

right to probe old wounds. Then suddenly she had decided—she left the broom and the sweeping just as it was—left the boarders to take care of themselves—while she went to Helen, remaining till the end. Jack was with his brother, but absorbed in caring for Helen, Mollie scarcely noticed the two men.

Afterward Mollie went back to her boarding house and lean, wearisome years followed, of skimping, drudging, striving to make ends meet. Her location ceased to be desirable—so her best-paying boarders left, necessitating less expensive food. The house, heavily mortgaged, was at last sold over her head. In four weeks she must give possession, when she would be penniless as well as homeless. But confidently, fervently, Mollie prayed to the Sacred Heart of Jesus that she would find work before the month ended. She was strong, she knew there was plenty of work she was capable of, if only she could find it. But alas,—no one really wanted Mollie now, for the simple reason that she was old. Desperately she wondered if the Little Sisters of the Poor would be her fate. Well, hadn't she always admired the Sisters and held their lives as Heaven on earth?

Jack Brown's letter came just in time to save her. Would she be his housekeeper? He lived with his mother, who had now become an invalid; already incompetent housekeepers had tried his patience severely. There was a cook, so Mollie would not find the work too strenuous—if she cared to come he would, of course, pay her fare. Was ever clearer, more direct answer to prayer? Jack had known nothing of Mollie's difficulties; it would not have occurred to him to associate such unpleasant affairs with the strong, capable character he believed her; he had simply turned to her because he knew she would take proper care of his beloved home.

It was a beautiful, old-fashioned country house over which Mollie was given full charge. She loved it at once, slipping into her place as housekeeper as though into something made especially for her. Jack was well pleased, for he was saved from all those worrisome trifles which before had irked him severely.

It was some weeks after Mollie's arrival. Jack Brown, having finished a particularly satisfactory breakfast, put aside the morning paper with an air of decision, and went outside where Mollie was trimming the roses.

"Miss Maloy," he said with cheerful unpreparedness, "I've been wondering if you'd care to marry me?"

He could see she was startled, and he went on hurriedly and wistfully: "You must know I've always liked you—and you've always been friendly to me. Why shouldn't we marry, then?"

Mollie hesitated, her pensive glance taking in all her surroundings: the rose garden, the big trees, the rambling old-fashioned house. At a word from her these precious things could become her own, become home—that was the word of all others which held most allurements for Mollie. Then she shook her head. "We are too old, Mr. Brown."

"But we are not very old," he maintained obstinately, "and as my wife, your position would be much better, socially."

"Yes," she acknowledged, "but that is no reason for marriage."

"You mean, I take it, for marrying me," he said bitterly, "if it were Dick your answer would be different." All these years he had restrained his jealousy of Dick, but now he was giving it full play. "I believe you are still fond of him—you prefer him to me!"

Mollie, being one of the kindest people in the world, did not smile as she contemplated the irate, bald-headed old bachelor, inclined to stoutness and shortness of breath, yet behaving like an exceptionally foolish young lover. Instead she spoke very gently, desiring that he understand just how things were with her. "No, Mr. Brown, I do not prefer your brother to you. Once I was very fond of him; but of late years I seem to care only for the good God, and any of His creatures in need of help or kindness."

So they shook hands and things went on as before. Shortly after, the letter came from Ireland, telling of Mollie's legacy, some forgotten relative had left her "a little something"—three thousand dollars—and Mollie's joy was boundless. She was rich now—or would be, till she could spend the money. She had made friends in the small country town near the Brown home—among them a kind-hearted lawyer, who at once endeavored to rescue Mollie's money—from herself: It was her patriotic duty to take some government bonds; also she must allow them to mature. If she attempted to dispose of them before maturity she would embarrass the government by depreciating the bonds' value. "You owe something to this country," the lawyer assured her gravely, "as you have made a good living here for many years."

Mollie agreed enthusiastically, thrilled and delighted that she could thus personally uphold the United States,—but she kept a thousand dollars just to spend.

"Investing in bonds, Miss Maloy will have something saved when she gets too old for active work," the lawyer explained to Jack Brown, "though it's likely some 'down and out' may yet entice the money from her."

Mr. Brown nodded. "Yes, she ought to hold on to it, though I have provided for her in my will—if I die first she will be all right."

One day Mollie Maloy, radiant, pleased as a child with a new toy, having obtained leave of absence from Mr. Brown, went back to the big city whence she had come, to spend her thousand dollars. She needed some new clothes—indeed she had prepared a long list of clothes and other things she must buy—but they were not all for herself. First she looked up the O'Neill family, former neighbors of hers; the children were provided with new shoes and a warm shawl bought for the old grandmother. The Burkes for once in their lives had a square meal. It was a thrilling experience, this having of a purse, full to the brim, and with dollars rather than cents, as basis for spending; yet it went with lightning swiftness. Almost in a panic, Mollie remembered her intention of buying something for herself. She must get a pretty waist at least—otherwise she could not face Mr. Brown.

Arrived at a department store, Mollie was directed to the floor kept exclusively for "blouses." The word alarmed Mollie somewhat. Blouses to her meant cute little wide-collared waists worn by small boys. Had inexorable fashion decreed that all the world wear them now? Soon she was undeceived—a blouse meant a waist, of any kind, from the severe tailored style to shimmering sleeveless drapery. With a sigh of happiness she found them on all sides of her. Mollie explained to an attentive salesgirl that she wanted a waist suitable for evening. "Something light, but not too gay," she said firmly, even as her eyes dwelt hungrily on a blue georgette creation, embroidered in tiny pink rosebuds. "We have that pattern in white," the girl said. "I'll show it to you—it will just suit your type."

She opened a box and the white one fascinated Mollie—but would it stand any washing? The girl acknowledged it would not, and suggested dry cleaning. "You'd look lovely in it," she said, and held the waist against Mollie, experimentally. Miss Maloy put it at arm's length, viewing it critically. Then her eyes rested on a black satin, further down the line. Would that be more suitable for a person of her age? I believe I'll look at some others before deciding," she told the salesgirl, and forthwith viewed the black blouse at all angles, only to decide it was too sombre for evening. As she turned away the girl of the georgettes approached. "Did you decide to take the white blouse?" she asked.

"Not quite," Mollie returned, "I see a grey over there I want to look at."

"If you decide on the white one you will let me know?" the girl suggested, a shade of anxiety in her tone.

"O certainly," Mollie returned, but she had met her fate in the grey—pretty, and not so perishable as the georgettes. As she turned from the counter, after arranging to have the "blouse" sent parcel post, the first salesgirl again approached. "You decided on the white?" she said pleasantly. "Shall I have it wrapped for you?"

"Why, no," Mollie faltered. Evidently the sale meant something to this girl, but she simply could not buy two waists, and she walked toward the door in some haste. The girl walked with her. Mollie was puzzled as she became aware that some of the other girls seemed to be observing her with exaggerated interest. Were they exceptionally curious, or friendly? It must be the latter. At the door she turned and beamed on them all. "Good-bye, girls," she said. It was impossible to doubt Mollie's honesty.

The girl at her side giggled. "You have the white blouse on your arm," she told her, and a gale of merriment swept the whole department at Mollie's surprised discomfiture. Then she laughed heartily herself.

Let us leave you now, Mollie Maloy of the good heart—making friends of these girls; leave you in happiness, comfort, your joy in giving, spending—while the clouds have lifted, the storm abated, and the sun shines brightly on your life as you deserve.

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