

which begets contempt; it is of a different stamp. The National League, the Plan of Campaign, and boycotting, the energy, ability and heroism of the Irish leaders are as palpable and as vigorous as ever. Balfour may murder a dozen or two, or, for the matter of that, the whole of the members, but he cannot murder the whole race or the principle which actuates them. They are indestructible, and will continue to live, and flourish, and fructify when the whole bastard brood of the Cilas and Balfours will be consigned to the vile obscurity whence they sprung.

I R E N E.

(From Women.)

It was all settled. John and I were to be married in the autumn and I had received my mother's consent to my going to board in Philadelphia for a few weeks, to buy my trousseau. Irene de Berghem was to go with me, as she also—I never like to think of Irene's engagement—it seemed such a half-hearted affair.

Now, John and I had fallen in love with each other at first sight—met a few times on the skating pond, walked home together in the moonlight, and then, with the glad consent of all our relatives, concluded to take one another for better and for worse. But Irene—she was infinitely prettier than I—very emotional; very romantic; and her *fiance* was fifty years old, bald, and her father's most intimate friend. A "family arrangement," they called it and Irene, who, with all her love of fun and zest for life, was shy and timid, submitted to the extraordinary decree. It maddens me now, when I remember how those old people plotted to sell their child "all for her own good." But French people are so queer!

I was very glad that an old friend of my mother's, dear Mrs. Thayer, who was boarding in Philadelphia, had offered to take charge of us. It would be so much pleasanter to have her to consult with about shops and other things. Moreover, two young girls alone would be open to remarks, papa said. We were in fine spirits when we reached the "City of Brotherly Love." Mrs. Thayer met us and took us to her boarding place, where she had secured for us a cheerful, sunny little room, close to her own.

In a few days we felt at home; everyone was so kind, and all the people in the house were so pleasant. There was an old navy officer, who sat opposite to us at the table, and a young married couple, very much absorbed in one another; and in the rooms just beyond ours a brother and a sister lived—the brother young, fair, with a frank and winning smile; the sister older, stout, with calm, near-sighted eyes, and evidently deaf. Nice-looking you would have called them both. We often met in the narrow entry, and I noticed that the brother looked at Irene very intently, from under his apparently downcast eyelids on such occasions. Mrs. Thayer did not "know them to speak to"; they had come the day before we did, and the sister's deafness stood in the way of an acquaintance.

One morning, as we went down to breakfast, I noticed the brother's hat on the hall table, and girlish curiosity led me into the indiscretion of taking it up to see if his name was inside of it. Surely—both name and address stared me in the face. John Athlin, of Milton, Mass., my John's name, my cousin, I felt positive, for he had often spoken of him to me. Ah, yes, it was all quite clear to me now, but I would say nothing, only as time went by, mystify them a little just for the fun of doing so. I swore Irene over to secrecy, and we kept our own council; only I wrote to John, of course, and told him all about it.

I ought to tell you here that before we started from home Irene took off her engagement ring and hid it away in her desk.

"I want for once to feel free," she said, "to make believe free," and though it seemed to me to be a little whimsical on her part to talk so, as she had never openly rebelled against the marriage her parents had planned for her, I promised to speak to no one of her engagement, not even to tell dear Mrs. Thayer, why the young lady had so much shopping to do.

As the days went by I occasionally spoke of John to Irene at the table, loud enough for the other John to hear me. He always seemed absorbed in his thoughts, but one evening his sister spoke to us. "My brother," she said, "fancies that you are the Miss Forcythe who is engaged to his cousin, Mr. John Athlin, of Milton. When he heard you mention his name the other day, he wrote to his cousin Carrie, Mr. John Athlin's sister, and she—" We all burst into a laugh, for Carrie was my John's sister, of course.

After that we became quite intimate. Miss Athlin was a charming person, saving the deafness, and just old enough to make a delightful chaperon for us. Dear Mrs. Thayer was very content to let her assume the *role*, for to an elderly lady sight-seeing is generally a bore, and naturally, we wanted "to see everything," while in Philadelphia.

I was particularly glad to make her acquaintance, as my John had always spoken of her as his favorite cousin, so I generally contrived to walk with her, and Irene and the other John walked ahead of us, or behind us.

I was so much occupied with my shopping, my new friend, and my letters to and from home, that I paid very little heed to Irene, those leafy June days. She seemed as happy as a bird, was always ready to go anywhere, and wore her prettiest gowns every day. I often noticed at her neck or in her belt, flowers that my new friend's brother had given to her, but the idea that they meant anything never came into my head. Miss Athlin, however, it afterward appeared, was more observing; she must have noticed the growing delight of her John in the lovely girl's society. The young creatures, as I have since remembered, were very shy before us, and I often surprised the timid light-hearted Irene in a brown study.

I think that we four visited together every spot of interest in the Quaker City, even mounting to the roof of Girard College, where I well remember the care that John Athlin took of Irene, holding on to her slender arm, as if afraid that, having left the earth so far below her, she would leave it still further, and fly away from him altogether

into the blue of the sky. There is always a little worship in a young man's first love, I think, and Irene was his first love, as I have since learned.

One night we parted as usual, promising ourselves the pleasure of going to the navy yard the next day, under the escort of the old navy officer, who had persuaded Mrs. Thayer to join us on that excursion. Irene was unusually silent and abstracted, it seemed to me. She was a long time undressing, and a long time combing out her beautiful auburn hair.

Then she knelt down to pray, and I thought that I heard a stifled sob; but I was drifting into dreamland, and I may have been mistaken. When we all met at breakfast, I fancied that Miss Athlin looked almost sternly grave. A letter lay open beside her, and she frequently glanced from it to me, and from me to Irene.

We started for the navy yard, however, and were soon walking among the great guns and listening to the chip, chip, chip of the workmen who were busy on the huge skeleton ships, making them seaworthy. It was a beautiful bright day, and the water sparkled and shimmered in the sunshine. How it all comes back to me as I write!

I never knew quite when or how it happened, but Miss Athlin fell behind the rest of us with Irene, while I seemed left to the polite, if somewhat reluctant care of her brother. It went on so all through the morning, until we returned home. Then, glancing at Irene's face as she flew past me to our room, I felt convinced that something painful had taken place. I was going to follow her, when Miss Athlin laid her hand on my arm. It was a soft, dimpled hand, but its pressure was very firm, and I did not dare to resist the entreaty that its grasp conveyed to my mind.

"Will you come into my room for a moment?" she said pleadingly; her large near-sighted eyes raised with a reproachful wistfulness to mine. "I have something to say to you."

I followed her in some bewilderment, my heart throbbing uncomfortably.

"Sit down, will you?" She spoke with grave civility. "I am going away by the next boat for Boston, and I may not have another chance to tell you my side of the story. You must have seen, as I did, that my poor John was becoming infatuated with your little friend. Why did you not tell us that she is engaged to be married? I saw no ring on her finger, and she seemed so light-hearted, so childish, so different from a woman whose thoughts are occupied with love, that, until I received this morning a letter from my cousin Carrie, I had no idea of such a thing. It was cruel of you, Miss Forcythe—cruel of you, who are happy in your future prospects, to allow these poor children to wander into such a fool's paradise. A word to me in time might have saved them all this pain. Now there is only one course for us to pursue. I must tell John the truth, and we must leave here at once."

I burst into tears. I had grown to love the mild, fair gentlewoman who was sitting in judgment on my selfish carelessness.

"They will get over it in time," I sobbed. "They are so young."

"John will, no doubt, get over it in time," she answered gently; "but his feelings are very deep, and I would—oh, what would I not have done to spare him this disappointment!" And there was a quiver in her voice, and tears in those calm, near-sighted eyes that heretofore had seemed to me so passionless. "He is all that I have, and I am all that he has," she continued, half apologetically. "We have lost all the others. Now, I must go to him, so I will bid you good-bye; and—and—some day—say to Irene that I forgave her, and that I hope she will be happy."

Irene did not go downstairs again that day—nor did I. The next morning at breakfast, two empty seats confronted us, and it took all Irene's pride, and my conscious innocence, to enable us to look on them with composure. Dear Mrs. Thayer made some wild guesses as to the probable reason of our friends' sudden departure, and joked poor little Irene about her red eyes and pale cheeks.

"But it will all come right," chuckled the ignorant old lady. "I never saw in all my life a man more in love. Keep up your hearts, girls; we will soon have them back again. Why, I remember when Mr. Thayer—"

But why do I repeat all this foolish nonsense! It only turned the knife in my poor Irene's wound. She crept about in a scared sort of a way; her face as pale as a sheet, her hands as cold as ice; and I remember that she held on to my dress as we walked together that day, as if I could save her from something; from herself perhaps.

How am I to tell what happened next. A steamer run into at night. Eight passengers lost. Among them a Mr. and Miss Athlin, supposed to be brother and sister. Oh, the woe of it! Hardly out my sight, and gone so far—so far—beyond the reach of our humanity.

At first Irene was stunned; then followed days of tears and self-reproach; self-reproach that found an echo in every heart, alas! But by the time that our parents called us home, a dead, dull calm had fallen over our grief, and we resolved to keep silent—silent as the grave. Oh, the deep meaning of that expression to us! For what good could come of baring our hearts to the scrutiny of the world? "But some day I will tell John all about it," was my mental reservation. Irene, I felt sure, would remain dumb. My poor John mourned the loss of his cousins very sincerely. I had to listen to endless panegyrics on their virtues. Oh, they were, they truly were, most lovely in their lives; and it seems well to me that in death they were not divided, so dreary must it be to go on that longest of all journeys alone.

As the summer waned Irene caught a severe cold that settled on her lungs. She had not seemed as strong as usual through the warm weather; a trifle thin and pale and rather listless. Her wedding had to be put off, but John and I were married just as the frost set in. A few days before this great event took place I went to bid her good-bye. She was too ill for us to expect to see her at the church. A racking cough kept her confined to the house most of the time. She was sitting in her favourite chair by the window, and as soon as she saw me coming up the garden path she kissed her hand and