

'It is well,' murmurs Napoleon, as he again assumes that cold and impassive composure, with which as beneath a mask he conceals his own intense emotions.

Scarcely had ten years passed ere Lucian's predictions were fulfilled. The empire which had become great by despotism was at length overpowered. Napoleon was humbled and a fugitive. His mother, Madame Bonaparte, who had given birth to an Emperor, three kings, and two archduchesses, withdrew to Rome, Lucian to the principality of Carrino, Louis to Florence, Joseph to the United States, Jerome to Wurtemberg, the Princes Eliza to Baden, Madame Borghese to Piombino, and the Queen of Holland to the castle of Arensburg.—From the French of Dumas.

MISS PACE'S CHAMPION

Martha Pace, who at all times suffered from an insufficiency of clothing, and whose stock of coals was just now exhausted, looked through the window of the one small room she inhabited, at the dull street, down which a biting east wind was driving dust and leaves, and slightly shuddered. In years nearly sixty, in garments threadbare and much mended, with features thin and pinched, she looked just what she was, a woman to whom life was a hard struggle. She had seen better days, but death and reverses of fortune had brought her to her present condition of 'private dressmaker'; which meant that she repaired gowns and made children's frocks for people who paid her less than they would have had to pay an inferior but more fashionable workwoman, and so called their employing her, 'charity.'

She had never been at quite so low an ebb as she now found herself. Hard times had come to her before, but she had pulled through them without any one's knowing of her trials; and she had never been in debt to the extent of a penny in her life. Lately however, she had experienced an unusual difficulty in getting in money due to her; and to-day found her literally penniless, and without a fragment of food in the house. Still, she was not despondent. She glanced cheerfully at a bundle containing a child's dress newly finished; her eyes and fingers and back had ached over it. But the work was ready at the promised time, and she was preparing to take it home to Mrs. Craven, a new and wealthy customer; she would be paid for it; next week other payments would be made, so the future was by no means dark.

She donned a rusty black bonnet and an antique necklet, drew on a pair of carefully inked gloves, and went forth. In the keen air she felt giddy and weak; but, as there was no hurry, she walked slowly, studying the windows as she passed, and deciding that people had a great deal to make them happy nowadays. There had been fewer pretty things when she was a girl. Coming home, she would buy some bread and tea, and perhaps an egg or a bit of bacon. It was a long way to the West End, where Mrs. Craven lived; and, not having the car fare, she was obliged to walk the whole distance. She was almost exhausted when she reached the mansion, ascending the wide pearl-grey steps slowly. A smart maid received the parcel, and disappeared down a long passage. Sounds of music and laughter floated from some distant room, and the opening of the area door had released odors of innumerable good things being cooked. What a blessing it was that there were some who always had enough to eat!

The smart maid, with her rosy face and coquettish cap, tripped back again.

'Missis is engaged, and she'll send you your money next week,' she said, all in a breath, and then shut the door.

The poor old soul stared hopelessly and helplessly at it; there was a dry clicking sound in her throat as she finally turned away, not having the courage to knock again, even had she been inclined to explain her wants and necessities to a stranger.

'Dear Lord,' she said, clasping her thin hands together, as she thought of the long road between her and her dwelling, 'help me to get home again!'

She crept down the steps, shrinking closely to the railings, and pausing now and again for breath. What was to be done? She had never begged or borrowed and she could not do either even at this crisis. Faint and sick, she halted before a picture-dealer's window, unable for the moment to drag herself farther; and, mechanically lifting her dim eyes, she saw a young, joyous face, so bright, so fair to see that she almost forgot her own forlorn condition. As the girl stepped away from the window, she collided with the old woman, who gave a slight gasp, for she felt as if a feather would knock her down.

'Oh, I'm sorry! I am afraid I hurt you,' the girl said gently.

No, Martha explained, she was not hurt, but had been walking about for some time and was very tired. The bright eyes scanned the pale, sunken face, the drooping, pinched mouth, the silvery hairs under the old bonnet.

'Take my arm,' said the girl, 'I must make amends for nearly knocking you down.'

They walked onward, the girl supporting the frail old creature, and chatting pleasantly the while. She was an artist, she said, and an orphan.

'I live in lodgings and earn my own bread. But things might have been worse. My mother was an angel, my childhood all sunshine, and I have that to remember forever. Besides, I am strong and energetic, and am doing the work most congenial to me,' she declared. And somehow the homeward way seemed less long and dreary to the tired seamstress.

But she could not turn the key in her door, so unsteady were her hands; and the girl did it for her, and helped her into the small, bare room. Martha did not faint, but she trembled from head to foot, and a tear trickled down her cheek as she surveyed the fireless, grate. Hunger, cold, and fatigue were stronger than pride. She told her bitter disappointment; but, true to her instincts, declined all offers of help from her new friend.

'Perhaps if I had seen Mrs. Craven herself it would have been different,' she said. 'I could have explained to her that I really needed the money.'

'Now I know what to do!' cried Agnes. 'You won't let me help you in one way, but there is another to which you can't object. I will go and ask to see Mrs. Craven, and tell her what a convenience to you payment would be. Sit down and rest until I come back. I am sure it will be all right.'

With that she departed, brushing away a tear. 'The poor old soul!' she said. 'How can rich people be so inconsiderate!'

The imposing exterior of the Craven mansion did not overawe Agnes, who had been born and bred a lady; nor was she overcome by the pert maid, who looked her from head to foot superciliously when she asked to see Mrs. Craven herself. For a person wearing a coat two seasons old to come to the front door was the height of audacity. However, she bade the visitor enter, not very civilly, and marched away to deliver the message.

Presently Mrs. Craven swept into the hall—a portly dame in silk and lace and glittering watchguard. She was annoyed at being called away from the inspection of numerous birthday presents, and cut Agnes' soft-toned explanation very short.

'Miss Pace was told that she would be paid next week,' she said tartly. 'I suppose she does not think that I won't keep my word?'

'She needs the money now,' urged Agnes. 'A day or two means a great deal to the poor.'

Mrs. Craven eyed the girl with disapproval; beauty and 'young persons' had no right to be in partnership with each other.

'Supposing I give you the money, how am I to know that Miss Pace will get it?' she asked.

Agnes stared; it was a moment before she understood the insinuation.

'Surely you don't think I am dishonest?' she gasped.

'My good young woman, how in the world can I tell what you are?' retorted Mrs. Craven.

Then Agnes became aware that some one was looking at her over the lady's shoulder. She saw too dark eyes, a handsome face, a genial mouth half hidden by a black moustache; and her color rose; tears of humiliation and disappointment glittered on her lashes. She did not remain to argue about her own honesty, but turned away with a swelling heart; opening the great door she knew not how, and leaving the house. She walked on very slowly, half-crying as she thought of Miss Pace's cheerless room, of the wasted, wan old face. How could she return empty-handed? She forgot the insult to herself in wondering how she could help the little seamstress without wounding her pride.

All at once she heard quick footsteps following her, and in a few moments the young man who had heard Mrs. Craven's remarks was at her elbow. He had flung a light dust-coat over his evening dress, and was breathless with haste.

'I beg your pardon!' said he. 'But I think you are the young lady from Miss Pace. This is the account, don't you call it? Mrs. Craven didn't intend to hurt your feelings. Is that all right? If it isn't, it can be made so next week.'

'It was kind of Mrs. Craven to send you,' said Agnes; 'and kind of you to come. Miss Pace really needs the money. A few shillings are a fortune to her. I never saw her before to-day, but her face and her home told me her history.'