

At the same moment a large automobile came swiftly around the corner. Quick, as thought, it was upon the little flying figure. There was a frantic but useless effort to escape, a piercing scream, a thud, and the child, bruised and bleeding, lay on the pavement. The conveyance was stopped quickly, the occupants alighted and gave what assistance they could. The child was tenderly laid on the cushioned seat and taken with all possible speed to the nearest hospital.

It was twenty-four hours later that Sister Augusta, accompanied by Mrs. Robertson, was walking down a long corridor in St. Joseph's Hospital.

'Yes, we are very busy,' said the Sister, in answer to the lady's inquiry. 'There is so much sickness and many accidents. A particularly sad case was brought here yesterday; a little girl struck by an automobile and severely injured. The circumstances are unusual and make it extremely pathetic.'

'What are the circumstances?' asked Mrs. Robertson, more from politeness than because she felt interested.

'I am going to relieve the Sister who has been caring for her,' said Sister Augusta. 'If you care to accompany me, I can tell you her history.'

A little later the two women were standing beside a little white bed. On it lay the small bandaged form. No wonder Sister Augusta's tender heart softened with a love almost maternal as she looked at the fair flushed face lying on the pillow. The bright eyes opened, but there was no recognition in their depths; the lips moved, but to Mrs. Robertson the words were incoherent.

'What is she saying, Sister?'

'Let me hear the music'—she is always talking of music, poor little Elizabeth.'

The Sister laid her hand tenderly on the short dark curls, and was so intent in her contemplation of the child that she did not observe the look that passed over Mrs. Robertson's face.

'Music—Elizabeth.' What memories those words recalled! Her voice had lost the calm, steady tone, and was slightly tremulous as she asked:

'Do you think she will recover, Sister?'

'Yes, with good care, but there will be many weeks of pain. She will suffer greatly, I fear.'

'If you have leisure, please tell me the history of little—of the child,' said Mrs. Robertson.

With a few quiet but deft touches, Sister Augusta made the patient more comfortable, and sat down beside her visitor.

The story was told to me by a former servant of Elizabeth's mother, who was Eleanor Fielding, the only child of wealthy parents. She was highly gifted, and an ornament to society. She married in opposition to her parents' wishes and her father refused to recognise her. Grief and worry affected her mother's health. She was taken ill, and died without again seeing her child.

Eleanor could have borne it, if she had had a strong and loving support upon which to lean, but too late she realised that she had married one utterly unworthy of her. She found herself an abused, neglected wife, but she never complained. At last her husband met with an accidental death. Still she struggled on, and taught music for a livelihood, until her health failed. Then, for the sake of her child, she made a last appeal to her father. He had married again, and the cruel message she received helped to hasten her death.

In his joy over the birth of a son, he said, he had entirely forgotten that he ever had an ungrateful daughter. Eleanor died, and the sale of her few effects sufficed to furnish the money to pay her funeral expenses. Faithful Mrs. Miller took little Elizabeth to her neat but humble home and cared for her to the best of her ability.

Sister Augusta paused, and a slight sigh escaped her lips as she said: 'Poor Mrs. Miller has a large family of her own; she is unable to do any more, but I feel somehow that God will provide for little Elizabeth.'

'The music. Let me hear the music,' moaned the child.

Mrs. Robertson's head sank on her breast. Her own Elizabeth's face seemed to rise from a silvery mist and she could hear her clear, sweet voice singing a song she used to love.

The flower of Elizabeth's beautiful life had been sunk in death, perhaps in music's breath its memory would be greener, fresher than before.

'It is probable, said Sister Augusta, that music would quiet her, but of course it is quite impossible.'

When Mrs. Robertson lifted her head, the Sister looked at her in astonishment, and she scarcely recognised the voice that vibrated with feeling as she said:

'Sister, let me relieve you of the care and of little Elizabeth herself. She can be removed to my house without danger, and I shall go myself to see Mrs. Miller. You have so many, Sister. Let me have this wee one to care for, yes, to love, as my very own.'

A sob broke in her throat, and tears filled her eyes and trembled on her long lashes. She seemed a statue awakened to the blessing of life, and the rapture of love.

Sister Augusta's eyes were full of tears when she finished, but they were tears of joy, to see the old loving nature of her dear friend assert itself.

Now she knew the ice about her heart had melted, never to congeal again! She had found something upon which to lavish her affection, and the little stranger who, in a few hours had grown so dear, had found a home.

And thus it was, that from the keys so long silent, came sweet entrancing strains of music that calmed the weary suffering child and brought peace and comfort to the mother who often fancied she saw her dear one's face smiling on her in approbation.—Exchange.

THE WATCHER

The soft dusk of an early autumn evening was falling when the doctor came from the sick-room into the spotless kitchen where Mary Catherine sat.

'How'd you find him, Doctor?' she inquired, anxiously. 'Is he real bad on?'

The doctor gave her a little reassuring nod as he seated himself in a chair near her own.

'The fact is, Mary Catherine,' he said, lowering his voice that his words might not carry to the invalid in the room beyond, 'your father has never in his life been sick enough to realise what real illness is. He hasn't any standard of his own for comparison, and consequently, when he's a trifle indisposed, as he is now, his imagination gets away with him. It's a cold—a simple, old-fashioned cold, nothing more nor less. Maybe he's a bit worn out, too. It takes hold of a man who is on the wrong side of seventy to work as he does. But there's nothing in any way serious. He'll be as good as new in a few days. But you can't make him think so. He firmly believes that this is the beginning of the end, and you can't possibly get the idea out of his head. End!' The doctor chuckled delightedly. 'I'd give a good deal to have half the constitution he has now!'

Mary Catherine gave a sigh of relief. 'I'm glad it's no worse,' she said. 'This afternoon I was real worried.'

'Naturally, naturally,' laughed the doctor. 'He makes a fuss out of all proportion to his ailments. I've left some powders for him. You might give him one every two hours as long as they last. And I'd humor him, if I were you. If he gets any comfort out of thinking his time has come, why, let him think so for a day or two. It won't last longer, I warrant you.'

He picked up his hat and medicine-case and went out at the back door, calling a cheerful good-night over his shoulder. A moment later the rumble of wheels told of his departure. Hardly had the sound of them died away when a voice called querulously from the bedroom:

'Mary Catherine, where are you?'

Mary Catherine hurried into the presence of the invalid. He lay in the high-posted bed—a well-preserved old man with huge frame and small, dark eyes that looked at one piercingly from beneath their bushy white brows. There was something plaintive in them as he turned eagerly to his daughter.

'What'd he say?' he asked curtly.

'He says you're going to be all right in a day or two, father,' was the cheerful response.

'He never,' the old man flatly contradicted. 'Or if he did, he was tryin' to deceive you. That's somethin' I ain't goin' to do. I'm goin' to be out an' out with you. Sit down.'

Mary Catherine sat down on the edge of the bed. 'I'm a sick man, Mary Catherine,' he went on. 'It's been comin' on this good while. I've been fallin' all summer. I ain't long for this world.'

'O sho, father!' his daughter deprecated.

'I ain't long for this world,' he repeated with some warmth, as if daring any one to dispute him. 'I guess I can tell pretty well when my time's come. I feel it in my bones this is goin' to be my last sickness.'

'You'll feel different in the mornin',' Mary Catherine declared.