

'She left us the day before yesterday,' said the Sister, after a little pause. 'It doesn't really seem like home without her—she has been with us so many years. I will tell you about it. We had not been here very long and we were terribly poor. I was quite young—the youngest of the little band that had left our dear France to establish our work in this far-off city, strangers among strangers. I was portress; and this day, when the bell rang and I opened the door, I saw before me a hale, hearty woman of middle age. Never supposing she was an applicant, I asked her if she wished to see any one. "No," she said; "I have come to stay. I am poor and old, so they told me at home. I was willing to do what I could, but I found I was only in the way. I had only one child, a daughter. My husband died when she was a little baby, leaving me poor and alone in the new country. I was comely, too, and young and healthy, and could have married again; but for the sake of my child I would not. It would have been much easier for me to make a living for us if I had put her in some orphan asylum, but I wouldn't. I did not want it to be thrown in her face afterward that she had been raised on charity. I rented a room and took in washing, in order to be with her, to raise her independently. When she was old enough I sent her to school, paying the regular amount for her. When she finished in the parochial school, I sent her to the academy; for I wanted to make a lady out of her. The Sisters did all they could to make her a true woman; but I suppose, in my foolish pride and love, I spoiled all their good work.'

"When she finished, she secured a position as teacher in one of the city schools. She was a beautiful girl, though it is her mother who says it. One of the members of the Board of Education fell in love with her; she returned his affection, and so they were married. I was highly rejoiced, for I saw that my efforts for her had been richly rewarded. I had fitted her for a high place in society, and she had gone straight to it. Her husband was well-to-do, and of good family; and when they took me to their new home, I thought all my cares were over and done with. But I soon learned that I was not in my right place. When I saw that my daughter and her husband were ashamed of me, I thought my heart would break. I asked them to let me go to some other place, and she said I was too poor; when I said I could work for my living, she said I was too old. My son-in-law was better to me than my daughter—men haven't such little meannesses as women have. She didn't mistreat me; I had enough to eat and to wear, but I knew she didn't want me. I knew she would be glad if I were dead; and I also knew that before I would die she might be an old woman herself, for we come of healthy stock.'

"She had a little child, a lovely girl; and I knew she was ambitious her daughter should get into the best society. I reflected that I would constantly be a drawback to the child as well as to the mother; and I knew that they and all her husband's people thought the same thing. 'So the other day I told her I would leave the city and go to some convent of the Little Sisters of the Poor. She pretended the suggestion made her angry, but I was shrewd enough to see that she would be glad if I put my threat into execution. I did. I have come here. I do not intend ever to tell you my name or where I came from. You may, of course, refuse to give me admittance. If you do, my death will be on your head; for I tell you you are looking on a desperate woman. I am not old and I am strong; I can do the work of two persons like you. I can work for you or I can beg for you, but you must not turn me away.'

"I assure you I was thoroughly alarmed by the woman's words and looks, and I hastened to Reverend Mother. I do not know what argument she used with Reverend Mother, but the upshot of it was that Mrs. Morton, as she called herself, stayed at the Home. She was a most capable woman, and she soon became as happy here as the Sisters, and they were not more interested in the work than she was. We all loved her, and so did the old people.'

'A few weeks ago, you know, our Home in Dallas street was so badly injured by the storm, the Sisters had to send all their old women into us, until the damage could be repaired. We made room for them, giving them the lower floor. Of course Mother Morton felt it incumbent on her to go down occasionally and see if the visitors were receiving proper attention and were comfortable in their new quarters. After one such visit I found her standing in the hall, her face as white as her cap.'

"For the love of God, Sister," she cried "what is the name of that woman with a breastpin at her

neck?" I told her I did not know the names of any of the old women visitors, and asked her what was the matter. "Come with me, Sister!" she said; and we went back to the room where several of the strangers were sitting. She led me forward to where one woman was, with folded arms and bowed head. Hearing us, she lifted her face, and I saw the saddest countenance upon which my eyes have ever rested. Then, to my surprise, I heard Mother Morton crying, "In the name of God, Helen, what are you doing here?" To my young day I shall not forget that woman as she sprang to her feet, then fell on her knees, "Mother! mother!" Mother Morton was down beside her, folding her to her breast, crying over her, soothing her as only a mother can. The room was in an uproar, and I hastened to get the two women out and brought them in here. Then the stranger fell again on her knees and pleaded with Mother Morton to forgive her, crying out that remorse had broken her heart, ruined her life.'

'Poor Mother Morton was crying and laughing at the same time; and when she could find voice, she began to upbraid the other for being a silly, foolish child. What had she to forgive, she wanted to know. And then she broke forth into lamentations because her daughter had lost her fortune and had to be a dependent on charity. All the time I was trying to get them quieted, so they could make their explanation coherently; and when I finally succeeded, the younger woman told us her pitiful story of remorse and penitence.'

'A few years after her mother left, her husband died, and she was left with the child to rear and the property to look after. She had never had a care in her life; for first her mother and then her husband had shouldered it for her. As she stood thus alone, buffeted by the world, she began to remember her mother's struggles against more adverse conditions than confronted her. Those struggles, she knew, had been made chiefly for her, as she was now struggling for her daughter. And how had she repaid that mother's devotion? The past was constantly with her; and of course her remorse magnified her faults, as remorse always does. She called herself an ingrate, and felt she deserved the severest punishment God could send. She confidently expected He would take away her child, and deprive her of her property, and turn her adrift even as she had turned her mother. None of these things befell her, however; and when her daughter was entering womanhood, she married a wealthy lawyer. Then she expected that the treatment she and her husband had accorded her mother would be repeated upon her. Again her expectations were not realised. On the contrary, her son-in-law, who had lost his own mother in early youth, loved her most tenderly, while her daughter was the most loving and devoted of children.'

'Had things been different, had they loved her less, she said she could have borne it; but their conduct was so great a contrast to hers, she was crushed by it. She knew that she must expiate her sin or she would go mad. She wrote a letter to her children, confessing her wrongs to her mother, and told them she could not live surrounded by love and plenty while somewhere her mother was the recipient of charity. She left home and came to this city, and engaged herself as a cook in a wealthy family. Her services were well rewarded; and every cent she earned she gave to our other convent in Dallas street, of which her master was also a benefactor. The Sisters knew of her secret sorrow, and they and the old people prayed constantly that some time she might have the happiness of finding her mother.'

'This summer, while the family was away, she fell ill and was taken to the hospital. Our Sisters, of course, went regularly to see her, and when she was convalescent she prayed them to let her come to the Home until she was quite well. So intense was her desire to be with the Little Sisters and the old people, the doctor said it was retarding her recovery; and so permission was granted to her. Thus it happened she was at the Home when the roof was blown off by the storm; and was sent here, where her prayers were answered by finding her mother, and obtaining her forgiveness.'

'Then,' said Sister Pauline, and the smile grew into a soft laugh, 'a strange thing happened. Mother Morton began to upbraid her daughter for leaving her daughter who loved her, and declared that she must instantly return and set at rest the anguish that child must be enduring. "I know she is suffering," said the daughter; "but I shall never leave you, mother."—"You'll have to," rejoined Mother Morton; "for the Sisters won't keep you here. You are not old and poor, with no one to care for you, and in this city there are many women who are. You would take the