

from behind the shades and thereupon moralise on the kind of woman any woman must be that makes her advent to a house among respectable neighbours at such an hour and in such a vehicle. At any rate such a manner of arriving was a confirmation of the town's hopes, for surely the taxicab was a positive proof that Mrs. Perkins was blessed with a superabundance of wealth.

Meanwhile the Society of the Hill waited impatiently and slept disturbedly. The morning, Sunday morning would tell just what kind of woman this new neighbor was. If she were a good Christian she would go to Church. And much to the surprise of all this woman who came home late in a taxicab was a good Christian and did go to Church. But, alas for Society's hopes! it was to the Catholic Church she went. That in itself was a certain confession of plebeianism, but the most alarming of all her unintelligible actions was the sending of the charming little Cecelia to the parish school.

I have always thought that there must have been a remarkable fascination about Mrs. Mary Perkins, for in spite of this double faux pas, this presumed belligerent attitude to the small but select Unitarian neighborhood, a week had not passed before the said society had called upon her to a woman, and in subsequent secret gatherings all had voted her a most refined, educated, charming hostess, and a valuable acquisition to their exclusive set.

Mrs. Perkins, however, did not display any undue enthusiasm over her admittance into the inner circle of these lineal descendants of the Pilgrims, and real daughters of the American Revolution.

'I do think she is charming and very handsome and a most exquisite dresser,' said Mrs. White-Greene, an authority on Colonial families, to her bosom friend, Mrs. Sydney Hall, equally authoritative in the matter of Colonial furniture, 'but somehow she does so seem in effect to disregard blue blood. It is always an affectation of the nouveaux riches. Now, I chanced to mention, very casually, that our family had come from England in the Mayflower, and, she naively asked if the Mayflower did not win the cup last year. Fancy!'

'Do you know,' said Mrs. Hall, 'I sometimes think she is laughing at us, and yet, she has the manners of a princess. Fancy her declining an invitation to the tea given by the Daughters of the Revolution, because, she said, she did not approve of Revolutions! You would think we were a petty South American Republic.'

Nevertheless, Mrs. Perkins returned the calls of all her neighbors, and was affability itself, even while she let it be known, gently, but firmly and positively, that she had no desire to be an active member of the society. All her life seemed to be devoted to the little Cecelia, and she never let her out of her sight save during the hours in which she was at the parish school under the eyes of the Sisters.

Just as the mother had become at once the favorite of the society that would have made her its queen; had she permitted, so the little daughter by her beauty, her sweet disposition, and her mature piety, had become soon the most popular child of the parish. That popularity had been firmly established by the wonderful party during the Christmas holidays which had been given to the classmates of Cecelia at Perkins house, a party which is even now referred to by the participants as the grandest ever.

But Cecelia, like her mother, also possessed the faculty of taking things for granted. It was merely a matter of course that she should have beautiful clothes, ride in a carriage and give such parties as other children only read of in fairy stories. There was no special reason to be proud of such ordinary things, and soon it was a saying among the nuns that Cecelia Perkins would not be surprised at the General Judgment. But that statement, even if it did originate in the convent, was a rank injustice to the said Cecelia.

She could become excited, and she verily did become excited, and that, too, over her approaching First Communion. Such an event appealed to her as the most wonderful thing possible in the life of any girl. Mrs. Perkins shared the excitement, just as she had entered heart and soul into all the plans of Cecelia, and many a book was ransacked by her in search of the beautiful stories relating to First Communion, stories later on retailed to the admiring girls who had long before declared Cecelia's mother perfectly wonderful. More appealing, however, than the stories of Cecelia was her matter-of-fact announcement to the assembled multitude that she was to have on the day after their First Communion another party which would put in the shade that memorable one of the Christmas holidays.

But the best laid plans, according to the Scotch poet, sometimes fall through. And to the lasting consternation of those expectant little epicures, that party never came off. It was not Cecelia's fault, for in the very hour in which her companions were beginning their three-days' retreat she was stricken down with a sudden illness.

'Is it appendicitis?' said the alarmed mother, even as she prayed that it might not be so, to Doctor Walsh, who had been instantly summoned.

'I fear so,' he said, 'and, candidly, a bad case.'

'And you think—?'

'I think an operation imperative,' he answered. 'I will summon a specialist at once.'

'Get the best possible,' she said, eagerly. 'Spare nothing. She must be saved. I will telephone for the priest now.'

And that is how Doctor Grant, the most famous surgeon of the country was summoned from his Boston home, to be driven in his auto at a reckless speed on that blowy March night, accompanied by a nurse to the old Perkins house where the little Cecelia was lying in great agony. The priest had prepared her, but had been unable to give her Viaticum.

It was Mrs. Perkins herself who went to the door as the machine rolled up to the house. It was a blessed sound to her who had been counting the minutes from the time Doctor Walsh had telephoned to the City.

'You are the surgeon, of course,' she said quickly, 'You—Doctor Grant!'

'You!—Lady Graham!' said the doctor.

'Don't use that name here,' she said, in a subdued voice, glancing at the nurse who was still standing in the doorway. 'I am Mrs. Perkins now. I will explain later. I have good reasons. But go—go to my little girl. Doctor Walsh is with her. Thank God it is you who have come.'

It was some hours later when Doctor Grant and Doctor Walsh came from the sick-room, leaving the little Cecelia still under the effects of the ether, in the care of Miss Shea, the nurse.

'It is over?' said the mother, eagerly grasping the hand of the specialist.

'Yes,' said Doctor Grant, 'and I feel she is going to recover.'

'Thank God!' she exclaimed. 'It was God that sent you. May I go in to see her?'

'For a moment, just to look at her. I know you will understand that you cannot remain.'

'I do,' she said gratefully, 'I will join you in the drawing-room. Doctor Walsh will kindly show you the way.'

Doctor Grant was pacing up and down the floor when the mother entered the room after the brief space allowed her to gaze at the face of her unconscious child. But the short time had given the doctor ample opportunity to think seriously and to come to a decision.

'I am sure she will be better,' she said. 'It is all due to you, Doctor Grant. I could not live without her.'

'Yet others have had to,' he said quickly.

'You mean?' she said, blushing.

'Your husband—Arthur. Forgive me, Lady Graham, if I seem severe at this time, and especially to one who was ever so kind and gracious to me during those happy days in England. But to us who admired Arthur—well, we felt for him, that you had left him, and taken away his child, hiding yourself.'

'You will not understand, doctor,' she said. 'You cannot. You are a Protestant, and naturally you will side with him. But my conscience tells me I am right. We were happy—you know how happy—till she, my little girl, began to grow up. He had promised, had sworn to me that she, that what children God sent us would be educated as Catholics. Otherwise I would not have married him. He broke his promise, insisted that she accompany him to Protestant service, and placed her under a Protestant governess. I rebelled. He ignored my plea. And then in desperation, when I saw my pleading was useless, rather than see my child deprived of her faith, and be brought up to hate my religion, I left, and came to this foreign country to hide her.'

'It was a wild notion,' said the doctor.

'To those who have faith,' she said, 'to whom religion is everything, nothing is wild that tends to preserve it.'

'And you have not considered his heart?' asked the doctor; 'his roaming the world to find you—and his daughter. Dear Lady Graham, don't think me heartless at this moment, but should she die, and he not see her—yet she is his child as well as yours.'

'But she will not die. You say the operation was successful.'

'Yes; but no one knows. I was pained for you both when he told me—'

'He told you,' she said. 'You have seen him?'

'I have. He dined with me to-night. He is now in Boston. He has been quietly seeking you all these months. You said it was God that sent me to-night, and now I believe it.'

'But you will not tell him,' she exclaimed, alarm showing in her voice. 'We have been safe here. I beg you, doctor, beg you on my knees to keep all this secret. He would take her away and break my heart. God alone knows how I have suffered in doing my duty. You will not tell him.'

'Be reasonable, Lady Graham,' said the doctor, pleadingly. 'Arthur worships you. He has suffered. Let me bring him to you.'

'No—no—he cannot love me. But I adored him, and I believed in him.'

'You will let me bring him,' persisted the doctor. 'Your child has not forgotten him?'

'She has begged to see him,' confessed the woman. She has talked incessantly of him, asking when we were to go home. Every word cut me to the heart.'

'Then you still love him.'

'Love him? My heart is ever bound to him.'

'That is all I wished to know,' he said. 'Let me act for you now. You will thank me later on. I will have him here before midnight.'

He was gone before she could offer further remonstrance, and as one whose heart was crushed she dragged