

'How perfectly dear of you to give so generously to St. Joseph's Orphan Asylum.'

'Yes,' exclaimed another enthusiastic guest, 'and to think how hopelessly small our contributions look beside it. But I just simply can't afford it. Professor Bourget's dancing lessons, you know, are almost prohibitive in price, and I must have several new gowns before the end of the season, and I want to get'—

'Oh, Marian,' interrupted Mrs. Jeffrey, 'you tell that little fiction of your poverty so frequently that after a while you will believe it is true. It is the more amusing when one remembers that your name usually heads the lists of contributors to our pet charities. Although,' she added, with an almost imperceptible stiffening of manner as she addressed Mrs. Bradley, 'I understand, Helen, that you have set a new standard this year. In my own case I usually prefer to distribute the amount among several worthy charities. It seems less noticeable than when the entire amount is given to one institution. But of course each must follow her own ideas in the matter. You have certainly succeeded in making yourself the most talked about member of the club. Verily,' she laughed, 'you have already had your reward.'

'To be discussed was not my desire, Margaret, nor was I seeking any special reward,' responded Mrs. Bradley, without a trace of the resentment that was burning within her. 'Neither had I any intention of establishing a precedent even for myself. The fact that I gave more this year than usual'—

'Was just because you are a dear generous soul,' laughed the hostess.

'Or because the appeal was made at the psychological moment,' murmured Mrs. Jeffrey.

Mrs. Bradley winced. If they but knew how true the chance guess was! And she had just been on the point of explaining the mistake and renouncing the unmerited praise of her friends. But not now. Mrs. Jeffrey's remark discouraged such an admission.

'I won't tell the truth now,' she decided. 'The money was mine. I gave it away. It is right that I should get credit for it. Mrs. Jeffrey had not given any yet and will probably have some very good reason to offer as to why she should not.'

'And to think,' Marion Spencer was saying, 'to think that you made so light of it that day. I remember the cool tone in which you directed Neva to get the money. I wish I could dispose of sums of money as unconcernedly as you can. I am afraid I would want everyone right there to know how very generous I was, and to say nice things to me. You must have wonderful self-control, Helen.'

Mrs. Bradley could laugh and adroitly change the subject there, but it was not so simple a matter at dinner that evening when her husband said with evident approval: 'That was a generous thing to do, Helen. St. Joseph's are in special need of funds at present, I understand—some necessary improvements or something—and you do not know how pleased I was to-day and how proud of you when I learned what you had done. Sometimes I have been afraid of these card and dancing clubs, these tea dances and theatre parties, with this eternal question of dress, would destroy all of those finer qualities that were your best possession. So many women are becoming such frivolous, irresponsible creatures with not a thought beyond pleasure and dress. I am ashamed to remember that I thought you wanted that money for some useless bit of furniture, bric-a-brac, or gowns. It was especially generous of you because as I told you then, that new deal I am trying to put through will take every available dollar I can get for some time. So it will mean scraping along on your regular allowance, and you know that never seems to cover any extras. I should think you would have wanted to keep back some of it. It makes me feel quite unworthy of you, dear.'

'Don't say that, Rob. It was really your money, you see. And I didn't really'—

'None of that,' laughed he. 'You can't put the credit on my shoulders. I am only sorry that I cannot replace even a small part of it. But perhaps it is just as well since any help from me would detract

that much from the pleasure you derive in having given it.'

Well, she could not tell Rob either. That was clear. His praise was sweet, and after all, she had given the money. Yes, she was probably entitled to credit. And so for the remainder of the evening she felt quite satisfied with herself. She was beginning to long again for the things she would have bought with the money, however, and remorse and chagrin insisted upon disturbing her self-complacency. It was exasperating, too, that she could not shake off the conviction that she had not been strictly honest in the affair. Would she have explained that afternoon had Mrs. Jeffrey not thwarted her intention by premature assumptions? Would she have told the truth to her husband had he not introduced the subject by praising her and by refusing to accept credit for the money? She could not answer these satisfactorily, but over and above every other consideration, a voice seemed to be whispering:

'You are not honest. You really gave but five dollars. You are insincere. You are a Pharisee. There is no merit whatever attached to that gift. You did not give it with a good intention. Are you willing to remain a hypocrite and to receive the thanks of the Sisters and the prayers of the orphans? Can you be satisfied to receive these acknowledgments and benefits under the false pretences?'

She tried to tell herself that she had too tyrannical a conscience, too strict a sense of honor. And then she realised that it was not so much a question of conscience as one of loyalty to principles that had taken new values since she had been invested in them by her friends and her husband.

'I must,' she suddenly resolved, 'be worthy of all that has been attributed to me by others. I must be worthy of my own self-respect. It need not matter to me how other women would act under similar circumstances. Perhaps they would do better than I am doing. At any rate I am determined to take only the credit that is due me. But,' and she hesitated in sudden alarm, 'surely setting it right cannot mean that I am to confess my mistake and the causes that led to it! Oh, no, that humiliation is not demanded of me. There must be some alternative.'

She sat long, meditating, in her room that night. And finally she found one way one. She must give an equivalent sum anonymously. It would mean deprivations, self-denials, sacrifices—and these were not pleasant to contemplate. And no one must know—not even Rob. He had placed her on a pedestal. He had not known how unstable it was so she must strengthen and secure its permanency without his knowledge. And Mrs. Jeffrey and others need never know. For a few days perhaps there would be many conjectures as to the donor's identity, and then the matter would be forgotten. There were many public-spirited citizens who might give and then for personal reasons not want their names known. Yes, it was the safest and most satisfying solution of her disconcerting problem. Cost what it might in personal discomfort, she would at least have voluntarily given the credited donation, and her mind would be at peace.

It was several months before the amount was made up, and it was with a sigh of relief and a consciousness of an unpleasant duty well done that the money was sent anonymously to St. Joseph's Orphan Asylum.

Public acknowledgment was made in the newspapers and editorial comment suggested that the donor was faithfully fulfilling the scriptural injunction of not letting the right hand know what the left hand doeth, and adding that the final reward of the benefactor would be the greater because there had been sought no personal recognition. Mrs. Bradley congratulated herself on having so successfully accomplished so difficult a task. She wished, however, that the newspaper had not so emphasised the merit of anonymous giving as it seemed to reflect on the prominence given to her first offering.

She admitted, however, in the secrecy of her own thoughts that since she had permitted the situation to disturb her so much, it would have been easier as well