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Through Thorny Paths.

BY MARY ROWENA COTTER.

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Synopsis of Previous Chapters.
Chapter I—Edward Dutton, of America, while visiting in Ireland, falls in love with Agnes Conlin, a poor Catholic girl. Thomas Conlin, Agnes' cousin who is soon to be ordained a priest, notices a serpent ring on her finger and when told of her engagement ring he tries to persuade her not to marry this Protestant stranger. She, however, refuses and is married by the old parish priest after which they depart for the strangers beautiful home in Boston Chapter II—Thomas Conlin is ordained and comes of America as a missionary and arrives at his cousin's home. There he learns that while his cousin has wealth and luxury she was not happy. Her husband had selected a circle in which she was to move and as it was strictly Protestant he said that she might give up her superstitions and become a member of his church. He would not even allow her to attend a Catholic church. She would not, grating him however and when Father Conlin arrived she insisted that he hear her confession and baptize her little baby son, who had just been born. Father Conlin goes away with his secret. Agnes dies a week after Mr. Dutton marries again, a rich Protestant woman, and his son is brought up a Protestant. When Edward is eight years old his father dies Chapter III and IV—Cecilia, a poor orphan, who lives with her sister Nellie, is engaged by Mrs. Dutton as companion. Her stepson, Edward falls in love with this Catholic girl, Cecilia, and marries her against the wishes of his stepmother. Chapter V—Cecilia is married eight years and has three children all of whom she and Mr. Dutton are left childless. Chapter VI—After a lapse of seven and a half years we find Mr. and Mrs. Dutton again happy with a daughter, Cecilia, who is about to celebrate her seventh birthday. Chapter VII—The husband of Nellie, who was Mrs. Cullen, dies and she is left a widow with one child, Agnes. Mrs. Dutton adopts her niece and brings her up with her own daughter. Chapter VIII and IX—Cecilia and Agnes are sent to a convent school. The grandmother is very much opposed to this and reproaches her daughter-in-law. Chapter X—Mr. Dutton is called to a distant city and Cecilia is called home from school. Chapter XI and XII—Cecilia and Agnes graduate and a grand reception is given them. Mrs. Cullen while at her sister's home is taken ill. Cecilia and her grandmother have a dispute over religion. Chapter XIII—Mrs. Cullen recovers and remains at Dutton's home. Chapter XIV—Cecilia tells her mother that she intends entering the convent and becoming a nun. After a dispute she promises to remain at home one year. Chapter XV—Cecilia and her grandmother are visiting in a distant city when a terrible fire breaks out making many homeless. Chapter XVI—Cecilia visits the prisoner, Charles Conn, who started the fire. Chapter XVII—Grandmother Dutton tells her grandchild that she has been convinced that the Catholic church is the only and true church and Mrs. Dutton becomes a convert. Chapter XVIII—Mr. Dutton is in fear of losing all he has and Cecilia goes on the stage.

(Continued from last week.)

PART SECOND. CHAPTER I.

Instead of the old songs he sang one which he was to render at his first appearance in the opera; full enough of life and spirit it was to please any one even the most gay, and his mother listened with great admiration until he had finished. Its brilliancy, however, could not keep back the tears, which would flow in spite of her, for everything seemed to breathe sadness to-night and her thoughts, instead of being with his gay words, were of the time when that grand voice would be singing for other ears than her own and she could not see her darling for many weeks, perhaps months. Ere he ceased she closed her eyes to shut out the sight of him who was such a noble picture of young manhood.

"That is grand, Allyn," she said, when he had finished, "and surely that voice cannot fail to win fame for you."

"Thank you, mother; I only hope that others may think the same, but the world is full of heartless critics and I often have great fears."

"You should not, Allyn. Have confidence; show the world that you fear not what it may say or think of you and I assure you of greater success than if you act the part of a coward, who is always dodging criticism."

"Right, mother; I shall try to take your advice."

After carefully packing away his last sheet of music the youth drew a chair close to his mother's side, and until the early hours of the morning they were engaged in conversation, which might have continued longer had not Mrs. St. Clair's eyelids begun to grow heavy. Then her boy bade her good-night. He had a little more packing to do and supposed that she was asleep before he retired, but her motherly love would not allow it, and after he had fallen into a quiet slumber she stole into his room and kissed his brow, as she had often done when he was a child, a tear falling on his cheek.

The next morning, after a hurried breakfast, came the separation, and each bravely strove to keep a cheerful mood in the presence of the other.

"My dear, noble boy," said Mrs. St. Clair to herself after he was gone. She had not the consolation of asking God's protection and blessing upon him, and could only stand at the window in silent, bitter loneliness as the carriage drove away with him, and was lost to view.

CHAPTER II.

Human nature, especially in youth, is full of fickleness and inconsistency; the resolutions made to-day are forgotten, perhaps, to-morrow and in many instances never fulfilled. But it will be so as long as the world lasts; human nature is ever the same and

those who look with scorn upon the changeableness of others might under the same circumstances do worse.

On the eve of his departure from home Allyn St. Clair had earnestly declared that no woman excepting his own dear mother could ever find a place in his affections, and he had said, too, that he would not marry, but now at the end of five months he finds himself in love, deeply in love, whilst the fair object of his affections absolutely refuses to return any of that tender feeling. As far as he or any other man he knew was concerned his heart was as cold as stone, but he loved her none the less for that, and he was determined to leave nothing undone by which to win so fair and lovely a prize. His mother first learned of her at Christmas, which he had gone home to spend as a national rather than a Christian holiday, and she saw plainly that although he had seen the fair beauty but once, his heart had gone with her, and she secretly hoped that if the young lady were really of a good family, as he stated, he might meet her again and receive in due time the reward of his affection.

The young lady was none other than our fair Cecilia, and the first meeting had been on the evening when in charity she had consented to sing for the benefit of the sufferers from the fire. As one who by his skill had already attained a high place in the company, he had been granted a short interview with her, which he did not forget. Her brilliant beauty had attracted him at first sight, but being what might be called little less than a woman-hater, the loveliness of her face might eventually have led him to scorn her and call himself a fool for having admired her in an hour of human weakness, but in those dark eyes he saw something else—a deep secret beauty which he could not then understand. It was, in truth, only a faint shadow of the outward sign of an interior beauty which shines from a pure heart, or rather the image of God.

Cecilia's modest, womanly dignity, compared to the bold freedom of manner found in some of the ladies connected with the troupe, spoke strongly in her favor. He believed this to be only the result of her having been so short a time out of school. On learning that she had been engaged as a member of the troupe, he resolved to do all in his power to help her remain as she was. The thought of the change her new mode of life might produce in her was distressing to him. Wholly ignorant of the dangers of the position she held, Cecilia never suspected the many little kindnesses of her benefactor, neither did she dream that he had, after only a few days' acquaintance, made a resolution to win her for his wife.

At the time of rehearsal Cecilia was never known to be absent or late, and her whole heart seemed to be given up to her efforts to obey the manager in every little detail, until on one occasion she was asked to wear an elegant costume of sea-shell pink, cut very low, with no sleeves and only straps of ribbon over the shoulders. It was an elegant affair which had been worn on one or two occasions by the lady whose place she had taken, and in company with her aunt and two of the leading ladies she was in the dressing room when it was sent up. Her companions, who had greatly admired the gown, looked on in envy as she unfolded it and held it up for inspection. Her face brightened at the sight of the long train and pretty skirt, but she could not help frowning at the immodest style of the waist. Accompanying the gown was a note from the manager telling her to wear it that evening.

"Really, Miss Dutton," said one of the ladies, "I envy you such a beautiful dress, but you appear not to be pleased with it. What is wrong?"

"Enough," said Cecilia, throwing it down on a chair. "I do not intend appearing in public with it on."

"Why not?" asked the two, in one breath, looking at her in amazement. "It is perfectly gorgeous and you should be proud to wear it."

"I certainly would, as I am able to fully appreciate fine clothes, but for one reason. It is cut much too low."

A sneering smile which did not escape Mrs. Cullen passed between them.

"You are prudish," said one; "I do not consider that low by any means, and if you only realized how pretty it will show off your beautiful neck and arms you would not refuse to wear it."

"I prefer having my neck and arms covered when I appear in public," was the curt reply.

"That is all right on some occasions, but on the stage we are not supposed

to wear street costumes with high collars that almost touch our ears and long sleeves. Such a thing would be perfectly absurd."

"I do not ask such privileges; on the contrary, I am willing to dress becomingly and intend doing all in my power to please our manager, but to appear in public in such a dress as this I consider improper in a young lady who has any respect for herself."

"There is nothing improper about it. Our manager expects it and will be displeased if you refuse to comply with his wishes."

"Let him be displeased, then; I shall not wear that waist."

She spoke in a tone which surprised those who had hitherto believed her to be a perfect model of docility, and a light of determination flashed from her eyes. In their hearts her companions admired her, but still they could not keep back the sneer which arose to their lips.

"Do you realize, Miss Dutton," said one, "how much you are taking upon yourself by refusing obedience to our master?"

"I am more than happy to comply with any reasonable demand or even slight wish from him, but this oversteps the bounds of reason, to say nothing of decency, and I repeat I shall not obey in this case."

With these words she turned to her aunt and asked her to take out one of her own reception gowns which she had worn at home. It was of a delicate canary, with elbow sleeves and the neck cut so as to show the delicate curves of her throat. Before her toilette was finished her companions had been called away, and she had felt relieved when the door closed after them. She was deathly pale, for even the slightest disagreement with any one grated harshly on her tender nature, and had not the moment of her own appearance been drawing near she could not have withheld her tears.

"Did I give way too quickly to my temper or say too much, Aunt Nellie?" she asked, in a sweet, humble tone wholly unlike that in which she had addressed the others.

"No, Cecilia; you did right, and I admire my niece for not being afraid to defend herself when Christian modesty demands it."

Cecilia's natural accomplishments had excited some jealousy among her less gifted companions, and they were further incensed by her refusal to associate freely with them. When necessity brought her among them she was kind and courteous to all, but she refrained from participating in any of the amusements the members of the company had among themselves. One thing that excited no little amount of comment was that as soon as her part in the evening's entertainment was over she, in company with her aunt, would be driven directly to their hotel and always refused to leave her room to partake of the elaborate suppers served for the actors. Some said it was due to thrift, as she did not wish to spend any of her earnings in giving treats, and the fact that she drew a salary far greater than many of them made her appear more distasteful to her enemies. Others called her a child who had been spoiled in the convent, but would outgrow her foolishness after having seen more of the world; still another class declared that she was afraid of her aunt, who would not allow her out of her sight.

This was the state of affairs when Cecilia refused to wear the dress, and her words, to which had been added a bitter tone she had never intended, were reported to the manager before he had time to seek an explanation from her in regard to the garment, which he had at first supposed had not been worn on account of its being an improper fit. He was angered at first and would have sent for the offender and tried to compel obedience, but Allyn St. Clair, who had accidentally overheard the conversation in the dressing-room, interceded for her. After expressing his view of the incident, in which he admitted her to be a trifle too prim in matters of dress as well as other things, he said:

"As the young lady believes herself to be doing what is right, I believe it best not to interfere with her."

"Perhaps you are right, but it seems too bad to throw aside such a costly and elegant costume, when it would be so becoming to her."

"She has other dresses which, even if less costly, are not less becoming. Miss Dutton cannot fail to make a beautiful appearance in whatever she may choose to wear, for I assure you that hers is a beauty not made by fine clothes or any other artificial means."

"I agree with you there, Allyn, and perhaps it is best to allow her to have her own way."

"It certainly is. If any great offense were given her she might leave us, and we cannot afford to lose such a voice or such a face."

"And your other motive, what is that, pray?" and the man could scarcely withhold a smile in asking this question, for he had read plainly the love story in the heart of the youth. He did not blame him, but grasped an opportunity to tease him a little.

"My other motive! Are you blind; can you not see that Miss Dutton is as innocent as a child? One of her greatest charms lies in her simplicity, which I would not have taken from her, and you yourself cannot fail to acknowledge that the world would be better if there were more like her."

"You are right, and I respect you for your high ideal of womanhood; but have you no more personal interest in her?"

"And what if I have?" he retorted, in a dignified tone. "In speaking as I have I have only sought to defend the rights of an inexperienced young woman among strangers, as I would if she were my own sister."

With this the youth left the room, and the man, who was much older and more experienced, looked admiringly after him.

"Well," he mused, "he thinks he can deceive me but I am not so easily fooled. I wish him every success in his love affair, for I firmly believe few could be more worthy of such a true woman, but he has a difficult task before him. I firmly believe that as far as our sex is concerned her heart is as cold and hard as stone. If it were in my power to move her I should do all I could to help him, for he is certainly a noble young fellow."

The young man in the meantime had gone to his own room and seated himself in front of an open grate, leisurely smoking a cigar and watching the rings which were being drawn toward the fire. But his thoughts were with Cecilia, and he was trying to plan an interview with her. Her last act had excited his deepest admiration, and he would like to have told her how pleased he was with the spirit she had shown, but he was fully conscious that such a thing would only cause her displeasure. Why was it, he asked himself now, as he had many times before, that he found such a mystery and so wholly unlike other girls? If he must still be denied the privilege of speaking with her, he would watch her more closely in order to learn that secret charm which he hoped might eventually give him the key with which her heart was so closely locked.

Suddenly his thoughts were interrupted by the touch of skillful fingers on the piano in an adjoining parlor, and his attention was wholly taken up by the low, melodious sounds of a sweet accompaniment he had never before heard. He was trying to distinguish the air, when Cecilia's voice was heard in tones far sweeter than he had ever heard her sing on the stage. She was singing in a foreign tongue, which, after the closest attention, he discovered to be Latin. The place was finished and in silence he sat; and another sound reached his ear excepting her light footstep as she crossed the room. Whether she went out or not he was not certain. He had been deeply touched by the words or rather the air, and after fifteen minutes of silence he went to the parlor, hoping that she might have left her music on the piano, where he could find and translate it at leisure. To his surprise he found her at a window, deeply interested in a small book.

"Pardon me for intruding upon you, Miss Dutton," he said as she glanced at him, "but I supposed the parlor to be unoccupied."

She smiled slightly and said: "We are never sure of finding the public parlors of a hotel vacant, and I see no reason why one guest hasn't the same right to them as another."

She had spoken thoughtlessly and expected him to take little heed of her words, but her smile had encouraged him to remain.

"Thank you, Miss Dutton, for your unselfishness," he said. Standing by the piano now and lightly fingering the keys, he asked if she had seen the new cantata which the manager had thought of having produced in the early spring. She replied in the negative and asked what it was. Her face told plainly that her interest was aroused, and glad that at last an opportunity had come for him to talk with her, he gave her a full description of the music.

"It must be very pretty," she said, when he had finished, "and ought to take well."

"I think it will, but of course a great deal depends on the singer."

(To be continued.)

KNIGHTS OF ST. JOHN. TWENTY-FOURTH CONVENTION COMES TO A CLOSE.



The twenty-fourth annual international convention of the Knights of St. John is at an end and it was a most successful one to all concerned.

The delegates assembled at 8:30 on Monday morning at the headquarters, Povera Hotel, and marched to the Cathedral, where a solemn high mass was celebrated by Very Rev. Thomas F. Hickey, V. G., assisted by Rev. M. J. Hargather as deacon and Rev. Joseph Netzel as sub-deacon, and Rev. Dr. Andrew B. Mehan as master of ceremonies. Bishop McQuaid, the supreme spiritual adviser of the Knights of St. John, occupied the episcopal throne.

The sermon of the day was preached by the bishop and he welcomed the knights and congratulated them on the fact that they considered their first duty a religious one. He spoke of the growth of Catholicity in this country and the good effect of Catholic organization.

After the service the delegates marched to St. Joseph's Hall, where Col. Henry N. Schlick, chairman of the executive committee, delivered an address of welcome.

Mayor Rodenbeck, in the name of the city of Rochester, welcomed the knights.

Rev. M. J. Hargather, chaplain of the First Regiment of New York, spoke words of welcome to the visiting clergy, knights and ladies.

Supreme President Henry J. Fries replied to the address, after which he introduced Mrs. Louise Zang, Supreme President of the Ladies' Auxiliary, who spoke briefly.

The parade of the Knights Monday afternoon was one of the best ever seen in Rochester. Every commandery in line was superbly uniformed and the manner in which they marched indicated that their drillmasters were men who had undoubtedly seen army service.

The Buffalo regiment was composed of three battalions and was led by the Seventy-fourth Regiment Band of Buffalo. They marched like veterans and were loudly applauded all along the line of march.

The commandery from Columbus, O., wore, instead of chapeaux, brilliant silver helmets with blue plumes, and gave a touch of color to the line. The bunching of colors of the different commanderies at the heads of the regiments was also a feature that caught the crowd.

The Detroit and Reading commanderies came in for a good share of the applause along the line of the parade. They presented a fine appearance and were a stalwart body of men.

The First Regiment of this city, headed by Hebing's Band, was the first organization of the Knights in line. The regiment was commanded by Colonel Henry N. Schlick and looked and marched well. The four Rochester cadet commanderies were also in the parade.

In the evening a reception was given the visiting knights and ladies at German Hall.

The delegates assembled Tuesday morning at St. Joseph's Hall for the second business session.

The prize drill which was to have taken place in the open air at Ontario Beach Tuesday was first postponed on account of rain and then afterwards held in the drill hall of the State Industrial School.

The drill was one of the finest exhibitions of military maneuvers ever seen in this city. The even floor of the drill hall enabled the men to execute the movements with the precision and smoothness of clockwork, and the spectacle was a very pretty one.

The judges of the drill were Colonel R. P. Kelly of the State Industrial School, Captain Lon Simmons of the 8th Separate Company and Captain Albert Schreiner of this city, the representative of the supreme body of the Knights of St. John.

The prizes were awarded as follows: Commandery No. 14, Buffalo, first prize, \$150; Commandery No. 98, Columbus, second prize, \$75; Commandery No. 18, Buffalo, third prize, \$35.

At 8 o'clock Wednesday morning the delegates headed by Hebing's Band marched to St. Michael's Church, where a solemn high mass

was celebrated for the repose of the souls of deceased members of the order. The mass was celebrated by Rev. M. J. Hargather, pastor of St. Michael's Church and Chaplain of the First Regiment, this city.

At the conclusion of the mass the delegates went into session in St. Joseph's Hall.

Thursday morning the following officers were elected:

Supreme Spiritual Adviser—Bishop Henry L. Moeller, Columbus, O.

Supreme President—Henry J. Fries, Erie, Pa.

Supreme First Vice President—Thomas McFarland, Philadelphia, Pa.

Supreme Second Vice President—Edward G. Ganser, Reading, Pa.

Supreme Secretary—M. J. Kane, Buffalo, N. Y.

Supreme Treasurer—Colonel James H. Schulte, Detroit, Mich.

Supreme Trustees—Thomas J. Lally, Cleveland, O., and John P. Smith, Rochester.

Columbus, Ohio was chosen for the convention next year.

The banquet which was held at Povera Hotel Thursday night, was the concluding feature of the convention.

Promptly at 9:30 o'clock the dining room doors were thrown open and the guests filed into the banquet hall to the strains of music. The tables were decorated with cut flowers, among which roses were conspicuous. Menus followed:

WENT:
Little Nests on Shell-Bell
Soup
Clear Green Turley, au Modern
Cold
Fillet of Kennebec Salmon, a la Reine
Tenderloin of Beef a la Cardinal
Asparagus, Tips a la Creme
Fried Soft-shell Clams
Breaded Sardines
Sherbet a la Maitre d'Hotel
Roast Philadelphia Squab, au Croquant
Shredded Chicken Potatoes
Lettuce Salad
French Ice Cream
Strawberries with Cream
Fruit Tartlets
Raspberries and Cream
Coffee

Major Joseph P. Linton, president of the toastmaster, called for toasts which were made by prominent officers present. Bishop McQuaid was chairman of the toastmaster, and he presented the place on the other, which was taken by Very Rev. Thomas Hargather, pastor of the Cathedral, who made a remark appropriate to the occasion.

General Henry J. Fries, supreme commander of the order, spoke on the "Knights of St. John."

Other speakers of the evening were Mrs. Louise M. Zang, supreme president of the Ladies' Auxiliary, who spoke on "The Ladies' Auxiliary," Hon. M. J. Kane, supreme secretary who outlined "Our Duty," Rev. Dr. Schlick spoke on "True Knighthood," and John T. Schreiner, who toasted "The Ladies."

The Ladies' Auxiliary, who had their daily sessions in the "rooms of the Chamber of Commerce," elected the following officers: Supreme President, Mrs. E. Zang, Columbus, O.; Supreme Vice President, Miss J. C. Linton, Detroit; Supreme Second Vice President, Mrs. M. J. Hargather, Rochester; Supreme Secretary, Mrs. Frances E. Sullivan, Erie, Pa.; Supreme Treasurer, Miss W. W. White, Newport, Ky.

COOK'S ORPHAN HOME.

There are four plays that will grace the American stage that are destined to enjoy infinite popularity with the lovers of the drama. They are "East Lynne," "The Two Orphans," "The Millionaire," and "The Cook's Orphan Home." The most successful and best liked of the quartet is "The Two Orphans," and the Cook's Orphan Home has been chosen to produce the play.

The pathetic adventures of a blind orphan and the sorrows of a grinder have been enacted here but a more magnificent production of the play than that which will be given by the stock company has never been seen in this city.

Fay Courtney will assume the part of the blind orphan. This will give her a chance to show her versatility. Miss Decker, who has been engaged to replace Mrs. Zang, will play Henrietta. Miss Courtney is a capable actress with much dramatic magnetism, and is considered a valuable addition to the company. The rest of the company will be seen in the play.

"The Two Orphans" will be at the Cook every night except Sunday, with matinee Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday. Matinee comes.

BAKER THEATRE.

What a splendid success! The second of the Baker Theatre stock company, which has been a popular success, is now on its way to the Baker Theatre. The play is "The Millionaire," and it is considered a valuable addition to the company. The rest of the company will be seen in the play.

The Baker Theatre stock company is now on its way to the Baker Theatre. The play is "The Millionaire," and it is considered a valuable addition to the company. The rest of the company will be seen in the play.