

horse-hair covering. Then she plunged one hand searchingly inside.

'I knew it was brown paper,' she said with some triumph, and she withdrew her hand a second later and held up something to Hugh's mildly inquiring gaze.

'Why, it looks like a parcel, something tied up with twine, and very carefully tied up, too,' she added, with suddenly-kindled interest. 'What on earth can it be, Hugh?'

'We'll very soon find out,' Hugh told her, taking out his penknife and quickly cutting the cord.

With fingers that trembled a little he undid the parcel, which apparently consisted at first sight of one piece of brown paper folded closely within another. But on opening the inner fold an exclamation of joy and surprise broke simultaneously from the two eager investigators. For there, wrapped closely together in the centre, lay a thick fold of treasury notes—500 dollars, and another 500, and yet another, and so on till their total reached the goodly sum of 50,000 dollars. It wasn't all of Aunt Helen's wealth, but it was undoubtedly the best part of it, and for a little while Hugh could hardly bring himself to believe in his own great luck.

'Good old Aunt Helen,' he said at last, a little huskily. It was so like her, Cynthia, to do this. You see, she was always so determined and so fond of priding herself on her own consistency. She would not go back on her word that she intended to disinherit me, and would leave me nothing in her will. And yet—one sees it clearly now, even the meaning of what she said about your clever fingers, and which at, God forgive me, I took to be an unworthy sneer at your profession as milliner. It is very evident that she badly wanted us to have the money all the same. God bless her tender heart!'

'I'm so glad,' Cynthia said, and there was a sound of happy tears in her voice, 'so very glad, darling, that after all you had not to pay too dearly for me.'

'Too dearly!' Hugh repeated in tones of deepest tenderness, 'as though one could pay too dearly for you, my pearl of great price, my greatest treasure on earth, "whose price is far above rubies."'—*Catholic Telegraph*.

A SISTER'S SACRIFICE

This is a story of a mill girl who willingly sacrificed her own life's happiness in order to save her younger brothers and sisters from the body-wasting, mind-dwarfing, soul-crushing life of the mills—a soul tragedy common enough, God knows, among the humble heroines of the industrial world, but one rarely told in print.

Patrick Dolan and his wife, Catherine, were among the Irish pioneers who, driven by famine and England's cruel laws, flocked to the shores of America in the early 50's. Lacking a trade, Pat, like many another exile of Erin, went to work on the railroad with pick and shovel. Though wages were small, the plucky, hard-working Celt managed to build a little home of his own for his now growing family on the outskirts of the town. Here, until black sorrow came to darken his door, he lived far happier than many a king upon his throne.

At the opening of our story Mrs. Dolan was the mother of five children, Mary, Margery, Joseph, Nellie, and Francis, ranging in age from three to eighteen years. When Mary was ten years of age her mother's health began to fail, and in order to meet the increasing family expenses the eldest daughter was obliged to go to work in the mills. Eight long years of winding-room drudgery had sent the iron deeply into Mary's soul, and she determined to save the other children from a like experience if it were in her power to do so.

At eighteen Mary Dolan was a lovely girl, tall, fair, and graceful, with a lady-like dignity of deportment more befitting the drawing-room than the winding-room. So lofty was her sense of duty that she refused the offer of marriage tendered her by Phil Morgan, the man whom her heart had chosen. The day

on which the lovers parted was one of the very saddest in our heroine's life.

Phil had declared his love, and had begged Mary to share his heart and home. This crisis had been the point of her fears for weeks, but when it came she met it with a strength and calmness wholly to be unexpected in so sensitive a nature. There was the slightest tremor in her voice when she declined the offer of honorable marriage as she told Phil of the high resolve which had been forming in her mind for months.

Feeling that he had been unfairly dealt with, the rejected suitor was about to upbraid the girl for her seeming heartlessness, when the look of dumb agony in her eyes checked his reproaches. Shamed and humiliated, the abashed lover picked up Mary's frail and trembling hand, pressed it to his lips, and with a hoarse 'Good-bye, and God bless you, sweetheart,' turned and passed out of the gate and out of her life. Long, weary, heart-breaking years were to pass before the lovers met again, for within a week Phil Morgan was on his way to Southern California.

After the painful interview, Mary stole into the house and, reaching her room unperceived, threw herself across the bed and, burying her face in the pillow, gave full vent to the pent-up agony of her soul. No tongue or pen can describe the happiness of plighted love, and none can tell the cruel pain of parting that crushes the heart, blighting, perhaps forever, the hopes of a young life. Yet when, an hour later, Mary came down to assist in getting supper ready, no one detected the slightest change in her manner or bearing—no one save her mother.

The die once cast, Mary Dolan lost no time in vain regrets. Having taken up the cross, she would carry it even unto Calvary. Her first charge was Margery, now fifteen years of age, and soon to graduate from the parochial school. It was determined at a family council that Margery, after leaving the local school, should take a course at a business college, to save her from the drudgery of the mills. This meant that Mary must not only stand all day at the winding frame, but that at home also she must wash and iron, bake and scrub, and ply the needle far into the night making and mending, as her mother's failing strength left no other alternative. Little wonder that fine lines began to gather about Mary's tired eyes and gray streaks to appear among her bright brown tresses. Shortly after Margery's entrance into the business world Mrs. Dolan died. The death cast a gloom over the entire family, but it nearly prostrated the eldest daughter, Mary, her mother's ever faithful counsellor and guide. But in order to spare the others the poor girl was compelled to hide her grief until the lonely watches of the night. Then, when the household was wrapped in slumber, she would bury her face in the pillow and sob herself to sleep.

Now that the mother was gone, the whole responsibility of the home developed upon Mary, so that between her household duties and the winding-room she had little time to grieve over the past. Were it not for the consolation of her holy faith, I fear she would have broken down under the severe strain. But the weekly Confession and Communion, and the holy hour under the sanctuary lamp on Saturday evening, when the week, with its cares and sorrows, had passed, kept her soul pure and sweet.

Five long years had now passed away. Joseph was in a technical college studying electrical engineering; Nellie was in the highest class of the parochial school and showing a strong inclination for the religious life. Margery, a successful stenographer, had 'met her fate' in the office and was about to be married to the bookkeeper.

(To be concluded.)

Portraits Are Our Forte

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