

'No, not a lifetime—an eternity!'

For a moment she straightened into the posture of the tragic muse, but it brought on the cough, and she doubled again into the crouched attitude of a weakened old witch.

'The world lies before you, girl, and you see nothing but flowers—but, girl! girl! It's the primrose path of dalliance. I know, for I've stood it. Your mother didn't wish you to leave home, and there is a sweetheart, eh?'

'A selfish one.'

'Oh, yes; so was he.' She held up the letters. 'But I defied them—just as you have done. I had a career—a mission—a name to make, and I was not to be hampered by conventionalities. Isn't that true?'

'Perfectly. But you see I surely have a future. You know what Mr. Kildare told me.'

'Ho! ho!' The old creature threw back her head with a sarcastic laugh, and tossed her arms out in a mild gesture. 'So had I; so had they all. I gave up everything for mine, and see where I am to-night. Hugging the cold grate in a cheap hotel—alone!'

'Don't talk of it, dear soul; you are not well, and—'

'If to do were as easy as to know what 'twere good to be done'—the worn voice had for the quotation all the timbre of youth, but it broke under the strain, and she breathed laboriously over the rest of the tirade. 'Girls are fools, but we never know until too late. I was not born in the business; I had a home probably as good as yours. A mother, too, and a sweetheart. But what were they to me when the chance came to go on the stage? You are no prettier than I was, but you won't believe that'—and I could not—'nor were your chances any better. New York—in the company of a great manager! I left home full of hope—no regrets—many promises. I even promised the sweetheart I would come back if I failed. The leading woman fell ill one night—I know it was because of a quarrel with the manager, but I didn't know it then. I only knew I was to play Ophelia. Ophelia! The hysteria of joy made the mad scene the more real. I laughed, I cried, I sang! and oh! I was so pretty. The star applauded from the wings, and even shared a curtain call with me. The favor of the audience meant nothing with the praise of that god—that Apollo. He invited me to supper that we might discuss my future. Wild with joy, I hastened to get ready. At the stage door as we came out stood Harry, from home. "Rose!" he cried, stepping out of the shadow. A shock of gooseflesh tingled all over me. "Why, what are you doing here?" I stammered. He laughed. "I came to surprise you, but you have surprised me. You were great, little girl; but come, let us walk on." I hesitated, blundered over an excuse, when the star called from his carriage: "Ready, Miss Briar?" I held out my hand, but Harry was not looking; his eyes were on the man waiting for me. "Rose," he gasped. "It's business. I must! Come to-morrow!" I whispered, as I stepped into the carriage. He didn't come; he never came. Here is his letter written in a hospital where he died from a bullet wound at Gettysburg.

'And then! that career! I had it. I gave my soul for it. I severed every tie which bound me to the writers of these faded letters. Ophelia! Juliet! Desdemona! I played them all, and I paid for it, too—just as every one of those women suffered for loving Hamlet—Romeo—Othello! Oh, vanity! Their torture was nothing to mine when I found myself dethroned for another aspirant—quite as young, as clever, as pretty as I had been—as you are now. The ladder broke and I went down faster than I had climbed.

'It has been twenty years since I read these letters; it was you that reminded me of them, for—well, I was as pretty as you are and as clever, and there are hundreds just like us.'

She paused with a sudden gasp and her head fell forward.

'Come, come, Miss Briar!' I urged; 'get to bed, the fire is dying.'

'I think I am, too,' she answered, tottering to the bed and slipping the old letters under the pillow.

I spent the rest of the night in my own cheerless room, thinking, and cried myself into a heavy sleep, from which I awoke with a shock, realising how long I had left the old woman alone. I knocked; no response. She lay quiet as I walked to the bed. She was at rest with the precious letters in her hand. The doctor said the end had been peaceful. The weak heart was unable to resist the violence of the cough.

The fund which provides burial for indigent actors—sparing them the indignity of the Potter's field—telegraphed arrangements, and we had a simple service at

the undertaker's. The leading lady brought roses and was becomingly hysterical. It was the only time I ever heard the stage manager praise her. 'A better actress off than on,' he whispered to the comedian.

The star expressed no knowledge of the event beyond selecting the understudy for the Widow Melnotte—the night's bill was to be 'The Lady of Lyons.'

'I am so much better, Miss Wray,' the golden-haired leading lady informed me during the performance at Savannah, 'you need not get up in the lines of Ophelia.'

'Oh, I shan't, dear lady, for I have given my two weeks' notice. I am going home—to be married.'—

'Catholic Times.'

The Catholic World

AUSTRIA—Catholic Congress

The Austrian Catholics (says an exchange) have reason to be pleased with the proceedings of the Catholic Congress held in Vienna. The attendance, which included the Cardinal-Archbishop and over twenty other members of the Hierarchy, was large, and the resolutions adopted were of a practical character. One of them proclaimed the necessity of suitable State provision for the aged, the infirm, widows and orphans, and the hope was expressed that the Government would at the earliest possible moment take in hand the question of old-age pensions and would have the aid of all parties in passing a good Bill. Another resolution urged the extension of Catholic social organisation and recommended that Catholic principles should be systematically explained by means of apologetic lectures, that the level of social life should be raised, and that the industrial classes should be carefully trained for the discharge of public duties. By way of antidote to the Protestant propaganda, it was resolved that there should be established a complete system of colportage, with the existing society in Vienna as the central body. Publications such as those brought out by Catholic Truth Societies in English-speaking countries will be circulated in the different parishes, and Catholic libraries are to be provided in all populous districts. Catholic solidarity and progress will, no doubt, be greatly promoted by the Congress.

ENGLAND—A Catholic Diplomat

Sir Arthur James Herbert, who has just been created a K.C.V.O. by the King on his appointment as the first British Minister at the Court of Norway, is a scion of the old Catholic house of Herbert of Llanarth, being the second son of the late Mr. John Herbert, and (through his mother) a grandson of the last Lord Llanover. Sir Arthur entered the diplomatic service about a quarter of a century ago, and had served in almost every quarter of the globe before his appointment two years ago to be Charge d'Affaires at Darmstadt, whence he has been promoted to his present post.

Death of a Venerable Convert

The death has occurred of the Rev. Father Richard Richardson. Before becoming a Catholic he was a Wesleyan preacher. He had worked along with his brother, the late Mr. George Richardson, at Ancoats, at which place he founded a Sunday school. Attracted by the preaching of the first Fathers of Charity, Dr. Gentili and Father Rinolfi, he joined the Order, and was for many years engaged in active work, especially at Newport and Cardiff. He was 86 years of age.

Honored by the Holy Father

The Holy Father Pius X. has conferred a Knighthood of St. Gregory the Great upon Mr. Charles J. Munich, Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, in recognition of his work for many years in advancing the interests of the Catholic Faith in England. Mr. Munich is well known in and around London as one of the most active workers in the Catholic cause. He is a member of the executive of the Westminster Diocesan Schools' Association and the Hendon and District Catholic Association; and he is also an active member of the Guild of Ransom, the Confraternity of Brothers of the Assumption, and other Catholic bodies. He is principally known, however, in connection with the Catholic Association, which he founded, in conjunction with the late Mr. Edward Lucas, in 1891. He was the first honorary secretary of the Association, and is at the present time a vice-president and a member of the Executive Council.

FRANCE—The Municipal Council and the Nuns

The Municipal Council, as was to be expected (writes a Paris correspondent) have followed in the steps of their Hospital Committee, and by 32 against 17 have