

BE CONSTANT. BY CAROLINE A. MASON.

Be like the sun, that pours its ray To glad and glorify the day. Be like the moon, that sheds its light To bless and beautify the night.

REAPING THE WHIRLWIND. A NOVEL.

BY MARY ELOISE COMBS.

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CHAPTER IV.

A Winter's morning, cold and desolate. The rain was falling, not in drops, but in blinding sheets, freezing as it fell, producing a stinging sleet that was almost unbearable.

Standing on the marble steps that lead into one of the fashionable club-houses, were two persons engaged in rather a heated controversy—a match-girl and an over-dressed serving-man.

"If you would only let me stand just here! It is so cold out there that the gentlemen will not stop, and I must sell something to-day."

"But I tell you, you shan't! Why, to-morrow we'd have every beggar in the city crowded in here. Now, go!"

He spoke angrily. He had left a comfortable fire and chair twice before during the morning to drive her away therefrom.

A small yellow dog came bounding up the steps and yawning at his feet.

"Don't you know any better than to run out in the street a morning like this? Why, you are cold and wet."

He was one-out of how many men?—that would give shelter to a dog and turn a woman into the street on a cheerless morning.

The man led the dog along the hall toward a half-open door, through which it disappeared. Then he returned once more to the scene of conflict at the entrance.

"Are you going to move, I say?" "Yes, I'm going."

The girl folded her small, faded shawl around her shoulders, and turned to go down the steps. She had turned so quickly that she struck violently against a man, who, with head bent and his hat drawn over his eyes, had started up the stairs two steps at a time.

"Oh, excuse me!" "It's nobody but me."

The singular reply arrested the man's steps. He looked back at the girl on whom ordinarily he would not have bestowed a second thought.

"Are you so accustomed to being knocked down that you expect it?" "Almost, sir."

"Humph! There's no use trying to sell matches a morning like this. Go back home. 'Tisn't decent weather for even a brute to be out."

"Harmon! Harmon!" the man muttered to himself. "I never knew anybody by that name, and yet I could swear that I have seen that face before."

"Will you buy some matches this morning, sir?" Her words were addressed to a young man, who, unseen by the man inside, had ascended the steps.

"Matches!" said the man, looking into the wet basket. "Do you sell a wringer and dryer with each bunch?" "No, sir."

"You don't? That's an oversight on your part." Then, stepping inside: "Hello! St. Claire."

"Good-morning, De Guerry." "It's nothing of the sort! It's beastly!" contradicted Jack, sententiously.

"James!" De Guerry called the servant, who had long ago become tired of the conversation between St. Claire and the match-girl and withdrawn to the room where he sent the dog.

"Here, James!" "The man appeared, moving slowly and deliberately. "What's your hurry? I could have waited while you put on a few more rings and chains."

St. Claire commenced to replace his hat and overcoat. James, who was only about half awake, thought De Guerry had called him to put on St. Claire's wraps, so he assisted him officiously, while Jack stood watching the performance.

"Did you say that you were going with him, Mr. De Guerry?" "Oh, yes! I said I was going to church, to pray to be delivered from the temptation to kill you."

St. Claire listened in astonishment. "De Guerry, I think that you are out of temper this morning."

"Then you are mistaken. I am in temper, the worst temper you ever saw!" By this time James understood that he was to remove the gentleman's outer wraps.

The "fellows" who were standing at the windows looking out in the storm saw St. Claire start out at a rapid pace in the same direction from which he came.

Jack did not ask questions himself, and he usually succeeded in silencing anyone who did. Meg had left the steps as soon as Jack had summoned her persecutor, and went slowly along the street crying her matches.

"Where is St. Claire going?" "He is going to a picnic," Jack answered, as he picked up a paper and settled himself to read.

"Then you do want some matches, after all?" The man silently handed her a piece of silver and put the matches she gave him in his pocket, not without some secret misgivings as to the probable result.

"No," answered the girl, laconically. "This was certainly an unpropitious beginning."

"You don't like them well enough to be a nurse for a rich man's child?" questioned St. Claire. "Yes," answered Meg, again in the same decisive manner.

"Has this 'Princess' any claim on you?" "I live there." "Would she let you leave?" "Yes, and be glad."

"Would you leave her and take the place I speak of if I can get it for you?" "To take care of a child—a clean child?" "Yes," answered St. Claire, gravely.

"Would I? Oh, sir, I would work like a slave for it!" The girl's face lit up with a glow that seemed to warm it into new life.

St. Claire took note-book and pencil from his pocket and wrote down the directions as the girl gave them to him, saying, as he did so: "I didn't know that there was such a place in the city."

"Oh, sir, I am afraid you can't find it. Let me come to you." "I can find it. I wish to see the 'Princess' and have some understanding with her."

talking to the girl, and they put their own construction on the matter. And, notwithstanding what is said of women, men are not usually very charitable in their judgment of each other's faults when speaking to other men.

St. Claire called a cab, and was taken to Wycliffe's office. Without any unnecessary delay, St. Claire explained the entire affair, telling his friend that he had heard him say that he wished to get some one to replace the inefficient Jeje, and that Meg had two things in her favor—capacity and a desire to please.

"I will tell you, St. Claire, I would like to oblige you. You are the only person of my acquaintance, I think, who would dare to make such a proposition to me. I have no faith whatever in the honesty of street waifs."

St. Claire thanked him heartily, and promised it should be as he requested, or the girl should not be mentioned again.

"All right, then. I will give her a trial, and see how good a judge of character you are." There was nothing said to the mother.

St. Claire had even more difficulty than he had anticipated in finding Meg's home. Some writer has said: "Home is not the space between four square walls in which we live; but 'tis where affection prompts and love performs unselfish acts."

St. Claire entered an alley filled with dirt and filth of every kind, from which the noisome vapors were so sickening that he covered his aristocratic nose with his handkerchief.

About a dozen ragged little lumps, youthful representatives of the genus homo, turned their attention to St. Claire and hailed his appearance with jeers, obscenity and derisive laughter.

After mounting to the third story, he halted before the nearest door and knocked repeatedly. It was finally opened by a bold-faced woman attired in a gaudy paper-silk dress of a bright red color, trimmed in gold lace.

She moved aside for St. Claire to enter the room, which did not look nearly so bare or uncomfortable as the location would lead one to suppose.

"Is Meg at home?" "Yes. Come in." She moved aside for St. Claire to enter the room, which did not look nearly so bare or uncomfortable as the location would lead one to suppose.

The floor was naked and black with the accumulated dirt of ages past, but there were several pieces of carpet laid here and there, and a rug which had once been elegant. The chairs were all safe, if not comfortable, and St. Claire seated himself and looked around for Meg.

"Meg told me that you're going to git her a place to take care of a child."

"Well, I can't let Meg go, you see. I've hed her ever since her ma died. I've gone to all the expense of dressing her and boarding her, and she hes never brought me in a cent till lately."

"The girl is no relation to you?" "Relation? I should think not! Why, I belong to one of the highest families in England; but I can't prove it yet. I will some day, though. Why, I'm a Princess!"

"Indeed! England should never allow her nobility to wander off to the wilds of America. How long has Meg's mother been dead?" "Over eight years. Meg was six years old when she died. I've hed all the care of Meg all these years. I've dressed her and boarded—"

"Not that I knows on. But I've been parents and relations to her, and she hes cost me heaps of money. I've dressed her and boarded—"

"I have, sir, for her board and clothes for eight years." "And how much may that be?" "I haven't counted it up yet, sir, but I will. And, my Lord—excuse me for saying 'my Lord,'

but you see we do that at home. As I was saying, if I should open my heart to part with dear Meggie—for I have no doubt it would be for her own good, now that I am a wanderer from the castles of my posterity—if by your winning words I would consent to let her go, for a while, would her wages be enough for her to pay me for the care I hev given her?"

"Madam, she would receive no wages for the present—only her board and clothes. And if she goes, you must give her up forever. You will never see her again."

"I will pay you a reasonable amount, madam, on condition that you give up all right and title in her."

"I can't do it, sir. 'Twould not be fair to Meg, because, you see, my Lord, I hev promised Meg that when I get to be a great—"

St. Claire rose wearily, and replied, quietly: "Very well. I presume I shall not meet with much difficulty in finding a person more suited for the position, and without an incumbrance in the form of a royal Princess."

The woman failed to understand the latter part of his answer, but she saw he was going to leave without Meg, and without paying that board bill, which probably no one else would ever offer to assume.

St. Claire looked straight at her and replied, concisely: "I will give you five hundred dollars if you allow Meg to leave this house to-day and never attempt to see her or hold any communication with her again."

He saw the woman's eyes gleam and a crafty smile cross her lips as he named the amount so far in excess of her greatest expectations. But she endeavored to hide her surprise as she answered, in well-feigned astonishment:

Both turned at the sound of the interfering voice, and saw Meg standing there with folded hands, lips tightly set, the light of a new resolution in her eyes.

"Meg," said the woman, angrily, "go back! I will settle with this gentleman."

"Yes; you will settle that I am not to go. But I will. You have no right to keep me. I wish to go, and I shall."

The Princess listened in surprise to the words of decision. She had always considered Meg a child; how she spoke like a woman. There was only one thing left for her to do.

"Of course you shall go, Meg. The gentleman is going to give me a small sum of money to pay for your board and clothes for the last eight years that—"

"Board, when I have always been hungry; clothes, when I have always been ragged! How much will you give her, this woman, who has treated me like a cur?"

"I have not cost her five hundred cents in these years; and as to interest, she never had any."

The woman remonstrated, and was profuse in her protestations of affection for the motherless girl. All of which Meg received with the most unequivocal scorn and contempt.

After much controversy, St. Claire produced a paper, which he had drawn up for the purpose, and, after reading it aloud, told the woman that if she would sign it, he would give her a check for the promised amount.

Adelina Patti spends her money freely, and drives hard bargains with managers. But she is charitable, and helps many a broken-down artist with a quiet munificence of which the world never hears.