But dreams, John?"

"Well, then, dreams. Take the dream life out of thy Bible and, oh, how much thou wilt lose! All through it this side of the spiritual world presses close on the human side. I thank God for it. Yes, indeed! Many things I hear and see which say to me that Christians now have a kind of shame in what is mystical or supernatural. But thou be sure of this—the supernaturalism of the Bible, and of every Christian life is not one of the difficulties of our faith, *it is the foundation of our faith*. The Bible is a supernatural book, the law of a supernatural religion; and to part with this element is to lose out of it the flavor of heaven, and the hope of immortality. Yes, indeed!"

This conversation occurred thirty years ago. Two years since, I met the man who had experienced such a deliverance, and he told me again the wonderful story, and showed me the pencil sketch which he had made of John Balmuto in Donald Brae's cottage. He had painted from it a grand picture of his deliverer, wearing the long black camlet cloak and head-kerchief of the order of evangelists to which he belonged. I stood reverently before the commanding figure, with its inspired eyes and rapt expression; for, during those thirty years, I also had learned that it was only those

Who ne'er the mournful midnight hours
Weeping upon their bed have sate,

Who know you not, Ye Heavenly Powers.

SIX, AND HALF-A-DOZEN

Slain in the battle of life. Wounded and fallen, trampled in the mire and mud of the conflict, then the ranks closed again and left no place for her. So she crawled aside to die. With a past whose black despair was as the shadow of a starless night, a future which her early religious training lit up with the lurid light of hell, and the strong bands of a pitiless death dragging her to the grave—still she craved, as the awful hour drew near, to see once more the home of her innocent childhood. Not that she thought to die in its shelter—any one who knew David Todd knew also that was a hopeless dream; but if, if her father should say one pardoning word, then she thought it would help her to understand the love of God, and give her some strength to trust in it.

Early in the evening, just as the sun was setting and the cows were coming lowing up the little lane, scented with the bursting lilac bushes, she stood humbly at the gate her father must pass in order to go to the hillside fold to shelter the ewes and lambs. Very soon she saw him coming, his Scotch bonnet pulled over his brows, his steps steadied by his shepherd's staff. His lips were firmly closed, and his eyes looked far over the hills; for David was a mystic in his own way, and they were to him temples not made with hands in which he had seen and heard wonderful things. Here the storehouses of hail and lightning had been opened in his sight, and he had watched in the sunshine the tempest bursting beneath his feet. He had trod upon rainbows and been waited upon by spectral mists. The voices of winds and waters were in his heart, and he passionately believed in God. But it was the God of his own creed—jealous, just and awful in that inconceivable holiness which charges his angels with folly and detects impurity in the sinless heavens. So, when he approached the gate he saw, but would not see, the dying girl who leaned against it. Whatever he felt he made no sign. He closed it without hurry, and then passed on the other side.

"Father! O, father! speak one word to me."

Then he turned and looked at her, sternly and awfully.

"Thou art nane o' my bairn. I ken naught o' thee."

Without another glance at the white, despairing face, he walked rapidly on; for the spring nights were chilly, and he must gather his lambs into the fold, though this poor sheep of his own household was left to perish.

But, if her father knew her no more, the large sheep-dog at his side was not so cruel. No theological dogmas measured Rover's love; the stain on the spotless name of his master's house, which hurt the old man like a wound, had not shadowed his memory. He licked her hands and face, and tried with a hospitality and pity which made him so much nearer the angels than his master to pull her toward her home. But she shook her head and moaned pitifully; then throwing her arms round the poor brute she kissed him with those passionate kisses of repentance and love which should have fallen on her father's neck. The dog (dumb to all but God) pleaded with sorrowful eyes and half-frantic gestures; but she turned wearily away toward a great circle of immense rocks—relics of a religion scarcely more cruel than that which had neither pity nor forgiveness at the mouth of the grave. Within their shadow she could die unseen; and there next morning a wagoner, attracted by the plaintive howling of a dog, found her on the ground, dead.

There are set awful hours between every soul and heaven. Who knows what passed between Lettice Todd and her God in that dim forsaken temple of a buried faith? Death closes tenderly even the eyes full of tears, and her face was beautiful with a strange peace, though its loveliness was marred and its youth "seared with the autumn of strange suffering."

At the inquest which followed, her stern old father neither blamed nor excused himself. He accepted without apology the verdict of society against him; only remarking that its reproof was "a guid example o' Satan correcting sin."

Scant pity and less ceremony was given to her burial. Death, which draws under the mantle of Charity the pride, cruelty and ambition of men, covering them with those two narrow words *Hic jacet!* gives also to the woman who has been a sinner all she asks—oblivion. In no other way can she obtain from man toleration. The example of the whitest, purest soul that ever breathed on earth, in this respect, is ignored in the church He founded. The tenderest of human hearts, "when lovely woman stooped to folly," found no way of escape for her but to "die;" and those closet moralists, with filthy fancies and soiled souls, who abound in every community, regard her with that sort of scorn which a Turk expresses when he says "Dog of a Christian." Poor Lettice! She had procured this doom—first by sacrificing herself to a blind and cruel love, and then to the importunate demands of hunger, "oldest and strongest of passions." Ah! if there was no pity in Heaven, no justice beyond the grave, what a cruel irony this life would be! For, while the sexton shoveled hastily over the rude coffin the obliterating earth, there passed the graveyard another woman equally fallen from all the apostle calls "lovely and of good report." One whose youth and hopes and marvelous beauty had been sold for houses and lands and a few thousand pounds a year. But, though her life was a living lie, the world praised her, because she "had done well unto herself." Yet, at the last end, the same seed brought forth the same fruit, and the Lady of Hawksworth Hall learned, with bitter rapidity, that riches are too poor to buy love. Scarcely had she taken possession of her splendid home before she longed for the placid happiness of her mother's cottage, and those evening walks under the beech-trees, whose very memory was now a sin. Over her beautiful face there crept a pathetic shadow, which irritated the rude and noisy squire like a reproach. He had always had what he wanted. Not even the beauty of all the border counties had been beyond his means to buy but somehow he felt as if in this bargain he had been overreached. Her better part eluded his possession, and he felt dissatisfied and angry. Expostulations grew into cruel words; cruel words came to cruder blows. *Yes, blows.* English gentlemen thirty years ago knew their privileges; and that was one of them. She was as much and as lawfully his as the horses in his stables or the hounds in his kennels. He beat them, too, when they did not obey him. Her beauty had betrayed her into the hands of misery. She had wedded it, and there was no escape for her. One day, when her despair and suffering was very great, some tempting devil brought her a glass of brandy, and she drank it. It gave her back for a few hours her departed sceptre; but at what a price! Her slave soon became her master. Stimulus and stupefaction, physical exhaustion and mental horrors, the abandonment of friends and the brutality of a coarse and cruel husband, brought her at last to the day of reckoning. She died, seven years after her marriage, in the delirium of opium. There were physicians and servants around her, and an unloving husband waiting for the news of his release. I think I would rather have died where Lettice did—under the sky, with the solemn mountains lifting their heads in a perpetual prayer around me, and that faithful dog licking my hands, and mourning my wasted life.

Now, wherein did these two women differ? One sinned through an intense and self-sacrificing love, and in obedience to the strongest calls of want. Her sin, though it was beyond the pale of the world's toleration, was yet one *according to Nature*. The other, in a cold spirit of barter, voluntarily and deliberately exchanged her youth and beauty, the hopes of her own and another's life, for carriages, jewels, fine clothing and a luxurious table. She loathed the price she had to pay, and her sin was an unnatural one. For this kind of prostitution, which religion blesses and society praises, there seems to be no redress; but for that which results as the almost inevitable sequence of one lapse of chastity *we*, the pious, the virtuous, the irreproachable, are all to blame. Who or what make it impossible for them to retrace their steps? Do they ever have reason to hope that the family hearth will be open to them if they go back? Prodigal sons may return, and are welcomed with tears of joy and clasped by helping hands; but alas! how few parents would go to meet a sinning daughter. Forgetting our Master's precepts, forgetting our human frailty, forgetting our own weakness, we turn scornfully from the weeping Magdalen, and leave her "alone with the irreparable." Marriage is a holy and a necessary rite. We would deprecate *any* loosening of this great house-band of society; but we do say that where

it is the *only distinction* between two women, one of whom is an honored matron, and the other a Pariah and an outcast, there is "something in the world amiss"—something beyond the cure of law or legislation, and that they can only be reached by the authority of a Christian press and the influence of Christian example.

THE STORY OF DAVID MORRISON

I think it is very likely that many New Yorkers were familiar with the face of David Morrison. It was a peculiarly guileless, kind face for a man of sixty years of age; a face that looked into the world's face with something of the confidence of a child. It had round it a little fringe of soft, light hair, and above that a big blue Scotch bonnet of the Rob Roryson fashion.

The bonnet had come with him from the little Highland clachan, where he and his brother Sandy had scrambled through a hard, happy boyhood together. It had sometimes been laid aside for a more pretentious headgear, but it had never been lost; and in his old age and poverty had been cheerfully—almost affectionately—resumed.

"Sandy had one just like it," he would say. "We bought them thegither in Aberdeen. Twa braw lads were we then. I'm wonderin' where poor Sandy is the day!"

So, if anybody remembers the little spare man, with the child-like, candid face and the big blue bonnet, let them recall him kindly. It is his true history I am telling to-day.

Davie had, as I said before, a hard boyhood. He knew what cold, hunger and long hours meant as soon as he knew anything; but it was glorified in his memory by the two central figures in it—a good mother, for whom he toiled and suffered cheerfully, and a big brother who helped him bravely over all the bits of life that were too hard for his young feet.

When the mother died, the lads sailed together for America. They had a "far-awa" cousin in New York, who, report said, had done well in the plastering business, and Sandy never doubted but that one Morrison would help another Morrison the wide world over. With this faith in their hearts and a few shillings in their pockets, the two lads landed. The American Morrison had not degenerated. He took kindly to his kith and kin, and offered to teach them his own craft.

For some time the brothers were well content; but Sandy was of an ambitious, adventurous temper, and was really only waiting until he felt sure that wee Davie could take care of himself. Nothing but the Great West could satisfy Sandy's hopes; but he never dreamt of exposing his brother to its dangers and privations.

"You're nothing stronger than a bit lassie, Davie," he said, "and you're no to fret if I don't take you wi' me. I'm going to make a big fortune, and when I have gotten the gold safe, I'se come back to you, and we'll spend it thegither dollar for dollar, my wee lad."

"Sure as death! You'll come back to me?"

"Sure as death, I'll come back to you, Davie!" and Sandy thought it no shame to cry on his little brother's neck, and to look back, with a loving, hopeful smile at Davie's sad, wistful face, just as long as he could see it.

It was Davie's nature to believe and to trust. With a pitiful confidence and constancy he looked for the redemption of his brother's promise. After twenty years of absolute silence, he used to sit in the evenings after his work was over, and wonder "how Sandy and he had lost each other." For the possibility of Sandy forgetting him never once entered his loyal heart.

He could find plenty of excuses for Sandy's silence. In the long years of their separation many changes had occurred even in a life so humble as Davie's. First, his cousin Morrison died, and the old business was scattered and forgotten. Then Davie had to move his residence very frequently; had even to follow lengthy jobs into various country places, so that his old address soon became a very blind clew to him.

Then seven years after Sandy's departure the very house in which they had dwelt was pulled down; an iron factory was built on its site, and probably a few months afterward no one in the neighborhood could have told anything at all about Davie Morrison. Thus, unless Sandy should come himself to find his brother, every year made the probability of a letter reaching him less and less likely.

Perhaps, as the years went by, the prospect of a reunion became more of a dream than an expectation. Davie had married very happily, a simple little body, not unlike himself, both in person and disposition. They had one son, who, of course, had been called Alexander, and in whom Davie fondly insisted, the lost Sandy's beauty and merits were faithfully reproduced.

It is needless to say the boy was extravagantly loved and spoiled. Whatever Davie's youth had missed, he strove to procure for "Little Sandy." Many an extra hour he worked for this unselfish end. Life itself became to him only an implement with which to toil for his boy's pleasure and advantage. It was a common-place existence enough, and yet through it ran one golden thread of romance.

In the summer evenings, when they walked together on the Battery, and in winter nights, when they sat together by the stove, Davie talked to his wife and child of that wonderful brother, who had gone to look for fortune in the great West. The simplicity of the elder two and the enthusiasm of the youth equally accepted the tale.

Somehow, through many a year, a belief in his return invested life with a glorious possibility. Any night they might come home and find Uncle Sandy sitting by the fire, with his pockets full of gold eagles, and no end of them in some safe bank, besides.

But when the youth had finished his schooldays, had learned a trade and began to go sweethearting, more tangible hopes and dreams agitated all their hearts; for young Sandy Morrison opened a carpenter's shop in his own name, and began to talk of taking a wife and furnishing a home.

He did not take just the wife that pleased his father and mother. There was nothing, indeed, about Sallie Barker of which they could complain. She was bright and capable, but they *felt* a want they were not able to analyze; the want was that pure unselfishness which was the ruling spirit of their own lives.

This want never could be supplied in Sallie's nature. She did right because it was her duty to do right, not because it gave her pleasure to do it. When they had been married three years the war broke out, and soon afterward Alexander Morrison was drafted for the army. Sallie, who was daily expecting her second child, refused all consolation; and, indeed, their case looked hard enough.

At first the possibility of a substitute had suggested itself; but a family consultation soon showed that this was impossible without hopelessly straitening both houses. Everyone knows that dreary silence which follows a long discussion, that has only confirmed the fear of an irremediable misfortune. Davie broke it in this case in a very unexpected manner.

"Let me go in your place, Sandy. I'd like to do it, my lad. Maybe I'd find your uncle. Who knows? What do you say, old wife? We've had more than twenty years together. It is pretty hard for Sandy and Sallie, now, isn't it?"

He spoke with a bright face and in a cheerful voice, as if he really was asking a favor for himself; and, though he did not try to put his offer into fine, heroic words, nothing could have been finer or more heroic than the perfect self-abnegation of his manner.

The poor old wife shed a few bitter tears; but she also had been practicing self-denial for a lifetime, and the end of it was that Davie went to weary marches and lonely watches, and Sandy staid at home.

This was the break-up of Davie's life. His wife went to live with Sandy and Sallie, and the furniture was mostly sold.

Few people could have taken these events as Davie did. He even affected to be rather smitten with the military fever, and, when the parting came, left wife and son and home with a cheerful bravery that was sad enough to the one old heart who had counted its cost.

In Davie's loving, simple nature there was doubtless a strong vein of romance. He was really in hopes that he might come across his long-lost brother. He had no very clear idea as to localities and distances, and he had read so many marvelous war stories that all things seemed possible in its atmosphere. But reality and romance are wide enough apart.

Davie's military experience was a very dull and weary one. He grew poorer and poorer, lost heart and hope, and could only find comfort for all his sacrifices in the thought that "at least he had spared poor Sandy."

Neither was his home-coming what he had pictured it in many a reverie. There was no wife to meet him—she had been three months in the grave when he got back to New York—and going to his daughter-in-law's home was not—well, it was not like going to his own house.

Sallie was not cross or cruel, and she was grateful to Davie, but she did not *love* the old man.

He soon found that the attempt to take up again his trade was hopeless. He had grown very old with three years' exposure and hard duty. Other men could do twice the work he could, and do it better. He must step out from the ranks of skilled mechanics and take such humble positions as his failing strength permitted him to fill.

Sandy objected strongly to this at first. "He could work for both," he said, "and he thought father had deserved his rest."

But Davie shook his head—"he must earn his own loaf, and he must earn it now, just as he could. Any honest way was honorable enough." He was still cheerful and hopeful, but it was noticeable that he never spoke of his brother Sandy now; he had buried that golden expectation with many others. Then began for Davie Morrison the darkest period of his life. I am not going to write its history.

It is not pleasant to tell of a family sinking lower and lower in spite of its brave and almost desperate efforts to keep its place—not pleasant to tell of the steps that gradually brought it to that pass, when the struggle was despairingly abandoned, and the conflict narrowed down to a fight with actual cold and hunger.

It is not pleasant, mainly, because in such a struggle many a lonely claim is pitilessly set aside. In the daily shifts of bare life, the tender words that bring tender acts are forgotten. Gaunt looks, threadbare clothes, hard day-labor, sharp endurance of their children's wants, made Sandy and Sallie Morrison often very hard to those to whom they once were very tender.

David had noticed it for many months. He could see that Sallie counted grudgingly the few pennies he occasionally required. His little newspaper business had been declining for some years; people took fewer papers, and some did not pay for those they did take. He made little losses that were great ones to him, and Sallie had long been saying it would "be far better for father to give up the business to Jamie; he is now sixteen and bright enough to look after his own."

This alternative David could not bear to think of; and yet all through the summer the fear had constantly been before him. He knew how Sallie's plans always ended; Sandy was sure to give into them sooner or later, and he wondered if into their minds had ever come the terrible thought which haunted his own—*would they commit him, then, to the care of public charities?*

"We have no time to love each other," he muttered, sadly, "and my bite and sup is hard to spare when there is not enough to go round. I'll speak to Sandy myself about it—poor lad! It will come hard on him to say the first word."

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