

to please her that none of her lessons were lost. In their evenings together she even began to educate him, taking down the shabby old books out of which she had picked up her own education, which somehow had never got lost in all her father's wanderings.

While he was out she did her housework. He would be up in the morning to light the fire for her and boil her kettle, always anxious to save her all he could. Kathleen had mocked at the idea of her sister-in-law, a lady born, living without a servant in a steward's cottage in the mountains. She had no idea of how much Muriel had learned to do for herself and her father in their pinching days together of those latter years on the Continent. She had not counted either, and had no knowledge indeed, of the English housewifely instinct, which is not only for the simple. Muriel knitting her delicate brows over a cookery-book, Muriel on her knees scrubbing out the long, boarded room, Muriel at the washing-tub, would have been a revelation to her.

Patrick never saw his wife at these employments. He always came home to find her cool and neat and delicate, ready for their lessons together, or to talk or play the piano to him after he had eaten the daintily-cooked meal which was a positive revelation to his palate.

Something of the happiness of the man found its way into his air. He was now not only strikingly handsome as he rode about his business, but he had a radiant air of perfect content, which made old people, bowing their backs under life's burdens, turn to stare after him as he went.

It was an ideal life so long as the fine weather and the good health lasted. But winter came, bringing dampness and draughts to the cottage, and swelling the mountain torrents and the rivers so that Patrick often forded them with difficulty; bringing storms, too, when the thunder roared and reverberated in the hills, and the lightning merced the lonely cottage, with its many little pinnacles, and was blue in the wooden rooms with their unshuttered windows.

It was terrible to Muriel when storms came and Patrick was out riding along the heavily-wooded roads, exposed to the fury of the lightning or the gale; and again when snow came and drifted in the valleys, and he was out on the hills, where the sheep were lambing, sometimes the length of the night.

And there were reasons why she should not be scared as she often was just now. There were reasons, too, why she should not work so hard, why, for instance, scrubbing the long rooms must not be thought of. Yet there was more necessity to work than ever, since Patrick coming in brought the snows and the heavy clay on his feet and clothing, and there had to be constant changes of garments ready for him when he came in half-numbed, and fires kept up. And every day she was less fit to do these things.

Already she felt heavy and paralysed. The time was coming when she could not attempt half her former tasks. And help, on fifty pounds a year, seemed out of the question. Patrick, pitying and tender, might serve her in a hundred ways; but there yet remained a hundred impossible other things to do.

Then came a worse matter, for Patrick, drenched to the skin in a sleety night, took a chill and developed pneumonia.

It was in the early days of his illness that a chance messenger brought Muriel a letter which had been lying for her at the distant post office for some weeks. With a leap of her heart she recognised one of those letters which used to make her father angelic in his temper for a day or two after their arrival. It had been addressed to him at the Spa House, and had been forwarded by Kathleen to her.

She opened the letter, and drew out the thin, rustling bank-notes—twenty five-pound notes—and looked at them, while the color deepened in her cheeks. She had been wondering how she was going to pay the doctor, and get the things which would be needed for Patrick; how she was going to provide the little things for the baby, as well as for herself.

She had been looking wistfully towards that two hundred pounds which Patrick had put away so safely. But she had been afraid to touch it, if, indeed, she could have touched it without Patrick's co-operation; and Patrick was lying tossing in a fever, his face purple, drawing breaths which were like sword thrusts in his lungs. That two hundred was all they had between them and the poorhouse if Patrick's illness was tedious and Colonel Denis grew weary of waiting and appointed a man in his place. Then, lo! and behold, here was a hundred pounds placed in her hands.

But, as she fingered this deliverance, her mind was agitated by a thousand delicate, over-strained scruples. The money had

not been sent to her. Could it be right to divert it to her own uses? To be sure, the sender would never forgive her the marriage she had made, any more than that that black sheep, George Crackenthorpe, would have forgiven her. She had no right to the money, she said to herself, with a pang at that second thought that her father would have been the last of all to forgive her.

The doctor came in unheard as she sat fingering the notes.

'Ah, they look comfortable,' he said kindly, without surprise, for he had seen that the steward's wife was a lady, and had pitied her for the mésalliance she had made. So her friends of old had not quite forgotten her.

'Take care of them,' he went on. 'You'll want them presently. We'll have to be getting this man of yours all sorts of things to pick him up. And you'll want care yourself, somehow to help you now. You've been doing too much.'

It seemed to be taken out of her hands. After all, would Aunt Henrietta, her godmother, grudge her the money that meant so much to her?

She took one of the thin notes and handed it to the doctor. He was a young man, with a wife and family, and he had come long distances in hard weather to attend on Patrick, without any very definite notion of being paid for his services.

He took the note now with an apologetic air.

'You owe me a very small fraction of this,' he said. 'I shall have a deal of change to bring you. As you are so very remote from a town, perhaps you would let me spend some of it in things you ought to have. There is a girl at one of the cottages I visit, a servant out of place, just come home. Let me send her to you.'

It was taken out of Muriel's hands. A second five pounds soon followed the first. The doctor's young wife bought Muriel the things for her baby, which she would not now have time to prepare. The doctor thought a trained nurse necessary for a case as grave as Patrick's. She had to be provided. Presently there would be the nurse for Muriel herself. Thus that hundred pounds did take wings to itself and fly!

Fortunately, Colonel Denis proved kind. He had paid a visit to his steward when he was at his worst, and had been impressed by his steward's wife. To be sure, Muriel had gained something by her love and marriage, something of charm, of elusive beauty, which not even her haggard anxiety had power to destroy. For the time, Colonel Denis put in a man to attend to the most pressing of Patrick's duties. There was no question of Patrick being superseded, none of that pound a week, which meant so much, being withdrawn.

More fortunately still, Patrick mended steadily, if slowly. Mild days of February came to help him. He was about the house again by the time the baby was born.

Before that happened Muriel had made her provision, as women do, against the chances of life and death. She had set her house in order lest she should be called away by stealth, lest Patrick should know the thing she dreaded.

She had few wrongs to right. And what bee in her bonnet made this gambler's daughter worry over that hundred pounds as though she had stolen it? It was perhaps because she was a gambler's daughter. Old George would have said that the girl had it from him. Who, indeed, was more fantastically honorable than he when it was a question of debts of honor? The gaming tables still remembered George Crackenthorpe as a gentleman.

Before she was taken ill she wrote her full confession to Miss Henrietta Crackenthorpe. She had been obliged to use the money, but it would be repaid, every penny of it, in time.

Not only was the hundred pounds gone, but by the time Muriel was about again with the baby some inroads had been made into the two hundred pounds. The servant had to be kept on. It was impossible that Mrs. O'Kelly could do housework and grow strong herself and attend to her maternal duties, said the doctor, remembering the hundred pounds, and calculating that Mrs. O'Kelly's friends would find money for her necessities.

(To be concluded.)

A Canterbury member of Parliament who was re-elected on Tuesday belongs to about 140 societies, and he says they cost him £1 a year each.

Messrs. Whitaker Bros., Wellington and Greymouth, notify our readers that their second supply of school prizes will be ready on November 30. Owing to a mistake, the above were sent by wrong steamer, hence the delay in arriving. Advices arrived too late to issue a list, but patrons may rely on getting a good selection by the best Catholic writers...