

Nevertheless, that grave stood between them, and climbing the hill once more, he paused beside it and thought within himself that, if Roger could know all, he would surely set matters right for them.

When he reached Margaret's house, she kissed him and lavished upon him many endearing words. She listened to him as he told her how he had met Clare, and said:

'Keep a good heart, dear boy. All will be well. I feel sure of it. Indeed I know, for I think Clare loves you, and there is even yet one last word from Roger. The dear lad gave me a letter the night before he died. It was a painful effort for him to write, but he loved you, Harry, and he said he would rest happier when he knew Clare and you were happy. The dear, noble fellow!'

Clare had read the faint, labored lines of love from that true heart now at rest. Tears are streaming down her cheeks, and Margaret weeps in sympathy, too. She looks towards the old ruin on the hill, and the white cross beside it, with a glance of love and thankfulness, and a prayer for the kind, thoughtful soul that even when all things were passing away from him, forgot not what the future might hold for those he was to leave behind.

Their future would indeed have been lonely and cheerless but for the trust reposed in Margaret Drew when he confided his last missive to her hands.—Irish Monthly.

A MATTER OF CONSCIENCE

A drizzling rain from a leaden sky is frequently symbolic of the heavy-hearted feelings of a disappointed person. John Hanson thought so as he gazed out of the window of his law office into great banks of black clouds seemingly endless and impenetrable. He felt terribly out of sorts this particular morning.

He had worked, but clients were few and far between, and the outlook was far from promising. He had education and natural talents and felt that the only thing needful was an opportunity to display the knowledge and power he possessed. For a long time he had nursed the ambition of representing his district in Congress. Once more, he felt that his future would be assured. Time after time he had made advances in this direction, only to be repulsed because of youth and inexperience.

While he sat musing he was roused by a knock, followed by the entrance of a heavily-built man with a black moustache. Hanson recognised the newcomer at a glance. It was 'Dave' Hendricks, the political leader of the district. Hendricks nodding coolly to Hanson, seated himself in a comfortable chair. Then pulling out a cigar, he lighted it with deliberation, and calmly blew a cloud of tobacco smoke in the direction of the young lawyer. The young man felt called upon to begin the conversation.

'What can I do for you, Mr. Hendricks?'

'Nothing,' was the prompt reply. 'You can do nothing for me.'

'There were several moments of silence, and then Hendricks resumed: 'But I can do a great deal for you.'

'I know it,' replied Hanson, who realised the enormous power wielded by the visitor.

There was another significant silence, and then Hendricks, ceasing to puff his cigar, gazed steadily at the young man. Finally he spoke:

'You look like an ambitious young man.'

'Did you come here this morning for the purpose of flattering me?'

'No,' was the reply. 'I came to ask you a question.'

'What is it?'

'Would you like to go to Congress?'

Hanson gripped the arms of his chair to conceal the agitation he felt. Could it be possible that the long-coveted opportunity was at hand? It seemed too good to be true. Nevertheless he answered as calmly as possible.

'Yes, I confess I would like to go to Congress.'

'All right; your opportunity is at hand.'

'Are you serious?' asked Hanson.

'Never more so in my life.'

'But how about Congressman Sandall—has he decided to retire?'

'No,' with a laugh, 'but we have decided to retire him.'

'Do you think,' asked Hanson anxiously, 'I can win against a man like Samuel Sandall? He has represented this district in Congress for a generation, if he wants to he can surely control a majority of the delegates to the Congressional convention.'

'That's where the joke comes in,' cried Hendricks, laughing uproariously, 'we don't intend to let the man know a thing about it. He thinks everything is all right and has planned to go out of the city on the day of the nominations. If he was there he could control the convention; but our game is to see that he is not there.'

'Our game,' echoed Hanson with uplifted eyebrows.

'Yes, our game,' pursued the other, ignoring the danger signals before him. 'You see, the old man is getting too independent, and we want to punish him. He refused to vote for two important bills that we were interested in at the last session. We don't propose to run that risk again. We want our own man there. We want you there.'

It was Hanson's turn to stare at his visitor. In that stare all of his hopes for preferment were dashed to the ground. He spoke slowly, choosing his words carefully.

'The conditions of my nominations are that I shall deceive Congressman Sandall first; and after that pledge myself to vote as you wish without regards to the merits of legislation?'

'Ah, now, Hanson,' remonstrated the other, 'you needn't put it in that fashion. We are going to attend to Sandall; all you have to do is to keep quiet and go along.'

'Well, then, Mr. Hendricks,' said Hanson, rising from his chair and shaking with suppressed excitement, 'All that I have to say is that I refuse to go along in any such despicable game.'

'What!' almost shrieked Hendricks; 'do you mean to say that you are going to refuse this nomination? Why, man alive, it's a chance in ten thousand. And it don't cost you anything.'

'Ah, but there you are mistaken.'

'No, I'm not,' insisted Hendricks, thinking the young lawyer was about to yield; 'it don't cost you anything.'

'It would cost me my self-respect. I decline to part with that.'

Hendricks did not say another word, but his face indicated extreme disgust and incredulity. As he made his way down the staircase he could be heard muttering to himself: 'Well, of all the blithering fools I ever met, this one is the worst of them all.'

After the departure of his visitor, Hanson sat in his office looking out at the drizzling rain, which still fell from the leaden sky. The mass of heavy clouds remained, and he felt thoroughly disheartened and discouraged. While he looked, the rain ceased, the lowering clouds lifted slightly, and a rift of sunshine coming out of the sky penetrated the little office.

That night as he sat talking to the dearest girl on earth, Hanson could not rid himself of the recollection of the day's events. Julia Joyce was thoughtful and sympathetic, and she noticed his preoccupation.

'John,' she said gently, 'you do not seem yourself to-night. You are pale and troubled. Share your difficulties with me—I am sure you would do so with your joys.'

John tried to evade the question, but she was persistent in her own tender way. Being a woman, she carried her point. Man-like, John blurted out the thing that filled his mind most.

'I am troubled,' he said. 'I have made a brave attempt to be somebody on your account, but it seems futile. My prospects were never so discouraging as they are now, and for that reason there are times when I think it would be wrong to ask you to share your lot with me.'

'What nonsense, John,' she cried with a hearty outburst of indignation. 'Don't talk to me as if I were a doll or a fashion plate. If you win me, it will be because we have faith in each other, and not because of prospects or any sort of rubbish of that kind.'

Her honesty seemed to clear the cobwebs out of his head.

'I think you are right,' he said; 'forgive me for talking in such a despondent strain.'

'You are forgiven,' she said smilingly; but now tell me really what you have on your mind.'

He started at this and stammered a bit.

'Why, I've—I've—just been telling you.'

'No, you haven't; you've been indulging in glittering generalities. Now tell me what has happened today to upset you so much.'

Retreat was impossible now, so he told the whole story as gracefully as possible, omitting only the names. At its conclusion she said simply:

'Do you regret your decision?'

'Not in the least,' was the answer.

'Then why are you troubled?'

'It's simply a matter of conscience. I think sometimes that it is my duty to go and warn the Congressman of the conspiracy that has been organised to