

She therefore rejoiced exceedingly when she made the discovery that Mary was a Papist, as she termed it, and lost no time in communicating the intelligence to John Pickersgill. He was as furious as she had hoped he would be, and she so worked on his prejudices that poor Mary was ordered to quit his house with the least possible delay.

Much pleased with her success, the new Mrs. Pickersgill tried to persuade him also to get rid of Mrs. Desmond because of her religion. But this he flatly refused to do.

'No, I will not,' said he. 'Papisty runs in her blood, and she cannot help being what she is. But it's different with the other. She ought to know better.'

And when she still pressed him to dismiss the housekeeper, a look came into his eyes which plainly warned her that it would be wise to desist.

But directly her husband died she had her wish, as we have seen.

'I'm very sorry, Mrs. Desmond, that I haven't a better place than this for you to come to, but, as you know, I am now entirely dependent on my own earnings, and can't afford to pay much in the way of rent. However, such as it is, you are most welcome to share it,' said Mary, as she busied herself with the preparations for supper.

'Thank you, Miss Mary. You were always kind,' answered Mrs. Desmond. 'I shall be glad to stay with you until I get another place, which won't I think, be very long, as I have heard of one already which I hope will suit.'

'I wish I could hear of one to suit me,' said Mary. 'I am in the ranks of the unemployed at present. To-day was my last day at the business house where I filled the position of typist, and the worst of it is that I have less than a sovereign in my purse.'

'Never mind, Miss Mary,' said good-natured Mrs. Desmond. 'There's some of my savings that you can have to go on with. You know I have a good bit put by. But just to think that you'll like this and that woman that doesn't deserve it having your stepfather's fine place and all his money they say. I'm told he left her everything.'

'Thanks, dear Mrs. Desmond, a thousand thanks for your generous offer. After all, things might be worse. I've health and strength, and who knows what God may have in store for me,' said Mary, cheerily.

'I'm certain He has something good for you, Miss Mary, if not in this world at any rate in the next, which is what matters most,' said Mrs. Desmond.

'Is this really the statue I left behind at my stepfather's, Mrs. Desmond?'

'It is, indeed, your very own statue, Miss Mary; and do you know I believe your stepfather began to think about becoming a Catholic when his end was near, for he asked me to bring that statue to his room, and nothing would please him but that I should stand it by his bedside.'

'And what did his wife say?'

'Oh, she looked at it with a sneer and ordered it to be removed. I believe she thought it was my idea to put it in the master's room, but when he said it was to stay, she just said: "Oh, a sick man's fancies," and took no further notice of it. But just a little while before he died he called me and said: "When I am dead, Mrs. Desmond, take her statue to Mary Derwent and tell her—," but he didn't finish what he wanted to say, for at that very moment his wife came into the room, and seeing me bending over him, came up in a wild hurry and said: "If there's anything you want, John, ask me," and then, turning to me, she said: "You may go now, Desmond. I shall remain with my husband for the present." I tried several times to get near him after that, but didn't succeed. She was that watchful that I didn't find a chance of speaking to him, but his eyes followed me about the room as if he wanted to tell me something.'

'I wonder what he wanted to say,' said Mary: 'perhaps that he was sorry for turning me out of the house in the way he did, but I didn't blame him for it. I knew that it was all his wife's doing. She

didn't want him to provide for me. I expect she is very wealthy now.'

She hasn't got the Pickersgill diamonds at all events. You know your stepfather owned some very valuable diamonds that came into the family through an uncle that lived in India. They were reported missing when your stepfather died, and though detectives have been in the house ever since, they had not been found up to the time of my leaving. She had everyone in the house searched, including your humble servant, and all her belongings.'

'What a woman! But I shouldn't be surprised at anything that she would do considering how she treated me,' said Mary.

A few days later Mrs. Desmond left for her new place, leaving her address with Mary, and giving her strict orders to write to her in case she needed assistance. But this Mary resolved to do only in the last resort, as the housekeeper would, she reflected, need all her savings for her old age, when she could no longer work.

On the ninth day of her novena, Mary had a letter in answer to an advertisement that she had put in one of the daily papers, which raised her hopes to the highest pitch. It came from an eminent firm of solicitors, requesting her to call that very evening, and mentioning a salary which was beyond Mary's most replete dreams.

'Surely the answer to my novena,' she exclaimed, and her heart beat high that evening as she set out for Lincoln's Inn Fields—the address given in the letter.

But directly she entered the solicitor's office something in the face of the person who was there to interview her seemed to freeze her hopes.

'I'm very sorry, Miss Derwent,' said he, 'but the position about which we wrote is not vacant after all. Our typist was going out to South Africa, but something has occurred to make her change her mind, and she is remaining with us.'

It was a crushing blow to Mary. Depressed and miserable she again made her way through a drizzle of rain to Berners street. She felt wretchedly lonely, but the first object on which her glance fell as she entered the room was the statue of the Sacred Heart, and her eyes seemed to look at her with such sympathy that she felt comforted. She went towards it and took it in her hands to imprint a kiss upon the feet. But was it her fancy that it was much heavier than she remembered it to be? She held it to the light and examined it all over. Almost immediately she discovered that a hole had been made in the pedestal, and that it had been carefully plastered over again. Expecting something strange to happen, she removed the plaster, when lo! the famous Pickersgill diamonds fell into her lap, and after them a heap of golden coins—her stepfather's legacy to her! Soon she left the dingy room in Berners street for a charming residence of her own, where Mrs. Desmond fills the position of housekeeper, and she often reminds people who hesitate to enter the Church, because of losing their friends or their position, that God is never outdone in generosity, and she tells them how He rewarded her even in this world for the sacrifice which she had made for Him.—*English Messenger.*

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