

St. Mary's Hall was a scene of gaiety on the eventful night of the festival. There were evidences of Mrs. Gardner's taste in all the decorations. Mrs. Gardner herself, in a pretty white gown, moved with stately grace about the hall, chatting with friends, or stood at the head of her table supervising a bevy of daintily dressed girls who served refreshments.

Mrs. O'Neill, her practical mind alert to all the details of Mrs. Gardner's management, noted with some misgivings the lavish adornment of cut flowers from the florist's, that shed a fragrance and added to the beauty of the tables, and the string orchestra that wafted forth music from behind a bower of palms. Mrs. Gardner had modelled the festival of St. Mary's on the lines of an afternoon social function, without doubt.

'Pretty and effective,' Milly mentally conceded, 'but'—she pressed her lips tight on words of criticism that longed to escape. She would not be the first to cast doubt on Mrs. Gardner's wisdom.

'Oh, Mrs. O'Neill, don't things look lovely to-night! That music makes me perfectly enthusiastic,' gushed Kathleen Connolly. 'Why didn't we ever have the orchestra before? It adds so much to the pleasure of the evening.'

'And the expense,' Milly longed to retort, but she laughed instead. 'Why didn't you ever suggest it before, Kathleen? You of the many brilliant ideas.'

'Oh, I'm stupid, of course, where my wits are most needed,' laughed Kathleen, and dashed off to attend to the wants of a handsome youth at the farther end of the table.

Mildred watched the crowd a few moments in silence. The prospects were bright for a successful social. The crowd was larger than she had ever seen it on similar occasions, and moreover, everyone seemed happy and enthusiastic. On all sides she heard flattering praise of Mrs. Gardner. A queer little ache clutched at her heart, but she tried to ignore it and join in the gaiety around her.

'Oh, Milly O'Neill, come here,' called a distressed voice from the kitchen doorway.

'Why, what is it, Mrs. James?' she asked the woman on whose countenance panic was plainly visible.

'The cream is almost gone, and the evening not half over yet, and such a crowd as we never had before,' wailed she.

'But can't we order more at once?' asked Milly, calmly.

'We've tried, and they say it is too late to fill an order now.'

'Let me try, then.' She went to the telephone, but came back, after a few moments' conversation, looking as distressed as did Mrs. James.

'It is useless, they say. No ice cream on hand.' 'What on earth will we do about it?' gasped Mrs. James in despair.

'I don't know really,' answered Milly, her brown eyes troubled. 'Call Mrs. Gardner, she might be able to do something.'

'Mrs. Gardner, indeed!' snapped Mrs. James. 'Cut flowers and music and nothing to eat. That's management for you!' And Mrs. James flounced back into the kitchen to talk it over with her companions.

Milly's eyes followed the stately, smiling Mrs. Gardner as she moved about among the throng with all the air of a social queen. Pity welled up in her heart. Mrs. Gardner had usurped her throne but for a day, for the ladies of St. Mary's Society were too practical and sensible to overlook such failure as this.

The evening ended somehow, and Milly went home with her husband. Mrs. Gardner had borne the news of the calamity with rare grace in spite of the many looks of indignation that were levelled in her direction.

'I'll wager she don't feel half as bad over this affair as you do, Milly,' declared her husband on the way home.

'You know nothing about it, Charles. She is not one of those hysterical sort. I do admire that composure she displays.'

'It is just as I expected, Milly,' teased her husband. 'You can walk right up and sit on your throne again, and I'll sing "Long live the queen!"'

Milly O'Neill received many calls next day from the members of St. Mary's Altar Society, many of whom seemed to think they owed her an humble apology, and by six o'clock that evening her sympathetic heart was aching as much over the humiliation of her rival as it had ached over her own misfortune. She longed to do something to alleviate the mortification she knew Mrs. Gardner must feel. She had just come to the conclusion that she must go and see her the very next morning, when her meditations and the preparation of her husband's supper were interrupted by the ring of the telephone, and a distressed voice answered her.

'This is Mrs. Gardner, Mrs. O'Neill. My little boy is very sick, and I'm so worried, and I've heard so much about how good you are to—'

'I'll be right over, Mrs. Gardner,' Milly called back. She hung up the receiver, hurried into her wraps, and was gone.

On the corner she met her husband. 'I'm going over to Mrs. Gardner's. Her little boy is very sick,' she briefly explained.

'Angel of mercy,' began her husband, but she hurried on unheeding. Mrs. O'Neill found it difficult to identify the worried, tear-stained woman who bent over little

Tommy's bed with the brilliant, smiling one of the night before.

'Oh, Mrs. O'Neill, it was so good of you to come. The doctor says Tommy has pneumonia, and I'm almost distracted. I am afraid he is going to die.'

Mrs. O'Neill looked down at the fevered, tossing child and realised that he was very ill, but she spoke comforting and reassuring words to his mother and began ministering to the wants of Tommy.

It was the next afternoon, when Tommy had been pronounced out of danger by the doctor and had fallen into a restful sleep, that Mrs. Gardner brought up the subject which for the time had been forgotten.

'I feel utterly disgraced over the Altar Society social,' she confided. 'I am not at all practical, so my husband says, and it must be true or I shouldn't have made such a mess of things.'

'Oh, don't let it trouble you,' Milly hastened to say. 'You have only been in town a short time, and you don't know conditions here as we do.'

'Don't make excuses for me. I know I am very much to blame, but I have always longed to assist in Church work, to do something that was not all empty vanity, and this seemed like such an opportunity,' she finished wistfully.

Milly O'Neill looked up at the woman she had thought vain and self-centred, and a warm rush of sympathy swept over her. After all, they were very much akin at heart.

'Oh, Mrs. Gardner, we do need you,' she cried impulsively. 'There are so many opportunities for good work here, and you are just the one to help.'

'If I only had your practical mind and good sense,' sighed Mrs. Gardner.

'But you have more than that. You have everything that I have not.'

So Milly O'Neill came to share the throne of leadership with Mrs. Gardner, to the amazement of the Altar Society members and the amazement of her husband, and the parish of St. Mary's flourished financially thereafter. —Extension.

HER MOTHER-IN-LAW

It is the boasted principle of American democracy that 'all men are created equal.' But even more boasted than that principle is the man who, having been created equal, is placed at birth among conditions unequal to those of his neighbors, and who proceeds to raise himself from that inequality into another inequality of conditions superior to his neighbors—theoretically, that is. Practically there is a hint of reproach contained in the epithet 'a self-made man.' It is hard for his fellow-citizens to forget a lack of family name, or to overlook a grandfather who found the signing of his humble name difficult.

The Camerons, coming to the Western world with their capital in a shining bag and in the health betokened by their shining eyes and cheeks, young, hopeful, and poor, had prospered modestly from the start. Their children had been healthy and happy youngsters, with enough comfort to keep them so, when an accidental appreciation of land acquired by their father, the laying-out of a fashionable drive, the building of a trolley and a fashionable college, had suddenly put the surprised elder Cameron among the town newspaper's list of 'our foremost citizens,' had made him, in fact, a rich man.

He took it sensibly, and his quiet, shrinking wife scarcely took it at all. They made no change in their manner of life, but the two girls and the one son were sent to good schools, and subsequently the boy went to college. The girls married and went away with a fine dowry of their father's wealth and their mother's goodness. The son moved, an equal, among other rich men's sons, and the daughters of excellent families smiled on him—handsome, clever, physically, mentally, financially well equipped, he was to be smiled upon.

Four children of the Camerons had died before wealth had found them, in one awful desolation of diphtheria; it was said that the shrinking little mother, whose plain garb and plain ways wealth had not altered, had buried in those four little graves all possibility of ambition, that to her life was henceforth rather a thing to be endured for the sake of the others whom she loved than to be enjoyed.

When Jack Cameron came home and announced his engagement to Celia Haverstock, the announcement filled his father with harmless pride that the beautiful daughter of the richest man in the State was to be the second Mrs. Cameron. The first Mrs. Cameron passed over that consideration as if it did not exist, as indeed it did not exist for the moment to her mind.

She put her hands on Jack's shoulders, clad in the best of weaver's and tailor's skill, and only said: 'Oh, Johnny, dear, I hope she'll make you happy and good, for a man's soul is mostly in women's keepin', first and last, mother and wife. Is she a good girl, John-boy, and home-lovin', besides bein' God-lovin'?'

And Jack had laughingly assured his mother that Celia was that combination of woman, angel, beauty, and sweetness that a man finds but once in his life—and too often sees in that light but briefly.

Celia was a good girl, untried, ignorant of everything outside of books, including herself, petted and guarded,