

The Influence of a Noble Love.

"**W**HAT a busy world this is," thought young Richard Hanley to himself as he sat in an easy chair on the verandah of his father's mansion, on Fifth Avenue, smoking a cigar. A thoughtful look had settled on his handsome face as he sat here in the twilight and viewed the never ending stream of passers-by.

"Here indeed is food for the thoughts of either the poet or philosopher," he soliloquized as he idly puffed at his cigar. "What story may there not be connected with each individual of this stream of human life. What emotions may now be crowding the minds of each; what desires urging them forward? How strange is the life of man! How treacherous is the hand of fortune! How vain is the search after happiness! Where will it all end?"

His reverie was broken at this point, by his hearing his own name mentioned. Within the sitting room his father sat in his easy chair with a troubled look on his face, while opposite him sat his uncle, Dr. Hanley, who had come from his home in Chicago some few days before to spend a while in New York. As he was evidently the subject of their conversation he became curious to know what it was about.

"I have grave fears for Richard's future," his uncle was saying, "and I feel that you alone are responsible for the condition of mind he is in now. You were extremely careless about your son's education and allowed the bustle of the money market to take up all your time. You knew the thoughtful, intellectual nature of your son and you allowed him to read and study those materialistic books which were lying around here and which I warned you to destroy; for how few readers are so modest as to admit that they want the scientific culture to refute a bad book, to separate the poison from the honey of sweet phrases and winning style? How few can see that they cannot read bad books without detriment. Nor was this all: You allowed him to take a course in that university where his belief in all those absurdities have been strengthened even more and he

has many times startled me with his false doctrines since I have been here. Education is a curse without morality, and morality impossible without religion. He has now no religion, in fact he despises all religion. A kind of philosophical morality has usurped religion's place and so his soul is in the gravest peril."

Richard could hear no more as a servant had just then entered the room and closed the window near which he sat. Yet he had heard all he desired to hear. The principles which his uncle had represented him as holding were those to which he had given utterance many times and had spoken of proudly as the true basis of life's enjoyment and usefulness. For some reason he was annoyed then at finding they belonged to him; whether from the scornful manner in which his uncle had mentioned them or from a conviction that when stripped of the glamour of cultured conversation and stated in plain English, their beauty and solidity were not so apparent, he could hardly tell. In the circle of his friends such declarations as these were received with applause and admiration and were called the free expressions of a mind liberated from the slavery of custom and superstition.

"I have no religion, he says. True for him if to despise the world's superstitions be that; but my heart is human, the love of my race is my religion—the religion of humanity, of culture, of refinement. So, I believe all those absurdities and consequently peril my soul eh! There he is wrong, I believe nothing at all. Faith ends where reason begins, besides I have no soul in the sense which is theirs—a part of me which is to live in eternity as it has lived in time, to suffer or rejoice when time is ended. That the mightiest intellects of the world have looked upon as a myth. I peril nothing for I have nothing to peril. But oh! if it were true beyond doubt that I have an immortal soul, what should I care for wealth or honors? Could it be possible that this much of Christian superstition had some truth?

He closed his eyes for some minutes and remained in deep thought. "If I had been educated differently perhaps—" These last words were the keynote to his meditations. He was reviewing his past life. Its suc-

cessive steps and the scenes of his youth and boyhood rose up before him with the painful distinctness which belongs to sorrowful memories. His mother had died in his infancy and Richard was therefore ushered into the world under severe conditions. Business cares were of more importance to Mr. Hanley than the care of the little boy who was to inherit his property. It did not require many years of such behaviour to separate them and to chill in his heart the lively affection he naturally felt towards his father. But it remained for the boarding-school and later the university to put the finishing touches to the work which ill-training and neglect had so well begun. For three years he walked with his teachers and professors through such mazes of absurdity and learning as it never occurred to the greatest or most erratic of scholars and philosophers to tread. The poetry and philosophy, the antiquities and religions, of all nations in all times were the objects of petty and superficial investigation. Three years in such an atmosphere for a boy like Richard meant spiritual death, and when his education was now finished he was fairly well enlisted in the ranks of atheism.

Richard remained in this attitude of meditation for a long time. He finally roused himself from his reverie and looking at his watch found it was already nine o'clock. His brain was in a whirl and he must needs do something. He had an invitation to a party that night and he decided to go to distract his feverish mind. Until to-night he had persistently refused all invitations from friends and acquaintances. Of the former he had very few ; he had grown tired of the world of pleasure-seeking, of himself. What wonder when in the great city of New York, with its hundreds of thousands of throbbing hearts, there was not one to whom in solemn truth, he could hold out the right hand of friendship ; not one upon whose sympathies he could anchor, should the tide of fortune turn and leave him, a rich man to-day, the sport of her cruel waves to-morrow ? There was little faith of human nature in his heart, no religion in his soul. Dissatisfied with his own aimless life, he sought no mirror in the lives of

others and he avoided all kindness and sympathetic associations.

During the course of the night at the ball he was introduced to a number of young ladies present. But he mentally criticized and found wanting each upon whom he had inflicted the bane of his company through a dance. Tired and ill humored he was about to go forward to take leave of the hostess when a few words spoken just behind him made him pause and look around curious to know who the speaker might be. It was a women's voice, clear and sweet and the words were, "No thank you ; I never dance the round dances." But a surging crowd of feverish waltzers drifted by him at that moment and her face, of which he had just caught a glimpse, was soon lost amid the throng.

"Here indeed is something interesting" he thought to himself, as he moved off a little from the dancers and watched cheeks flush and bright eyes grow brighter at the call of voluptuous music.

"What inconsistency of fate and fortune has brought into this fashionable gathering a lady, certainly young and probably beautiful, who does not dance the round dances?" He was curious to have another look at her and if possible to get an introduction. His opportunity soon came. As he turned to cross the hall he encountered the very object of his desires. She was in company with an old friend of his, Tom Foster, and the surprise and pleasure caused them momentarily to forget politeness and several sentences were spoken before Foster recollected himself and said, "Allow, me, Rose, Mr. Hanley, my cousin, Miss McManus." Richard muttered something; the young lady bowed, that was all. She was indeed a very handsome girl. There was nothing airy or artificial about her but she was radiant with a fresh bright color in her cheeks that made one think of long walks taken on a winter morning, with large brown eyes, which, while they did not fall on fear as they looked into his, yet had a shade of reticence and bashfulness in their untroubled depths.

Although they conversed but a short time her personality effected Richard pleasantly and somewhat strangely. There was freshness and elasticity about

her that did not proceed from inexperience or unacquaintance with the world ; for dignity and selfpossession characterized her every movement and yet she seemed entirely unconscious of any claim to originality or naturalness.

For the next few weeks Richard kept even more to himself and to his books. He had always a natural aversion for women and he was endeavoring in vain to distract his mind from that heroine of the ball, as something unworthy of his thoughts.

"It is all of no avail" he finally exclaimed, as he sat in his chamber gazing into space. "I follow the professor's exact investigations into the labyrinth of their studied arguments to make it appear that I am only an animal and that all our sentiment is only imagination and fallacy. Can these gentlemen teach me how we can cease to have admiration for the noble and exalted ? Here man forcibly breaks through. The nobility of human nature must assert itself and all the wisdom of boasted Materialism becomes idle nonsense."

His surroundings were growing unbearable to him. He resolved to quit the city and seek rest and leisure in some remote parts.

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It was late in the evening when Richard arrived in Kirk's Ferry, a quaint little village among the hills of New Hampshire. He had heard of the splendid fishing grounds around here and being an ardent disciple of Isaac Walton, decided to spend a few weeks at the sport.

Having secured rooms at the principle hotel in the place he was waiting for supper to be served when he was accosted by a diminutive looking person with a swallow tail coat and a neck-tie of the dimensions of a window curtain, and whose general appearance more resembled a scare-crow than a man and a brother. Phil Murray, for it was he, was known to everyone in the village, and was remarkable for the way in which he became intimate with all new comers. To Richard he proved to be a very interesting personage and in a few minutes they were as thick as pick pockets, so that

when the waiter announced some minutes later, that supper was ready, Richard invited his new friend to dine with him. The offer was of course accepted with alacrity.

The next morning Murray was on hand with a pleasant "Good morning" for Richard, and true to his promise was ready to pilot him to the best fishing grounds.

"This ought to be a good trout day, Mr. Murray" said Richard as he lighted a cigar.

"Shure enough," rejoined Murray looking up at the sky," and I just seen Finnegan's trout as I came across the stones there below."

"Finnegan's trout ! What sort of a trout is that ?" asked Richard.

"I'll jist tell you" answered Murray as he, with great difficulty fished out a weather-beaten black pipe from his outer garment and proceeded to fill it with a care and gravity befitting the operation. "Pether Finnegan was a great fisher in these parts, yer honor. Nothin' could bate him. He'd ketch a fish as shure as he wetted a line, an' no matther how cute or cunnin' he'd have thim out av the wather before they could cry murther. Bnt there was wan ould trout of shupayrior knowledge who knew Pether Finnegan, an begorra, Pether knew him. They used for to stand foreninst wan another for days and days, Pether flappin the wather an' the ould trout flappin' his tail. 'I'll have you yet me man' sez Pether. 'I was never bet be a man yit' sez he, 'and be the mortal I'm not goin' to be bet be a fish.' So he ups yer honor, an' puttin' a cupple o' quarts o' whiskey in his pockets for to keep up his spirits, he begins to fish in arrnest. Furst he thried wurrums an' then he tried flies an' then he thried all sorts of combusticles ; but the ould trout turned up his nose at thim all, an' Pether seen him colleguer in wud the other throats an' tellin' thim to take it aisy and lave Pether's decoys alone. Well sir Pether Finnegan was a hot man an' aisy riz, an' whin he sees the conspiracy for to defraud him, ad' the young throats laffin at him, he boiled over like a kittle, an' shoutin' 'I'll spile your divarshiun', med a

dart into the river. His body was got, the bottles was safe in his pockets, but would you belave it, the ould throuth had got at the whiskey and dhrank it all up. "

Although Richard laughed and said he would like to see that trout, yet he did not entirely doubt the possibility of the truth of the story ; for could he not prove beyond a doubt that animals as well as men have an intellect and therefore capable of reasoning, and so why not a fish. However he gave Murray all the credit for the last part of the story as he would not accuse fish of such an action although man would stoop even lower than that

Murray having then refilled his pipe, led the way in the direction of the fishing grounds through a narrow mountain pass inaccessible save to pedestrians. It was a sombre morning, Nature was in a meditative mood and forbade the prying glances of the sun, while a gentle breeze—the angler's luck—fanned their cheeks.

The fishing was splendid and for over an hour Richard and his genial companion enjoyed the sport, till their attention was attracted by the approach of a carriage coming up the road which bordered the lake.

" Ah ! " exclaimed Murray, as he shaded his eyes with his long skinny hand " Here comes ould McManus and his daughter, so we will soon have more company, "

" McManus " exclaimed Richard with a start. " and who is that pray ? "

He's a rich old codger what lives here and does nothin' but dhrive around ; and that's his daughter Rose who stops with her aunt ' way up in New York in the winther and spinds her vocation down here at home in the summer.

" Could it be possible " thought Richard to himself as the carriage approached, " that this was the girl who had interested him so much and who continually haunted his dreams ? "

Sure enough it was, as the carriage drew up where they stood, she recognized him at once ; and both father and daughter joined in welcoming Cousin Tom's friend to Kirk's Ferry.

Richard made himself as agreeable as he could while the four fished and conversed together, and ere

they parted he had a strong invitation to visit the McManus family.

During the next few weeks Rose and Richard became excellent friends and he was a regular visitor at her home. Although their views of life differed widely on many points, religion was the only really sensitive topic, and more than once he startled her with his materialistic views.

His stay at Kirk's Ferry would have perhaps prolonged itself indefinitely, for he could not break away from her enchanted presence, but a break in their relations was destined to come.

It was a Sunday evening and having met her as she came out of the church after Vespers, accompanied her home as usual. Seated together in the parlour their talk drifted from one subject to another till Richard unconsciously attacked the religion which she so firmly held and about which she was so very sensitive. An angry flush mounted her forehead as she stood and faced him.

"I am deeply pained and disappointed," she exclaimed, "to hear such words coming from the lips of one whom I had almost learned to call friend, but who has to-night, in a very few words shown me my mistake. For my religion, I have long been aware that you cherish an undisguised contempt; for myself, I had hoped that you entertained no such contemptuous feeling."

Richard perceived that he had made a grave error and fully conscious of the disadvantages of time and circumstance resolved then and there to tell her the whole truth though he had no presumption of success.

"Stop a minute" he replied; "you have wronged me by intimating that I purposed aught of disrespect to you or your religion by what I have unthinkingly said this evening. I could do neither; for I love you;—how deeply, I, who have struggled with that love for months, alone can tell; how entirely and unselfishly, you perhaps might learn, could you find it in your heart to let me show you; how vainly, my own heart tells me when I look at your face. Surprised you may be—I have no doubt you are, displeased too, but I

take no blame for that. An honest man dares lift his eyes to a noble woman; and whatever be my faults, and they are many; wherever lie my errors, and they are thickly sown, I still can call myself an honest man."

She moved farther away from where he stood, and once or twice while he was speaking, made a motion as though to interrupt him. As he uttered the last words he saw her eyes flash and a half sarcastic smile wreath itself about her lips.

"You call yourself an honest man," she said, "What is your code, and who the law giver? Is it honest to leave untilled the soil that has been given you in trust for an endless harvest time; to waste the talents that have been bestowed upon you with lavish hand; to spend days and months in pleasant idleness as you have done and as you do? Is it honest to wrap yourself in a mantle of hollow cynicism, lest your better nature might have an opportunity to assert its capacities and prove its possibilities; to scoff at all creeds and professions of religion as so many shams and superstitions, because it suits the nature of the life you lead? For yourself I could have sympathy, but I scorn the evil spirit that is in you."

He loved her before, but as she stood there taxing him, and justly so, as he was just beginning to realize, his love gave one great bound and seemed to sit enthroned high above sight or sound of human passion, although with every word she spoke, the knowledge of its vain endeavour fastened itself more firmly upon him.

He was about to speak but she interrupted him and her words came more slowly now and more kindly.

"I regret that you should have so far forgotten yourself as to have spoken thus; I can and do appreciate the love you have offered me; I can be, I am your friend. Forgive me if I have been too harsh; in calmer moments you will come to think of me as one whose words were too quick and too impulsive but who had your interest at heart. Now let me go. Do not speak further I beg of you; it will only pain us both."

Though he fain would speak, he obeyed her com-

mands and went forth as one in a trance with her last farewell ringing in his ears.

A noble resolve was kindled in Richard's heart by her parting words. He went abroad to quiet and unpretending places where travellers seldom go. His heart sought rest and quiet. His soul was beginning to shake off the torpor that had so long enchained it, taking up also unconsciously the silent influences that pervaded his whole being. Truths forced themselves upon him unawares and his ears did not refuse to listen to them. "Some one was praying for him although he did not know it then ; one whose face he vainly strove to banish from his memory, whose voice ran through the current of his dreams. The whole purpose of his life seemed changed. How often he thanked her that, all unconsciously though it were, she had opened to him new avenues of thought and action. "Better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all," and so the work went on.

Two years had passed and Richard returned to New York a new man. He had completely discarded all his old ideals and was now a sensible living and God fearing man. He no more scoffed at religion as a sham but on the contrary was a regular attendant at church and many times blessed his noble benefactress for the change she had wrought in him.

The same Miss McManus was even now in New York for he had already seen her several times in church but he always managed to escape a meeting. Indeed she had also seen him and was also endeavouring to avoid a meeting.

However this was not to continue for long, Fate had destined that they should meet. It happened that one Sunday evening just as he came out of the church after Benediction, he espied her right before him. Escape was impossible for both ; she was in company with her cousin Tom Foster and when that genial young man beheld Richard he ran forward and eagerly grasped his hand and welcomed him back to the land of the living. Rose was plainly embarrassed by the meeting yet she also extended her hand while she cast her eyes downwards. Nothing would do Tom but that he should come

down to his aunts where Rose was staying and although Richard would rather be excused just then as he could plainly see that Rose was not in favour of the proposition, yet something impelled him forward and in a few minutes the three were walking down the street together. Tom kept the conversation going much to the satisfaction of the other two and before very long they were at their destination. Richard was warmly welcomed by their aunt but felt rather out of place when she begged to be excused for a few minutes, as she wanted to go down to the drug store.

"It is surely late to go shopping," she said, "but Tom has very kindly volunteered to accompany me and we shall only be a few minutes away. You and Rose are old friends, I believe and can manage, no doubt, to spend a few minutes pleasantly together."

An embarrassing silence followed as the two were left alone together. However Richard resolved to break the ice.

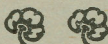
"I perceive, Miss McManus," he began, "by the look of discomfort on your face that fate has been very unkind to you by bringing us both together again; to me it has been a kind act as I have hoped for this moment for a long time. I owe you a debt of gratitude that I can never fully repay. Some two years ago I offered you a love that had grown in my heart till it had penetrated every fibre of my being. You rejected it; and that you did so or why, I find no fault or blame. The folly was mine; I alone have borne the consequences. But while you stripped my mind of any wild hopes it might have cherished in moments just as wild, you told me some unpalatable truths. Until I had met you I had lived a selfish, useless and most dangerous life. Your noble example and especially your parting words, stirred the germs of something better in my soul and made a new man out of me and I come back loving you still, but I am not here to-night to plead a lost cause. As in former cases circumstances have forced it upon me. But before I close the book forever, let me thank you most sincerely for what you have done for me.

She had risen from her chair, while he was speaking with half parted lips and eyes downcast.

"I do not forget" she said, "anything of what I told you that night two years ago. I was harsh—unnecessarily so, but it all came on me so suddenly that I hardly knew what I was saying. I remember there was something about misused talents and a wasted life, but, here her voice faltered and the words came slowly, "I do not remember telling you then or at any other time that I did not or could not love you."

Looking up her gaze half smilingly, half tearfully met his and somehow or other two soft hands became clasped in his. Then she told him what he never even fancied in his dreams; of the love that had dwelled in her heart so long; of fears that had assailed her when she grew conscious of it and finally of her prayers that from their fervency had been heard and answered.

J. R. '17



Every stone in the edifice of your character was laid by your own hands.

To the stupid people only and the unobservant does life ever cease to be interesting and dramatic.

Not to be lost in idle admiration is the only sure means of making and preserving happiness.

Great men rejoice in adversity just as brave soldiers triumph in war.

We all when we are well, give good advice to the sick.

Though ambition in itself is a vice, yet it is often the parent of virtue.