

character that was developing both kindness and force. The deep sense of obligation she had felt for her aunt had grown into love, and she was willing to make almost any sacrifice rather than bring sorrow into the life of the lonely woman. Miss Crane had legally adopted Ethel and she bore her name.

It was something of a shock to the girl when her aunt made known to her the aversion she felt toward Irvin Banks, and her strong desire that she should not allow the acquaintance to go any further.

"But why, aunty?" she urged. "What have you against him?"

"Don't you know what there is against him?" cried Miss Crane.

"Well—what?"

"Why, that boy took to drinking when he wasn't more than 18. He got in with a bad set and helped to rob a store over in Redcliffe and got sent up for a year."

"Yes, I know about that," said Ethel quietly.

Her aunt regarded her with speechless amazement. When she finally found breath to speak, she said: "You knew that? And yet you ask me what there is against him?"

"Yes, I knew it—he told me. But that was seven years ago. He has never touched liquor since. It was a terrible lesson. They got him so drunk that night he scarcely knew what he was doing. He watched outside, but he never entered the store. It was all right he should be punished. He feels that way and says he is glad he was pulled up in time. You know what he has made of himself, the people all know, and most of them overlook what happened when he was nothing but a boy."

"Well," protested Miss Crane, "I must say I can't. I wouldn't lay a straw in his way. I'd help him any way I could, but when it comes to—"

She paused here as though positively unable to contemplate the awful possibility of anything like familiarity with such a person.

"But just think!" cried the girl. "They have given him the position of first assistant among all the engineers in building the big bridge. Just imagine what they think of him in New York, when they do that."

"Yes, that's fine. I want to see him get along. But I don't want to see you get to caring enough for him to—spoil your life."

"Spoil my life?" echoed the girl blankly.

"Yes. You can never tell when a man who's been a drunkard once will take to it again. You can't trust him. I'd rather die than see any one I cared for marry that sort of a man."

Ethel's affection for her aunt, and her love for this man—for she knew now it was love—were so nearly crushing her in warfare that she could say no more, and she brought the interview to an end by making an excuse to go to her room.

Irvin Banks lived with his sister, who had been one of the principal factors in helping him to rise to the position he now held. It was with his sister that Ethel had first met him. She was attracted by the good-looking young man with the high, firm carriage of the head, the straight gaze and the wholesome smile, and she was further held by his ability to say something worth while, and saying it rather well. She had met him in his own home by invitation of his sister, and had asked him to call. It was after his second visit, at both of which Miss Crane had pretended illness as an excuse for not appearing, that the lady had given her emphatic reasons for not wishing him to call again.

Ground between the millstones of her "divided duty," Ethel sought the counsel of Mary Banks.

"Aunt Melissa has been to me a second mother. I love her very dearly. How can I go dead against her wishes. I—I must ask him not to call again," Ethel said.

"And do you think Irvin will let it