

line bidding him come to see her in the afternoon. Of course he obeyed the summons, though he was sure that during the appointed interview he should hear of his dismissal. He suffered acutely at the thought of parting from Caroline, and he now realised the full extent of the sacrifice he had made. Nevertheless, he was convinced that he could never have acted otherwise, and that if the ordeal were to be repeated he must do as he had done. He stopped at the florist's, and ordered a particularly choice bouquet of roses for Caroline, thinking bitterly that they might be the last he should ever send. Other men were in the shop buying flowers for other women, and he wondered, as he looked at them, if any amongst them were so sorely tried as he had been.

When he reached the Woodward mansion the plate-glass windows seemed to stare at him coldly from their polished surfaces, as the world would stare, Arthur thought, at an unsuccessful man. The palatial mansion frowned as though he in his poverty had no right to approach, and the ornolu clock, ticking away the minutes, whilst he waited amongst the gorgeous furnishings of the drawing-room, seemed to taunt him with his insignificance.

Caroline came down presently, advancing to meet her lover with both hands outstretched, eagerly, effusively, with the light of a genuine welcome in her eyes. Arthur wondered how he could ever give her up or tell the news, which would be a death-blow to his hopes. He began the ungrateful task conscientiously, trying to make his meaning clear without compromising others. Caroline listened with downcast eyes, and the young lover thought, as lovers have thought since the world began, that surely never more charming being was wooed by mortal man.

'Do you care for me so very much?' Caroline asked, when Arthur paused in his recital.

'Oh, darling!' he cried, and his mouth that had been so sternly set during the contest of the previous day quivered pitifully; 'you know that I do.'

'Yet you threw away the chance of making a fortune, which would have won me.'

Arthur felt that this was the most agonising trial of all. He could brace himself against the hardness of the board directors, the coarse invectives in which a few had indulged, their railery, their contempt, their denunciations; but Caroline, in her beauty and charm, armed for conquest, was another sort of adversary, against whom his strength seemed in vain.

'I am trying to explain, Carrie,' he cried desperately, 'that the secret was too hard to learn after all, and that I found it was not so easy to make millions in a hurry.'

'You found, in short,' commented Caroline, from the depths of the chair wherein she was ensconced, 'that you were willing to give me up.'

'God knows I would rather give up everything else,' explained Arthur.

'Except,' added the girl, with a little laugh, 'your scruples.'

'My honesty,' corrected Arthur curtly; 'but it is a difficult matter for you to understand, and one which it is little use discussing.'

'I believe you want to get rid of me,' declared Caroline, gazing up at her lover with eager, wistful eyes. The look that Arthur turned upon her and the choking voice in which he strove to protest would have convinced the most cynical. Caroline enjoyed her triumph and the delight with which she heard his confession in a thoroughly feminine manner. The flush that rose to her cheeks and the light to her eyes were perilous; indeed, to poor Arthur, whom she on her part found the more attractive, that he made this gallant stand against her influence.

'I suppose it isn't too late,' she exclaimed, half jest, whole earnest, 'to go back and tell them that, as you wanted to marry a very extravagant girl, you must just this once do like other men.'

Arthur's breath came quickly. The splendid apartment became as the board-room had done, upon the previous day, close and stifling, and while he felt the fascination of this modern siren, he was conscious of a sense of disappointment. Surely she, too, should have seen the matter as he did, and he might have expected her to aid him in his upward struggle.

Yet when he looked into the eager, childish face, and met the pleading eyes, he softened towards her. It was because, he told himself, that she could not know, did not understand, that she thus played the role of tempter. It was to Arthur's credit, however, that he never wavered in his determination. He was, as a knight, clad in impregnable armor. He merely answered her gently:

'Don't let us argue, dearest. I quite understand that you could not marry a poor man, and you must always remember that I don't blame you for giving me up.'

'It is you who are giving me up, Arthur,' protested the girl, 'and of your own accord.'

'It is like parting with the best part of my own life,' Arthur responded; 'I have loved you, Carrie, ever since I was a little chap going off to college, and you—' He stopped, overcome by the recollection of a little white-robed figure, with blossom trimmed hat, which had waved him a farewell.

'I was just a mite,' Caroline said, and her voice was low and thrilling with a strong emotion; 'I used to think you such a splendid fellow, and I believe I began to love you then.'

Arthur caught at this admission eagerly, joyfully, as a ray of light in the darkness; the next moment he stiffened

and pulled himself together. He had no right even to hear such an avowal, and he must at all hazards subdue his beating heart and leaping pulses. To Caroline he seemed a very attractive figure, as he stood thus, with the new manliness and determination in his bearing and the signs of the recent conflict in his worn and haggard face. She could not help thinking that he was different from the painted simulacra of men she met every day in drawing-rooms, or those gilded toilers in the financial market-place, whose triumphs were entirely material, and who lacked the moral fibre. She rose from her place, trembling, blushing with a new ardor and a new admiration, and confronted Arthur where he was making his last stand, grasping the back of a Sheraton chair for support. There was something as noble as it was pathetic in his dumb acceptance of defeat, uttering no complaint of the agony which the conflict had cost him.

Caroline extended her hand, and Arthur, feeling that it was in farewell, braced himself to take it in both his own and speak the irrevocable words of parting. There was an interruption, the door was thrown open, and Arthur heard the genial, hearty voice of Mr. Woodward himself. The young man's heart sank, he felt scarcely equal to any further contest, and he had lost those last few minutes with Caroline.

Mr. Woodward, slapping Arthur on the back and seizing his hand in a vice-like grasp, cried: 'I'm glad to find that you are your father's son, and as I told this little girl here I don't care how soon your engagement is announced now.' 'But, but,' stammered Arthur, 'I am a poor man.' 'Poverty, be d—d. You've got the sort of grit I want in a son-in-law.'

Arthur turned his eyes upon Caroline, bewildered, expectant, reproachful, as he realised that she had been merely playing with him and trying his mettle, ashamed, too, that he had ever doubted her; and Caroline, half laughing and half crying, still held out her hand.—Anna T. Sadlier, in the *Montreal Tribune*.

## OLD IRISH SILVER

Old Irish silver plate is one of the most coveted objects in the modern curio world, and examples bearing the 17th and 18th century hall marks always excite keen bidding when they enter the auction room (says the *London Globe*). Prices are steadily going up, and as long as people collect it is unlikely that there will be any depreciation. This rage for antique silver of Irish manufacture is due partly to its scarcity and partly to its beautiful workmanship.

A guild of goldsmiths was established in Dublin in the 15th century, but it did not obtain a charter till 1687, when the crowned harp was ordered as the standard mark. From 1688 to 1730 three stamps were in use—viz. (1) the harp crowned, (2) the date letter, (3) the maker's mark, or initials. In 1730 a fourth mark was added—viz., the figure of a woman in a sitting position, with her left arm resting on a harp and her right stretched out and holding an olive branch, called 'Hibernia.' Strictly speaking, this was a duty mark to signify the new duty of sixpence per ounce. These four stamps were increased to five in 1807, when the sovereign's head was added to denote the raising of the duty to a shilling. The mark 'Hibernia' was not withdrawn with the sovereign's head when the duty ceased in 1890.

Cork, Limerick, and Youghal also claimed the privilege to assay during the 17th and 18th centuries. Youghal received authority by charter, but not the others. A goldsmith's guild was formed at Cork in 1656, and the society adopted as its mark a five-masted galleon, set between two others, each representing a castle with a flag-staff, which appeared in shields following the outline of the emblem. This was changed in the early part of the next century for the mark 'sterling,' which continued to be used up to the century's close. In 1773 an assay office and particular marks—viz., the harp crowned with a har across the strings—were granted to a village called New Geneva, near Waterford, in order to encourage a colony of Swiss Protestant refugees. The Genevese were mostly watch-makers or goldsmiths.

The early Irish silversmiths were magnificent craftsmen, and took a peculiar pride in their work. Both the Dublin and Cork guilds were of the highest standing and integrity, so much so that many of the leading families apprenticed their younger sons to those societies. The earliest known pieces of Irish silver comprise church plate, tankards, civic maces, candles, tumblers and loving cups, punch bowls, pap boats, and trencher salts. Connoisseurs are, however, most enamoured of the bell-shaped cups with harp-shaped handles, the tailed spoons, and, above all, the famous potato rings. The latter form an absolutely unique ornament, being a circular stand on which was placed the wooden bowl containing the vegetable, in order to prevent damage to the mahogany.

Many of the rings were most elaborately and beautifully pierced, and chased with repousse work to represent pastoral subjects. The rings weigh from nine ounces to twenty ounces, and they are thought to have cost originally about £10 apiece. For some years now they have been fetching in the salesroom from £10 to £15 per ounce, and their average value at the present day may be estimated at £140.