

'Then it is Ned?' Annie said, interrogatively.

'And we so proud of him,' Mrs. Murphy admitted. 'Maybe, God knows, too proud. Sure he took in the learning like anything, and got the situation in the bank by his own cleverness entirely.'

'I know.' Annie had often heard how Ned Murphy had obtained the position of clerk in Marchant's Bank at a competitive examination.

'And now,' Mrs. Murphy threw out her hands widely, 'he's a thief, a common thief!'

'Nonsense,' Annie remarked.

'But he is,' Mrs. Murphy produced a handful of sovereigns from her pocket, 'Look! I found them in his drawer!'

'Perhaps Ned has been saving up. Perhaps he is thinking of marriage.'

'That's it,' Mrs. Murphy assented emphatically, 'that's it. Sure, he must go and see Miss Kate Early every night. And the boxes of chocolates he buys and the time he takes dressing! I used to be able to iron his collars and cuffs, but now they must go to the laundry, if you please.'

'But why do you think Ned stole the money?'

'Didn't I hear him and young Nolan, that's another clerk in the bank, talking last night?' Mrs. Murphy was definite at length. 'There was a deficiency of forty pounds yesterday,' she produced in a whisper, 'and there is going to be an inquiry into the matter to-morrow. And Ned had forty sovereigns that he had no right to have. I asked him did he know anything of the missing money, and he said he did.'

'I can't believe Ned took the money.'

Mrs. Murphy ignored the observation.

'What I want you to do, Miss Annie, is to take this money to the manager who is also the junior partner. He lives at Hampstead. See, here's the address, Oaklawn. Tell him it was the son of a poor widow that was tempted to take it because he wished to have a home and wife.'

'Me!' Annie was startled into the objective.

'Oh, yes,' Mrs. Murphy said imploringly, 'you can speak to a gentleman as he ought to be spoken to, which I can't. And any one would guess I was Ned's mother anyhow. We're just alike, the two of us.'

'Oh, dear!' Annie said, but she had long ago learned to respect Bridget's wishes and the habit was telling. Besides she wished to save Ned from the consequences of his folly or crime.

'I suppose I had better go at once,' she said presently. 'It is a long way to Hampstead.'

'You'll take a taxi cab,' Mrs. Murphy said, 'and I'll pay the fare.'

Annie was drawing on the coat which she had cast off on a chair, and Mrs. Murphy secured the sovereigns in a pocket handkerchief and thrust them into a hand-bag.

'Oh, God bless you, Miss Annie; God bless you!' she cried. 'You have taken a load off my heart.'

The junior partner of Marchant's Banking Company was descending the wide stairs of Oaklawn preparatory to entering the dining-room when there came a loud insistent ring at the door. John Probyn paused on the last step. He was a bachelor and had no relatives, and his callers out of office hours were few.

'I wonder who that is,' he said and then moved toward the outer door and threw it open. A lady entered unhesitatingly.

'I wish to see Mr. —,' she began, and stopped. She did not know the name of the junior partner. 'I mean the manager of Marchant's Bank.'

'Annie!' said Mr. Probyn. 'Miss Merton!'

'O-h!' Annie gasped. 'I did not know. I did not suppose'— The two stood staring at each other and both thought of their last meeting. It had taken place in the hall of the country house near Brookfield in the days when Mr. Merton was thought to be a wealthy man and Annie was looked upon as an heiress. John Probyn had ventured to remark and condemn the frequency with which Annie had danced with a certain officer, and Annie had answered that it wasn't necessary that he should approve. The two young people had parted in anger. John had soon after

gone to an office in London to ruminate on the fickleness and inconsistency of woman, and Annie had later enough to occupy her. When John Probyn next visited that neighborhood, Mr. Merton was dead, his property was in the hands of his creditors, and Annie had disappeared.

'I have come,' Annie said at length, 'on a business matter. There has been some money missing from the bank.'

'Won't you come in here?' John threw open the dining-room door absently, just as a maid servant came leisurely up the kitchen steps, then retreated precipitately to inform her fellow servants that there was a lady in the dining-room.

Annie produced the pocket handkerchief and the sovereigns, and began to explain. Mr. Probyn interrupted.

'Oh, that's all right,' he said. 'Yes, there was a sum of money missing; but one of the clerks, Edward Murphy, gave me a hint as to the person who took them. His name was Nolan. He had been gambling a bit, but he gave Murphy the money back. Oh, it is all right. There shall be neither prosecution nor inquiry, and Nolan shall stop backing horses. Murphy has the forty pounds in safe keeping.'

'I'll never forgive Mrs. Murphy nor myself,' Annie told herself wrathfully, as she returned to Maycourt street. 'What an utter idiot John Probyn must think me.'

But John Probyn was at that time thinking very different things. He was counting up the number of years that had gone by since he and Annie had parted in anger; and wondering why Annie had remained unmarried. She answered that question for him a few weeks later.

'Why didn't I marry!' she said. 'Oh, well, you see, John, I was in love with you.'—*Magnificat.*

WEDDING BELLS

O'SULLIVAN—MORRISON.

A wedding of more than local interest was celebrated by the Rev. Father Fay at St. Mary's Church, Blenheim, on August 6, the contracting parties being Mr. George Winefride O'Sullivan, of the permanent staff New Zealand Defence Forces and Regimental Sergeant-Major of the 13th Infantry Regiment, son of Mr. John O'Sullivan, of Blenheim, and Miss Margaret Mary Morrison, elder daughter of Mr. William Morrison, also of Blenheim. The bride, who was given away by her father, looked charming in a handsome dress of creme crepe de chene over taffeta silk, trimmed with silk and pearl embroidery, and wore a veil and orange blossoms. She carried a bouquet of lilies, Christmas roses, and maiden-hair fern. The bridesmaids were Miss Mary Morrison (sister of the bride), and Miss Alice O'Sullivan (sister of the bridegroom). Each wore a pearl and garnet bangle, gifts of the bridegroom. Mr. F. O'Sullivan and Mr. T. J. Morrison acted as best man and groomsmen respectively. The Rev. Father Fay was the celebrant of the Nuptial Mass. The church was tastefully decorated by the Sisters of the Convent of Mercy, the bride and bridegroom being old pupils. As an offertory Miss Frances Morrison, L.A.B. (cousin of the bride) sang the 'Pateroster,' and later Bordese's 'O Salutaris.' The 'Wedding March' was played by Miss McCabe. Subsequently a reception was held at the residence of the bride's parents, Weld street, where a handsome display of presents was on exhibition. These included several cheques, as well as a beautiful marble clock from the non-commissioned officers of Area Group No. 11, to which the bridegroom is attached, and a handsome barometer from the 10th Mounted Regimental Band. Both were suitably inscribed. The bride's travelling dress was a brown tweed costume, with hat to match. She also wore a beautiful set of furs, the gift of the bridegroom. Mr. and Mrs. O'Sullivan left by the afternoon train for Picton, *en route* to the North Island, where the honeymoon was spent, prior to settling in their new home in Rangiora.