

eyes. Ah, lilies had no place in scenes like this, she felt with a dull, dead pang in her chilled heart. Their pure white bloom would soon tarnish in the garish light, they brought back to her hopes, dreams, visions that had dulled and darkened even as the lilies must in the world's fierce glare. And as she stood there, held by some sweet, mute reproach in their fragrance, there came a light step on the threshold. 'Lilian, dear, I have knocked three times. May I come in?'

'Miss Millicent.' The startled girl turned, feeling as if the lilies had suddenly found voice and word. 'Dear, dear, Miss Millicent; why, I thought—I heard—' and then her voice broke as she read confirmation of all she had feared on the wan, wasted, yet radiant face.

'That I was dying,' said the visitor brightly, as she grasped Miss Lorimer's outstretched hands. 'My dear, so I am. But I am not quite a ghost yet, though I look like one, no doubt.'

'Oh, no, no, no,' was the eager answer, and the girl drew her visitor to a low chair and sank down on a cushion at her feet. 'You look like your own dear, sweet self, sweeter and lovelier, if possible. But I heard such sad things about you that—that—' she broke off suddenly and questioned in lighter tone, 'When, where, how did you come here to-day?'

'The door stood open for the florist,' said Miss Millicent, 'and being half a ghost, I asked no questions, but fitted in. The maid told me you were here and I found you. I want your help, Lilian, dear,' the visitor went on simply, as if this reigning belle of two hemispheres was still the little sodality girl that had filled vases and trimmed tapers for her three years ago. 'To-morrow will be the feast of the Immaculate Conception.'

'To-morrow,' was the young lady's low answer. 'Ah, so it will. I—I had forgotten.'

'Forgotten!' echoed Miss Millicent. 'My little Child of Mary? Forgotten?'

'Aye, forgotten! all, everything,' was the sudden outburst and the proud golden head of the queenly beauty sank upon her visitor's knee.

'For how long, Lilian?' asked Miss Millicent, softly.

'Oh, months, years,' the speaker lifted her head and looked recklessly into her visitor's face. 'Don't ask me to remember, dear old friend. It is too late, too late.'

'Forgotten,' repeated the lady. 'You do not mean your faith, your Church, your God, Lilian?'

'Yes, yes; all, all,' was the quick answer. 'Don't let us talk of it; it is no use. I—I have made my choice. You cannot—you would never understand, never understand!'

Ah! yes, vaguely, dimly, as the light of some pure star struggled through the mist and vapors of earth. Miss Millicent understood.

She knew the call that had sounded in this young heart in the first sweetness of its springtime. She knew the upward path from which Lilian had turned to dally in the flowering ways, that for God's chosen ones lead into darkness and night. But with the clear insight of those in whom heaven's radiance is already breaking, she refrained from appeal or reproach.

'My poor, poor child,' was all she whispered; and Lilian lifted the frail hand, as if it were a holy thing, to her lips, and then spoke in another tone. 'Now, how can I help you, dear Miss Millicent? You want something good of me, I know. For your poor—your church—your altar. What, how much? Fleece this lost lamb of yours for all that you need.'

And again the reckless tone and word pierced the hearer's gentle heart. She had thought to find vanity, forgetfulness, some blinding, dazzling glamor that would pass with the sobering years, but not darkness, abandonment like this.

'No,' said Miss Millicent, putting aside the silver-lined purse that Lilian dropped in her lap. 'For once money does not count. I have come to beg some of

your lilies for our Lady's altar to-morrow. You have taken them all for your feast to-night, Lilian.'

'Taken them all! all the lilies for my feast to-night,' echoed the girl in a startled tone. 'All the lilies.' The thought seemed to stir some long-slumbering depths in the speaker's heart.

'Oh, Miss Millicent, dear Miss Millicent—what a wretch I must seem. To take all the lilies for my vanity, my folly.'

'You did not know, dear,' was the gentle answer. 'I was sure you did not know. You will give me some for our Lady's altar; and it is only a sick woman's fancy, but I feel as if I would like you to bring them yourself, and fill the vases as you used to long ago. It won't keep you more than an hour, dear—and for me—it will be the last time—Lilian, the last time.'

'Oh, Miss Millicent, dear Miss Millicent, no, no,' cried the girl brokenly.

'The last time,' was the sweet, grave answer. 'You know it, dear. I know it. If I could only leave you as I once hoped—a lily among the lilies, dear.'

'Oh, my God! if you could, if you could!' was the cry that burst from Lilian's lips as she flung her arm despairingly about the frail form and hid her tears on Miss Millicent's breast. 'But I have strayed too far; too long.'

'It is never too far or too long,' was the low-breathed answer, and the heart upon which Lilian leaned leaped with a joy divine. 'Come back among the lilies and see—'

* * * * *

Again soft, sweet voices were murmuring in the sacristy as girlish hands busied themselves with tapers and flowers for the Easter altar.

'Dear Miss Millicent,' whispered Doris sadly, 'I feel as if she were watching us from heaven to-day. The altar will be beautiful enough to please her, I am sure—Lilian Lorimer will take care of that. She has just sent a wagon load of lilies.'

'Her last Easter offering to St. Martin's,' said Father Brady, with a smile.

'Oh, Father!' was the dismayed chorus, for Miss Lorimer had been a busy worker for the altar all the winter.

'She is not—not going to marry the English lord after all—'

'No,' was the cheery answer.

'She is going to do something very much better. It is no longer a secret, for she entered the Convent of the Cenacle this morning—thank God.'—*Church Progress.*

Cardinal Pietro Gasparri, the new Papal Secretary of State, is regarded as a man distinguished for his knowledge of Canon Law. An Italian by birth, and for many years closely in touch with the Vatican, the successor to the late Cardinal Ferrata was a member of the Supreme Tribunal of the Segnatura Apostolica, under Pope Pius X. He was raised to the College of Cardinals in 1907. The political adviser of Pope Benedict XV. was born in 1852. Before the Conclave in September Cardinal Gasparri was spoken of as a likely occupant of the Papal Chair.

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