masonry, the reflection came to me that there stood government. I imagined an obscure, friendless, penniless man dragged toward that building; I compared its collossal proportions with his puny form. I saw the trembling, terrified wretch, hand-cuffed and hopeless, enter the portals to leave life, as well as hope, behind, and to have the soul crushed out of him. If there must be jails and scaffolds—if our state of society is so diabolical that these things are necessary—in Heaven's name why should the way to them be made even more inhuman than the things themselves? Yes, as a rule, policemen are heartless wretches. No good man can remain long a policeman and remain a good man. It should not be so, but they look upon the poor as public enemies because they are poor, and spy upon them as such. There is not a police court in this country, flippantly as the newspapers speak of its doings, but every week enacts once at least the tragedy of a slain human soul."

"If I were president or governor, I'd change all that, or know why," exclaimed Kate.

"No, you would be expected to talk tariff and the like, and let the under world of poverty remain unheeded. It is not considered good practical politics, you know, to meddle with the hell kept by policemen for the recreation of the poor. But to my story again. I must lie down, however, for I have been sitting up too long."

Leaning upon his young nurse as gently as his weakness and his crutch would permit, the old man lay down, and resumed:

"I didn't know what to do about writing home. What news to tell the wife, who, after three year's separation, was eagerly watching for my return, and thinking every footstep outside the door was mine. And I was so homesick, too. I had been picturing in imagination our happy greeting and reunion after our long separation, and had planned our future life together. I wanted to see my boy, too, and thought of him so often. O, I was heart sick! I yearned so to see them and to be home once more. And here I was a thousand miles away in the penitentiary—for life. For life! Think of that!"

The old man was silent for quite a while. Kate was overcome, and leaning her young head on the pillow, wept.

"How the weary days dragged on, one by one, through the weary years, with no hope of freedom but in the grave at last!"

"But," said Kate, "surely your wife heard of your fate in some way and came to be near you at last? At least, you got letters from home?"

"No, my dear; not so. After my conviction and sentence, my doom being sealed, as I supposed, I gave all my money, my watch and my trinkets, except a picture of her, to a comrade from the same county, who, having found it impossible to do me any good by remaining longer, was going home; and with them I sent a letter to my wife, telling her the awful truth, but bidding her hope. Though, of course, I knew there was no hope, I wished to spare her all the agony I could. My comrade bade me a sad farewell and departed. My heart seemed as it would break. How I envied him his happy greeting at home, while I—"

The old man was silent for a time again.

"Not a line ever came to me from home."

"Never, during all those awful years?"

"Never. And as the years went by I believed that the news of my fate had killed my wife outright, and that her father had simply abandoned me as a common murderer. He was one of that class of very pious people who expect to be forgiven in heaven because they themselves have never been wicked enough to forgive any poor sinner on earth. After the strictest sect of the Calvinists, he lived a bigot, although, barring his bigotry, he was a good enough sort of man."

"But why did you not write? How did you know but your comrade had kept your money and never delivered the letter?"

"I ought to have written again. That is clear enough to me now. But, my dear, you do not know what it is to be a prisoner for life. The awful doom seems to settle down upon the whole being. The man's very mind and soul seem to have been sentenced with his body to death in life. The brain is sluggish—crushed under the awful doom. I had no vigor—no disposition to do things like a live man. The outer world was as distant as heaven from the damned. Besides, my comrade had reason to think I would write in case I did not hear from my wife. *He* was free and could think like a *live* man. So he would not have dared to rob my family thus. But I had unfaltering confidence in his fidelity. Three years of comradeship in the life of a soldier does not leave room for doubting the man who has stood by your side in the nerce rage of battle. I *knew* he had been taithful to the trust I had given him. And I was right. After coming out of prison I learned that he, also, fell by the way and never reached home. In a railway accident, my comrade, my money and my letter were all burned up together, and thus no news of my fate ever reached my people; no explanation of my sudden dropping out of sight, except, as I will tell you presently, that I, also, perished in the railroad disaster."

"How did you come to be released at last?" asked Kate.

"I was shut up in prison, going through the dreary, monotonous daily round of prison life, till three years ago, shut up there like a frog in a rock for twenty-two years; when one evening about sun down, the warden sent for me, and to my utter and stunning astonishment, told me I was free—that I had been pardoned. I spent that night in the old prison, and left it next morning to go out into the world. For some days I felt lonesome without those hopeless walls about me They had become part of my life. I was dazed and aimless. The warden told me that about the time I was sentenced, the woman I had defended had also been sent up for a term of twenty years, presumably for allowing herself to be whacked over the crazy-bones with a club, far she had done no other wickedness. She had been released at last, and having told the true story of the affair to some humane person, he had taken interest enough in my case to finally secure my pardon.

"After some days I began to regain my vigor, and the old yearning for home revived with crazing intensity. I sped to Wisconsin, and with beating heart, rapped at last at my father-in-law's door. A stranger greeted me. He had never so much as heard of my people, though he had lived on the place twelve years. I went to the old burying ground and to the lot where some of my father-in-law's folks had been buried. No grave had been made there since I had left for the front, and I could see that no one had taken any care of the spot for many years.

"Nobody knew me, for I had left there, five and twenty years before, a young man; but I finally met and recognized a stooped and palsied old wreck who had been the village postmaster in those earlier days. From him I learned that my father-in-law's family, with my wife and child, had removed to Oregon in 1868, but that they had afterwards left there, and, in 1873, or thereabouts, my informant had heard of them somewhere—just where he could not remember if he had ever known—in New Mexico. Nothing had been heard of them since, that is, for about fourteen years. Though I inquired of many of the old settlers, I could learn nothing more than the old postmaster had told me; but everybody wanted to know all about me and my unaccountable absence. This much, however, I did hear: That before they moved away, all but my wife had given me up as having been burned up in the same railroad accident in which my comrade perished, for it was assumed that we were journeying homeward together, as it had been our intention to do, and my watch, with my name and address engraved in it, had been found in the debris of the wreck and sent home; but despite this seemingly conclusive evidence, my wife had insisted that I would some day return, and left word for me just where to find her in Oregon. Doubtless, she, too, at last, gave me up as dead, for she seems to have left no message for me when they moved again.

"I hadn't much money, and luxurious traveling was beyond my reach; but, in one way and another, I beat my passage to Oregon, where nothing was to be learned, and then to Albuquerque. Falling in with a party of miners there, I went to work and began to gather and to save some money. I wandered all over New Mexico searching for my family or for some trace of them. I got not the slightest clue. It was while on one of these pilgrimages that I stumbled by sheer luck upon a find which I afterwards sold for a respectable pile. Since then I have traveled all over the west and the northwest. I have studied directories, looked through tons of country newspapers, used every means I could think of, but in vain. I know absolutely nothing to-day of the wife and child I kissed farewell twenty-eight years ago. Of course, by baby boy, if living, is now a young man of thirty years, and very likely has a family of his own. But he and his mother both may have been in their graves long years ago. I am in Kansas now on my ceaseless pilgrimage, hoping still against hope. Now, you have the old ex-convict's story."

"And, oh, what a sad one it is!" said Kate. "I wish I could know that you will yet find your family."

"Well, be that as fate wills, Kate. But let us come back to my proposal. I have a respectable fortune. I am not a millionaire, but I have more than I can ever need. I have nobody to share it while I live, no one to leave it to when I quit. What's the good of it?"

"But you may find your family," said Kate.

"True' but I have little reason to hope for that any more; and I want *you* to be my family." Kate started, but he continued: "I want you to become my daughter and my heir." (Kate breathed more freely.) "I can trust you. If you should ever come across my wife or my boy, you would divide. I wish to adopt you by legal proceedings, so you can be my heir, will or no will. You can go right off to college, dress well and live easy, and some day you can make that speech I dreamed about."

"You are so kind it seems ungrateful to refuse," said Kate, "but I could never bear to give up my father's name. It would seem like deserting him—renouncing him, as it were."

"You will some day marry, and then you will be guilty of precisely that wickedness," said he. "You will give up your father's name and become Mrs. somebody else. That is sure to happen to such a jewel of a girl, if the race of young men has not become extinct."

"Of course," said Kate "a girl changes her name when she gets married, and it seems all right. But—that's different, you know."

"How different? It is going back on your father's name in one case as much as in the other," said he.

"Yes, but if I should marry"—

"If you *should* marry?" interrupted the old man.

"If I should marry," Kate smilingly resumed, "I would still be my own father's daughter. I would not be renouncing him—putting him out of my life forever."

"I understand your feelings, Kate," said he, "and they are worthy of you. But let us see if we can't get around the difficulty somehow. Let's compromise. You can be your father's daughter and mine too. As children say, 'let's pretend like' you are my daughter. You needn't change your name at all, nor do any such disagreeable and unheard of thing. You wish to go to college. Let me send you there, and see you through, just as if I *were* your father."

"That would be too much like accepting charity," said Kate. "It's good of you to offer it, but I would feel as if I were living on charity."

"Charity!" What a commentary on our latter day Christianity, that a word once descriptive of the chiefest Christian virtue has come to express only an act by which, in the name of Christianity, the rich man or woman mortifies God's children in distress! It once meant an act of kindness done as by one to another of the same household. It meant the actual feeling of human solidarity—of human brotherhood. Now it means the half contemptuous alms tossed in condescension by a social superior to social outcasts below. Alas, "charity" is not brotherly! It has been taught to be "discriminating" lest it should give to the "unworthy," and has thus come to ask humiliating questions when appealed to for assistance; and poverty, shrinking from the ordeal, dreads to make its condition known. He who, willing to work or unable to work, is in want in the midst of plenty, should not feel that he begs alms, but that he merely demands justice when he asks for the necessaries of life. The Christian has no right to merely bestow money or goods upon one in distress, but is bound to consider the manner of bestowing. In that beautiful lesson in true charity —*The Vision of Sir Launfal*—Lowell makes the mendicant leper, when Sir Launfal had—

"Tossed him a piece of gold in scorn."

exclaim:

"That is not true alms which the hand can hold;
He gives nothing but worthless gold
Who gives from a sense of duty."

And, after awhile, when Sir Lanfaul had learned at last his lesson, the poet makes our blessed Master say:

"Not what we give, but what we share,
For the gift without the giver is bare;
Who gives himself with his alms feeds three
Himself, his hungry neighbor, and me."

The "charity" which St. Paul puts above faith and hope is not mere almsgiving, but the generous feeling of human solidarity; the feeling that every human being is a member of the same household of God.

On the other hand, what misery does the folly of vain "selfrespect" cause to people in distress? From infancy we are taught to conceal our poverty, and to "keep up appearances" even though we be perishing of hunger. All about the sufferer are good-hearted people, who would gladly relieve his necessities were they frankly revealed; but no one dares offer assistance unasked, lest his brotherliness give offense. We are taught to look upon poverty—destitution—as disgraceful, and to accept relief *because we actually need it*, is regarded as degrading. Many suffer in deepest poverty, some even die of want, rather than confess their condition, when that confession would bring instant and eager assistance. No one should lose any time in getting rid of this false notion of "independence." It is as wicked to suffer thus in secret as it is to let another die unaided from a bountiful store. "Proud" poverty needs the feeling of human brotherhood quite as much as uncharitable wealth. No one will hesitate to tell his true condition to his own brother, nor to accept that brother's aid, and if we really felt that all men are our brothers, would we not show the same frankness to all, and accept without a sense of shame relief from any hand?

Kate had been brought up in a household where this old idea of "pride" prevailed, and from the old man's offer, which was prompted by the holiest motive, her false philosophy made her shrink almost as if her would-be benefactor had proposed some disgraceful thing. I cannot approve her conduct nor her feeling. But she had been taught to feel and to act thus, and we must forgive her. Kate was young. Her good sense and her good heart may teach her better in time.

The old man answered:

"But I owe you ever so many hundred dollars for your care of me. Who knows but had it not been for your nursing I would be holding up a graveyard mound right now?"

"Do you think I would take pay from you for that?" asked Kate in unfeigned astonishment. "Mrs. Carlington has been paying me my regular wages just as if I had been at work all the time. So I've been paid already."

"Mrs. Carlington be hanged! Just

(Continued on page 14.)


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