

as more honest to have told the truth in the first place. The victory over herself would have been greater, she could have lightly accepted the amused sympathy of friends, the incident would have been forgotten by this time, and she would have been spared those months of aggressive and oppressive economy. But it was all settled now. And there was just a little vanity in the reflection that she had earned the right to have her name head the list. It was a sort of victory, after all, and it was also a pleasant little triumph over her social rival, Mrs. Jeffrey—a triumph she could now fully enjoy. So it was with a sense of elation that she dressed for Mrs. Spencer's reception, and with an unusual degree of self-confidence and self-congratulation that she greeted her hostess—but what was Marion Spencer saying. Surely she had not heard aright?

Mrs. Spencer had not noticed her confusion. And after the first shock, Mrs. Bradley realised the import of what her friend was telling:

'And wasn't it lovely of her to send it in that way? What vain creatures we were to tack our names on to ours! Indeed, it makes me quite ashamed of myself when I think of what Margaret Jeffrey has done,' added Marion.

'Does she did she say she sent it?' asked Mrs. Bradley whose broken tones were attributed to the general surprise felt by everybody present.

'No, indeed. And that is so splendid a trait, isn't it? But she is coming this way now,' as Mrs. Jeffrey made her way through chatting groups to where the two women stood.

'I was just telling Helen,' explained Mrs. Spencer, 'what a surprise you gave us all. To think that all the time that we were discussing our charity funds you never once hinted that you were going to do anything like that. I noticed that your name was not on the list, but I thought you had probably given more to some other cause this winter and so had deserted poor St. Joseph's.' As a matter of fact Marion Spencer had thought nothing of the kind, having early decided that Margaret Jeffrey intended to decline all appeals as she so often did under the pretence of giving to private charity which must remain unknown. But Marion was now reproaching herself for her rash judgment.

'Desert poor St. Joseph's!' laughed Mrs. Jeffrey easily. 'I would like to give to all the orphan asylums if I could.'

'But'—stammered poor Helen, 'do I understand that you admit that you are the anonymous donor?'

'Oh, dear, no,' exclaimed the jubilant lady, secretly pleased that Helen's honors were being divided, 'I admit nothing. That would not do, under the circumstances. It is true that my name does not often appear on a list of contributors who give large sums. I have special reasons for that, and then, too, I always believed that ideal alms giving should be done anonymously, but'

'Yes, yes,' interrupted Helen, almost irritably, 'but if you do not admit it, why do they say you gave it? Surely, you must have—'

'My dear Helen, don't look so perplexed about'—

'I confess I am perplexed,' replied Helen slowly. 'You say you did not admit it, yet everyone here seems to accept this version of the giver's identity. Do you, then, deny sending it?'

'Deny it?' queried Mrs. Jeffrey with rising color. 'Deny it? Why, no. You see, I can't very well do that. And isn't it strange that you should be the only one who has thus questioned me? Perhaps because the offerings of the others were smaller, and that it did not therefore affect them so much. Is that it?' and she smiled indulgently.

'Not at all,' answered Helen. 'I supposed that having been given anon'—

'Exactly,' agreed Mrs. Jeffrey. 'You see the Sisters received it. My name was not on their list, and I am afraid that I inadvertently said something—and—well, really it was only natural I suppose—I—I should have known—but—really, you know, I shouldn't discuss it at all. It isn't just the proper thing to do under the circumstances, is it?'

'I am afraid not,' weakly responded Helen.

'Isn't Margaret Jeffrey wonderful, Helen,' exclaimed Marion a few moments later, when Mrs. Jeffrey had joined another group of admirers. 'To think how we've misjudged her! She is really the most charitable of us all, isn't she?'

'It was a generous gift,' replied the discomfited Mrs. Bradley.

And later Robert Bradley added another pang to his wife's silent anguish.

'Do you know, Helen,' he said that evening, 'that I am afraid you have misunderstood Mrs. Jeffrey. It is easy to misjudge. She must be rather good-hearted after all, if she is the anonymous benefactor. Jack Spencer told me on the way home. It is true?'

'Her friends say so, and she does not deny it,' admitted his wife.

'What's the matter, dear?' he inquired with smiling raillery.

'Nothing.'

'Don't feel so disturbed about it. She didn't really give more than you did, you know, only she was shrewd enough to add to its apparent value by not openly giving her name. She seems to have managed to have it made known, though. Trust a woman like Mrs. Jeffrey for that,' but he modified his last statement almost immediately. 'But perhaps she didn't give her name at all.'

'Perhaps she didn't give the money, either,' retorted Helen.

'Oh, Helen, don't say that! I suppose that Mrs. Jeffrey feels that she has scored a point, but what of it? It isn't like you to withhold your approval of good traits even in otherwise undesirable people. And I am sorry that your prejudice against her makes you so unjust. I am a little disappointed.'

There was no reply.

'Well, perhaps I don't exactly mean that,' said he comfortingly, and I would be willing to wager any amount of money if I had it, Helen, that the same Mrs. Jeffrey did not practise any self-denials nor economies in order to contribute to that fund.'

'I am sure she did not,' replied Helen emphatically.

'And I imagine there was a chair or a vase or something that you had to do without for a week or two at the time you gave not your tithe, but your all—wasn't there?'

'Yes,' and the tone was reminiscent of hidden things. He could not know how big a price she had paid to have the right to claim the gift as her very own. She had not forfeited that right but the victory seemed less desirable now that she had made it possible for someone else—and that someone else Mrs. Jeffrey—to share, undeservedly, the place that was hers alone. Was it a victory even over her own selfish vanity?

And then her husband's voice broke in upon her thoughts. She had not been listening, so absorbed was she in her own memories, but now he was saying:

'And therefore, while I don't pretend to understand the intricate relationship between meritorious giving and social prestige, it seems to me that you win, after all. Don't you?'

He waited for her answer.

'I wish I knew,' came the enigmatic reply. *The Magnificent.*

CORRECTING MRS. SIMS

From the day that the Simses moved into the corner house on Stuyvesant place, Mrs. Sims was the subject of lively speculation in the little street. Later, when the street found out how the corner house was run, she became the object of indignant wonder. But when Mrs. Billy Keenan, out of the overflowing goodness of her heart, decided that it was the duty of the street to correct her ways, Mrs. Sims absorbed all their attention.

Her ways surely needed correcting, for Mrs. Sims, leaving her youthful daughters to run the house, 'gadded.' Morning, noon, or afternoon, various residents of the neighborhood were continually meeting her