

WHY THOMAS SUGCUMBED.

There were but two servants at the little country place; Thomas, the coachman, a native of the village, and Maggie the maid of all work, brought by the family from town. The house was built on the edge of a rocky slope. In front the lawn curved gently towards the stone fence, and the large gates which opened to the highway at either end of the grounds. In the rear the steep descent had been leveled to a smooth green lawn abutting the basement kitchen. At either side this space was walled up to meet the level of the closely clipped grass above.

One summer's evening the young Irish girl sat on the bank swinging her foot and humming disconsolately. A kennel stood near but the dogs were not in it. An Irish setter pup lay motionless across its entrance with his tawny paws straight before him. He was known to hunt far and wide for the birds of the air and of the poultry yard, but now he would not stir when the girl called him for fear of hurting a pet chicken which had crept between his paws.

"Come Bruno, leave that chicken and talk to me," she said again, but the dog only wagged his tail.

Around the carriage drive edging the bank came the mistress of the house.

"What is the matter, Maggie?"

"O ma'am, I am so lonesome! What with the frogs and tree toads and no one to talk with—even the dogs won't stay with me. Bruno is over there, and Trimmer went to the stable with Thomas."

She glanced down the driveway which followed the line of the green oval to the carriage house. In front of its open doorway sat a stolid figure smoking a pipe; at his feet lay a small bulldog of ferocious aspect but with kindly brown eyes. Both master and dog possessed an attractive ugliness which marked a certain similarity between them.

The eyes of the mistress followed those of the maid.

"Is not Thomas good company? I understand that he was jilted by a girl named Bridget O'Flynn shortly before we came out here, but that is no reason that you cannot be friends."

"I have to knock the talk out of Tom," the girl said viciously.

The mistress passed on to the old cherry tree beyond the kitchen slope, where great clusters of luscious fruit hung within easy reach. But Maggie pined for the unattainable and sauntered slowly across the grass to a tree near the stable whose small red cherries of inferior flavor grew high above her head. Standing on tiptoe, her fair complexion was faintly tinged with rose, and the gentle winds lifted the loose ends of her pretty hair, but the stolid figure in the doorway still smoked.

"Thomas, you might bring me the stepladder," she called.

Now he had been told to save Maggie any unnecessary lifting and to get her whatever she needed. Kindly obedient, without removing his pipe, he strolled to the house and back with the ladder, then returned to his doorway.

Vexatiously the girl picked her fruit. On many evenings was the little drama repeated. When cherries grew scarce the man whose rough exterior hid his innate chivalry, mounted the ladder, or climbed the tree to pluck for her the lingering fruit on the topmost boughs.

Cherries early and late were gone, and no break had been made in the firm armor with which the soul of Thomas was encased—and still the "knocking" went on. Simple and direct, he was fighting a brave battle against a pretty, keen-witted girl. The fortress of his heart was guarded by pride, determination and obstinacy, and the remembrance of another girl's scorn formed an

impossible (he thought) barrier to its entrance.

Thomas liked women, but a faith rudely shaken cannot be hastily repaired; for the falseness of one, others must suffer. Sometimes retribution's eyes seem blinded or her memory uncertain, when she unflinchingly metes out life's punishments, but brings her ill gifts to the innocent.

Because Bridget had been false, Tom could discern no truth in Maggie's blue eyes; at least he took it for granted that none could be there—he had not looked.

Three times a day Maggie sat opposite him at the little table near the kitchen window and poured his tea with her most bewitching smile. His favorite dishes were there, and the richest of cream was saved for his coffee. Her merry laugh rang through the house, but alas! Tom's gloom was not dispelled.

Then fate added its "knock." The little village possessed a large Irish population living along the railroad, and in the inner circles of Hibernian society no one was more popular than Thomas Slatterly. To be sure his mother was a trifle plain in her dress, but it suited the simplicity of her shanty near the track, and she had a gala attire purchased on the death of her only daughter and saved for very grand occasions—a black dress and heavy crape veil. Conscious of these elegant possessions she was ordinarily more than satisfied with her old calico gown on the one or two days in the week when by chance she was sober.

Both mother and son were noted for their wit and flow of conversation, (Maggie to the contrary) and no wake was a success without the presence of Thomas or a funeral complete unless Mrs. Slatterly in her raven weeds, sat among the mourners. It was only upon the death of an acquaintance that Thomas ever requested a day's holiday. The all night session devoted to the conviviality of the wake would be followed by the funeral the next day, and with a headache attributed to lack of sleep, he would return to his labors.

At the time of this story, Thomas requested a leave of absence. Maggie watched him walk forth in his Sunday clothes after carefully adjusting his best tie by the kitchen mirror. His heavy square jaw showed the unswerving strength which had rendered her blandishments of no avail; but his steady resistance had only made him more attractive.

He went forth with firm, swinging tread and the pride of a strong man, but at dusk the next day, battered and bruised, humbled and ashamed, he crept past the house to his room over the stable.

It happened this way. On the return from the graveyard the carriages were crowded and the talk grew boisterous.

"Tom, how's Bridget," called an acquaintance.

"O, none of that, he's got a city girl," jeered another, "The likes o' Bridget is not good enough for him."

Tom struck out a sinewy arm towards the speaker and grazed his shoulder.

"So that's your little game, is it? And shure when I'm in it. Thry that and that."

Thomas was the heavier man, but his senses were dulled and the attack was unexpected. Over he went from the carriage, striking his face in the dust. He was dragged a few feet by the wheels and the sand was ground into his skin. The fright sobered them all.

"And shure, Tom, I didn't mane to hurt ye;" Tom, sullen and dazed, shambled away towards his mother's cottage.

"Come, Tom, we'll drive ye home to yer girl," but he did not turn.

"And good riddance for Bridget," came shrilly from behind, "What would she be wanting of a drunken loafer?" It was Bridget's mother who added her

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stroke when he was already down.

Mrs. Slatterly soon found her son stretched speechless in her hut. "What's this about yer girl? I want no stuck up city daughter, too good for the likes of me, mind that!" No answer from Thomas. "My but ye're a beauty, Tommy, just loike yer mither. Show that face to yer gurl."

He turned to the wall.

There he lay until the dusk of the evening. Only Maggie saw him return. Her quick ears caught the sound of his uncertain steps on the gravel, and she remarked indifferently to her mistress that Thomas had come home.

At the first opportunity she flew down the path and called sweetly, "Come to supper Thomas," but there was no reply. "Thomas!" she insisted.

"I don't want any," came in muttered tones. Then as he glanced down the open stairway at her sympathetic face, full of genuine concern, he relented. "Maggie could you give me something to put on my face? I fell from a carriage and it is scratched. I'm ashamed to be seen."

"That is nothing," said the girl. "It won't show by tomorrow."

She soon returned with a tray and a lotion which she gently applied to the poor, bruised skin.

Alas for Thomas! He had never before felt a woman's touch on his rough, weather beaten face.

"O Maggie, I am disgraced."

"And why? You could not help falling off."

"But Tim pushed me off."

"Bad luck to him."

"I'm thinking I struck him first."

"Then he deserved it."

The man's spirit revived under the sweet sympathy. Well he knew the black bottle and the liberality of the night's entertainment were responsible for his fall, but no word of blame came from Maggie.

"How soft your fingers are Maggie," he said. Blushing she ran down the stairs.

Three days was Thomas guarded from the view of the family, then he came forth with the scars of a double battle. In the evenings he still smoked his pipe but moved to the terrace, then edged to the kitchen door and was sometimes seen lingering over his meals. Maggie was shyer and more quiet. The burly fellow watching her was afraid that she despised him, but the kindly light in her eyes belied that fear. When the wind blew soft across his face, he felt the touch of her fingers again caressing

their way to his inmost heart, and gently obliterating the impression of Bridget—so gently that her image was there no more, and he knew it not.

The summer evenings were long and the wind blew soft.

The man still smoked his pipe but love grew and spread 'neath the misty veil of the smoke, and then—

What black shadow follows the bridegroom pair up the aisle of the little Roman Catholic church? So dark a shadow was never before cast by robes of white.

This is no omen of evil, but a messenger of reconciliation; for Mother Slatterly, filled with pride and gratification, draws about her more closely her heavy crepe veil.

ANNIE L. MILLER.

The sale of bicycles at E. R. Guthrie's still keeps up regardless of "cost sales" advertised. The reason is that the wheels sold are worth their prices and do not require the fascinating phrase "wholesale cost" to sell them. The prices are right and better represent the real value of the goods than the cut prices offered by some dealers.

[First publication June 25] 3
NOTICE OF PROBATE OF WILL.

In the County Court of Lancaster County, Nebraska:

The State of Nebraska, to Wilhelmine Miller and to others interested in said matter:

You are hereby notified, that an instrument purporting to be the last will and testament of Samuel Brandt, deceased, is on file in said court, and also a petition praying for the probate of said instrument, and for the appointment of Wilhelmine Miller as administratrix, with will annexed. That on the 18th day of July, 1898, at 9 o'clock a. m., said petition and the proof of the execution of said instrument will be heard, and that if you do not then appear and contest, said court may probate and record the same, and grant administration of the estate to Wilhelmine Miller.

This notice shall be published for three weeks successively in THE COURIER prior to said hearing.

Witness my hand and official seal this 23d day of June, 1898.

S. T. COCHRAN,
County Judge.
By Dudley Cochran, Clerk.

What He Knew.
In announcing for office a Georgia candidate who evidently desires to make his record plain, a newspaper says: "I never was in the war; never hollered at the surrender and never killed anybody that let me alone, and the only thing I know about the financial question is this: I need money."—Atlanta Constitution.