

bottom, but she is gone, vanished. Perhaps Monsieur le Pere came and took her out.'

'He would not do that without telling you, Amelie. Look again. The child may have fallen asleep somewhere. Look behind the window curtains, it is her favorite place to go with her doll.'

But Amelie was fast becoming nervous and unstrung. 'Ciel, Madame! I have examined every window, every corner, and Rogers has been looking also. Mademoiselle Marguerite is not in this house.'

In spite of herself the pretty young mother blanched with fear, and fear made her angry.

'Ring the bell for Rogers, Amelie; your carelessness has been unpardonable. If Margaret is lost it will cost you dear.'

The butler, who seemed to be within earshot, appeared immediately, but he could throw no light on the subject. Again the house was searched from top to bottom, all the maids and the footmen joining in the search. It developed that Margaret's coat and bonnet had also disappeared, proving conclusively that she had gone out. Inquiry at surrounding houses presently brought out the fact that at about five o'clock their next-door neighbor, in passing the house on her way to Fifth Avenue, had seen and spoken to the child, who had just come out. Supposing that the nurse was to follow, Mrs. S—— had hurried on, to attend to her Christmas shopping.

Amelie had become hysterical, and the now thoroughly frightened mother convinced that her child had been kidnapped, turned for help and comfort to the parlor maid, a young girl whose reserve and quiet had hitherto rather irritated her. It was this girl, Mary, who suggested telephoning to Mr. Walsh.

'Call him up at once,' said the distracted mother, and in half an hour he was at the house. In another half an hour a force of detectives and police were on the scene, and every police station in the city had been notified. Henry Walsh's words were few before hurrying away, but the look on his face cut his wife like a knife. Left alone again she clung to the maid, and another miserable hour dragged on.

At nine o'clock it seemed to Annie Walsh as if she had lived an eternity. Unable to sit still, she paced the room, and then suddenly she broke down. Her cry of despair was the cry of Rachel who would not be comforted. Careless, indifferent, worldly, was she not still a mother?

The maid drew near, her own eyes full of tears. 'We can pray, Madame,' she said simply. And then, side by side, mistress and maid, forgetting the differences in rank, prayed for the lost child. Then the maid arose.

'You are worn out, Madame. You must have a cup of tea. I will get it, and be back in a moment.'

She was gone, and the mother was left alone. Back and forth she paced. Was not conscience smiting her, regret knocking at her heart?

Who was to blame for all the trouble of the past few years? She, she only. Her husband had been good, patient, and kind. She had been spoiled, exacting, careless of her religious duties, selfish about everything that did not concern herself. Viewed in the light of her present agony and self-abasement, the whole question of her relations with her husband was threshed out—and resolved itself into the fact that she had made no allowance for the cardinal principle that the married state, even the most ideal, calls for some forbearance on each side. And because she had not fulfilled her share she had been ready to wreck their home and separate her child from its father.

Afterward, in the years that followed, Annie Walsh carried with her as long as she lived a deep inner conviction that half the divorces in the world could be prevented if husband and wife practised the mutual forbearance and patience that their relation calls for.

Presently her restless walk up and down the room brought her to a door that opened into the sitting-room at the back. Involuntarily she passed from one room to the other and, turning on the electric light, stood

silently looking at the magnificent Christmas tree that Amelie, with true artistic taste, had dressed that morning. The scent of the evergreen branches in the cool room revived her. How beautiful the tree was with its wax Christ Child fastened to the topmost branch. On every side presents for the household were piled on tables and chairs. That this was a Catholic household, in spite of trouble and worldliness, was demonstrated by a creche which Amelie had arranged on a separate table, right under a picture of the Madonna. Involuntarily the mother lit the candles in front of the crib, and in another moment she was on her knees before the Divine Child, imploring the safe return of her own little one. 'I will be a better mother,' she said. 'Mother of Christ, pray for me. You who lost and found your only Son.'

So soundly did the children sleep that not even the soft undertone at the altar, and the rustle among the congregation, at the Midnight Mass, woke them. It was a young Jesuit Father who, coming to the creche for a last glance before retiring for a few hours' sleep, saw to his astonishment a small foot, followed by a black stockinged leg, suddenly appear from the depths of a pile of hay behind the Crib. He called another priest, and the two Fathers were presently gazing down at the sleeping children. The news of the lost child had reached them, and the church had been searched soon after nine o'clock, but to no purpose.

Very gently the sleeping bambini were awakened. In ten minutes, well wrapped up, they were carried through the wintry streets to the Walsh home, a block away. Five minutes earlier Henry Walsh had come home from a fruitless quest, to be greeted by a wife who seered the reincarnation of the woman he had wooed and won ten years ago.

There was a ring at the bell as the two stood in the hall. Before the butler could appear, the door was opened by the father. There was a flash of light on a golden head, as the long black cloak loaned by a good Jesuit Father, fell from the little one's shoulders, and father, mother, and child, were all locked in one embrace.

'Oh mother, dear, were you frightened? I went to church to pray for you at the Crib and got locked in, and then I went to sleep. But never mind. I have found a new sister, and I want her to live with me for ever and ever.'

How everyone talked, and how gently and lovingly the forlorn little stranger was welcomed to the reunited home!

'She shall live here and be our child, if you say so, Annie,' said Henry Walsh, and the mother, with happy tears in her eyes, assented. Had not the Christ Child and the Blessed Mother heard her prayers, and could she do less than adopt this child?

Four happy hearts assisted at Mass the next morning, and perhaps the happiest was the child who had found her Pearl of Great Price, the thrice-blessed little Margaret Mary.—*The Magnificat.*

HAIL FULL OF GRACE

Hail, virgin mother of a King—
Whose throne thou art;
Chaste daughter of thy Son divine,
Whose Sacred Heart

It's precious life-blood drew from thee,
Hail, full of grace!
Hail, mother of the Lord,
Who is with thee,

Plant courage in this heart of mine,
O pray for me;
God's angels' word I bring to thee,
Hail, full of grace!

REV H. B. TIERNEY.