

gentle always. Oh, when I see this poor creature near him—dear God forgive me the thought!—it seems as if it is he that is keeping him from me.

For five years, buoyed up by her faith and by her belief in the power of prayer, she had trusted implicitly that her loving husband, her other self, might be restored to her—might in time return to her from the darksome night that obscured his brain. His statue had outlived the pitiful attempts made to decay it. People drove out of their way to pass the sanatorium where perchance, a glimpse might be had of the sculptor whose work was now deemed a masterpiece, whom unkindness and lack of appreciation had driven mad. Week after week the faithful woman visited him, striving to bring back to him the memory of olden days. Month after month rolled by, year after year, and still there was no gleam of reason to tell her that the bond was loosening. Still did he hold his mimic court and wear his mimic crown.

And one day Eleanor Satterlee came to Dr. Morrison. 'I want you to listen to me,' she said simply, looking at him with eyes that were more eloquent than any speech her lips could frame. 'The years—the very best years—of his life are going one by one. And every day my heart grows heavier and heavier, until it seems as though it pulses but feebly—too feebly to sustain me. When I think of him I feel—the tears were running swiftly down her face—I feel as if I, too, will go mad. Madness would be a blessing, Dr. Morrison, for then I could not remember—all.'

Dr. Morrison looked at her sympathetically.

'My plan—I have one, you see—with a sorrowful little smile, 'is this. His statue, ours, is still in my possession, I would not part with it. Supposing,' she pleaded swiftly, seeing the growing wonder on his face, 'supposing that I have it brought here, set up in your room, and bring him in upon it suddenly. Do you think such a thing might aid him, might help him to—'

Her throat was very dry and her lips grew suddenly parched, for he shook his head, averting his eyes not to see the pain on her face.

'It may serve to drive him to the padded cell. My dear madam, consider. He is at peace now; he has no cares, no troubles; he may possibly recover in time. Why disturb him, perhaps condemn him to—'

'No, no; do not say it, do not say that word,' she cried, pressing her hands to her heart. 'I beg you, I beseech you, do not say that word to me. God—you do believe in God, don't you? God wouldn't be so cruel to me. If—if you knew how much—' her voice grew faint and weak—'if you knew how much I love him, and how he loved me until that miserable day! I am so unhappy,' she went on. 'Night and day he is with me, night and day I think of him, dream of him, hope for him, plan for him, love him, love him, love him. Oh, Dr. Morrison, be pitiful. See, I kneel to you. Let me try to save him; for it means death to me if I cannot.'

She was at his feet indeed, her hands clasped across his knees, her face, luminous in its pallor, raised to his, her blue eyes dark with anguish. The professional man was vanquished. His heart was stirred. Suddenly he saw her as she had been on that day when she first realised the dreadful truth. He remembered her, sorrowful and stricken, but not like this, for her beauty then was young and sweet and fresh, pink and white and delicate, not strained to the mere shadow of a vanishing loveliness, like the white countenance turned up now to his pitying gaze. He felt that she spoke truth—that present conditions meant death to her.

'Women should be made of sterner stuff,' she went on sobbingly. 'I should be brave and strong, I know, but I cannot. He was all I lived for. At first I was desperate. I am so much alone, Dr. Morrison, and I am not brave. Because I seem so at times does not argue that I am, and maybe—maybe if I showed myself the coward that I am really, you would not let me come so often. My heart was wild with its pain. I would throw myself upon my bed, begging God to give me strength to save him, or to let me die. It would have been easier to me to die than to struggle. I cannot fight—'

'You are the bravest little woman I ever knew,' said Dr. Morrison, softly. The tears were in his kind eyes.

'Just hear me,' she begged. 'Just hear me. I have prayed and prayed so. I asked Our Lady to have pity, Our Lady, my Mother, the only mother I have ever known. I prayed to her as I sat looking at the statue he had made, the statue that proved his undoing. It was "My Lady Hope," he had given it that name, his ideal figure. And Our Lady showed me then that though all else was gone I still had hope. Afterwards, when my mind dwelt on the future, the dreadful thoughts that tortured me were driven from me by the prayer, "Dear Mother, let me hope." And last night

like an inspiration something came to me. Something whispered to me that since through her he had lost all that makes life worth living, through her, by Our Lady's grace, all would be restored.'

Her voice thrilled him. He looked down at her, not knowing that the tears that had come into his eyes were thick upon his lashes, for he was not easily moved—he had seen so much misery.

'It shall be even as you desire,' he said to her. 'It is a venture, but of that you are aware. You abide the consequences?'

'I abide the consequences!' She sprang to her feet transformed, her eyes glowing. She seized his hand covered it with kisses. 'Oh, I shall succeed, I shall succeed! I have hope and Our Lady both with me. How can I fail?'

And while Dr. Morrison felt that he had done an unwise thing now, he excused it to himself on the grounds that for the past five years he had taken more than a professional interest in the case and in the woman. He had yielded, true, and even realising what her failure meant to both, he could not say that he regretted doing so. He had seen weeping wives in his day, young and beautiful even as she, some of them. They had come, distraught and anxious, to this tomb of buried and lost ambitions. Unlike this woman, however, they had accepted the inevitable, they became reconciled. Some of them, indeed, the greater part, were easily consoled, and Dr. Morrison had grown sceptical where woman's grief was concerned. But Eleanor Satterlee, her eyes, shadowed by long watching and sleepless hours, shining out of her moonlight face—well, she was different. She commanded not alone his intense respect, but even his regard. She fought for this man's reason with desperate resolve. She left after her weekly visit, and the physician knew that she scarcely left her knees until she returned again. That, was chiefly why he consented to the trial, having but a vague idea of what she meant to do or how she meant to do it. And though he told her part of the consequences, he did not tell her that failure meant death to Herbert Satterlee. He was not troubled by the scruples a Catholic practitioner would have in such a case, and mayhap he felt that death would be a merciful thing—how merciful only those who come much in contact with it knew.

They set up the glorious statue in the doctor's private parlor, placing it carefully in the alcove, and drawing the red velvet curtains so as to hide it from view. Behind the portieres that led into an inner room the doctor and his assistant concealed themselves, in case, the physician told her, of some accident. Dr. Morrison's lips were set, his brow bent. Now that the trial was imminent his heart misgave him—to his surprise he became afraid of her. Not for the blighted mind that knew nothing of what was coming, but for this frail shadow, buoyed up by hope and Our Lady. What if she failed? The man was an agnostic, a freethinker, but at that moment his soul was stirred. 'I shall be tempted to believe in your existence, Mother of Christ, if she succeeds,' he said. And then he smiled. The thing seemed so impossible—that she should succeed.

The mimic king was led into the little parlor alone. His clouded brain saw the bare corridors outside transformed into royal paths, but the rich furnishings of this room struck pleasantly upon his senses. He looked about him with evident delight. Dr. Morrison, with his keen gaze upon the patient's face, was suddenly startled by a woman's voice, that broke the silence; a rare contralto, that most beautiful of God's gifts to creation, and it was singing Mattei's 'Non e ver.' How its deep tones throbbed through the room, filling it with speech and sound. The deranged man turned quickly, clasping and unclasping his hands in nervous fashion. Then out from behind the curtain she came. She had slipped off her long dark cloak, and was clad in simple white, her beautiful hair thrown carelessly back from her face. The woman's soul was desperate, the emotion that gave that thrill to her voice was passionate fear, but she was singing as she walked. She looked up to meet her husband's gaze and the song died upon her lips. She ran to him, holding out her hands.

'Why, Herbert!' she cried. 'You have not answered me. What is the matter with you? You are very strange—'

'Am I, sweetheart?' he asked. 'I did not answer, dear, because, because—'

She had startled his sleeping brain with a vision of herself as she had been when he wooed her in the country lanes, when they sang together the songs they both loved. But after that first effort he grew troubled. He put his hand to his forehead and pushed the hair away. The old blank look settled across his face.

(To be concluded next week.)