

'Who is it from?' she asked.

'John Edward Levering, he replied.

'But you've never waited on any of his people before?'

'No,' he admitted, 'I never have.'

'Well, then,' she said in a determined voice, 'if I were in your place I simply wouldn't go. I'd let him get some other doctor.'

The physician halted for a moment, irresolute. His wife's argument chimed in with his own desires. He was sorely tempted to refuse the call, but the voice of conscience arose and chided him, saying—'The good doctor must be like Caesar's wife—above suspicion.'

When he looked up into his wife's face again his resolution had been reached. He would go at all hazards. She kissed him good-bye with tearful eyes.

'I don't see,' she complained, 'why you should kill yourself just for the sake of keeping other people alive.'

The motor car made good time, and it was but a half-hour after midnight when he was ushered into the handsome home of the Leverings. He was so tired and worn that he had to shake himself to keep from going asleep on his feet. He found the boy in a critical condition. A hasty examination proved that he had not been summoned any too soon. An operation was necessary; that, and that alone, offered the only possible method of saving the life of John Edward Levering's son and heir. Curiously enough, it happened to be one of those strange cases which the doctor had made his specialty. All of his professional pride arose within him, and with it the always present desire to save a human life. He went at his work swiftly, skilfully, and with the steadiness of hand and eye which were winning him a place among the great physicians of his day. The operation completed, it was necessary that he should remain at the bedside of his patient until the result of his work had become manifest. The boy had been unconscious for many hours, and Doctor Carney said:

'The crisis will come at 5 o'clock in the morning. One of two things will happen: he will become conscious and speak, or he will pass into a state of insensibility, which means death.'

The doctor, the father and mother and several relatives clustered about the little cot. The clock ticked its seconds with painful slowness. Time seemed to pass with leaden heels. Two o'clock struck, then three and four, and finally five. The last echo had scarcely died out when the child on the bed tossed restlessly, and then sat upright and looked at the circle of faces around him.

'What's the matter?' he asked, in his boyish voice. 'Why are you all here?'

The crisis was over. The patient was saved. Cries of joy came from all sides. In the midst of it the doctor quietly slipped on his coat and hurried out of the house. It was Sunday morning, and Doctor Carney resolved to hear Mass before returning home. It was only a few weeks after the festival of Christmas, and echoes of the yuletide music seemed to haunt the Sunday morning service. In spite of his fatigue, the doctor followed the Mass with attention and devotion, and when the period of thanksgiving came he offered a double prayer—one for the life that had been saved and the other for the temptation to avoid duty which he had resisted.

It was after 6 o'clock when he finally reached his home. He staggered from weakness and want of rest. He scarcely had time to undress before he collapsed. The room and the furniture danced about him, and then came darkness and oblivion. When he opened his eyes he found his wife bending over him.

'Isn't it time for me to get up?' he asked.

She smiled wanly.

'You have been very sick, John, but it's all right now. Doctor Howard, who left only a short while ago, says that it was a nervous collapse. He says that nature has supplied the remedy—perfect rest.'

'How long have I been in bed, Mary?' he asked.

'Two days,' she replied.

He laughed.

'And the world has been going around for forty-eight hours without my knowing anything about it?'

'Yes,' she replied brightly. 'And good things have been happening, too. You have been made chief consulting surgeon at the Good Samaritan Hospital. Isn't that a promotion?'

'Yes,' he nodded gravely, 'a decided promotion.'

'And, besides that,' she went on, 'everybody is talking about your wonderful triumph in saving the life of Levering's little boy.'

'Oh, that was nothing,' he said absently.

'Yes, it was,' she retorted with wifely devotion; 'it was a wonderful thing—an extraordinary triumph, and you know it.'

He was sitting up by this time, and he put his arm on her shoulder and looked into her eyes, and as he did so he thought of how he had overcome his inclination to avoid that call of duty.

'Yes, Mary,' he said, with infinite tenderness in his tones, 'you are right. It was a great triumph.'—*Derry Journal*.

A PRAYER AT EASTERTIDE

Do you think she will live, doctor?'

The great specialist looked into Gilbert Kenmore's haggard face.

Intimacy with suffering and death had not made him impervious to pity. He had the good fortune, still, to possess the rare gift of sympathy. Then the circumstances were unusual. Mr. Kenmore and his wife were Americans and had been in Naples only a few days. They had gone for a drive in the morning and met with an accident. Mr. Kenmore had escaped injury, but his wife was not so fortunate. His voice trembled as he asked the question, and the physician hesitated.

'Doctor, I want to know—the truth.'

'I can give you no hope, and the time will be short. But I can promise one thing. She will not suffer.'

Mr. Kenmore stood for a moment incapable of speech. Then like a flash came the remembrance of a line he had heard his wife sing only yesterday:

'The light of a whole life dies when love is done.'

Was she going to die—his beloved? Then there would be nothing in life for him, for love would die, too. A wave of anguish seemed to roll over him, and he felt the doctor grasp his hand.

'Try to bear it like a man,' he said, and turned away quickly.

He went down the broad marble steps and through the garden.

Who can describe a Neapolitan garden. Clusters of flowers, bright hued as the rainbow; tropical blooms, so redolent, it seemed, that there must be hidden in the orange grove a magician who presided over a mystical alembic.

And to think in the midst of that beauty and fragrance the angel of death was hovering near. If only the sun would darken and the incessant warbling of the birds would cease, it would have been more in accordance with Gilbert Kenmore's mood, as he listened to the words that threw over his life the pall of sorrow. Always before fortune had favored him. He had accumulated wealth and in the literary world he had won merited recognition. Earth's cup of joy, brimming, he had lifted to his lips. The blow had fallen and he reeled beneath it. He staggered to a chair, sat down, and his head fell forward on his breast. With a groan he muttered aloud, 'This is the end of all, life, love, everything!'

'No, it is the beginning for the one you love,' said a firm yet pitying voice.

He started and looked around. It was the nurse, a Sister of Mercy, who had come softly down the stairs.

'Mrs. Kenmore is asking for you, sir.'

He sprang to his feet and turned to the Sister. 'Thank you for reminding me of my duty, Sister. I will go to my wife.'

As he hurried along; the truth came to his mind.

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