

AMBITION.

Adown yon vale, so cool and green,
Where rays of noon were never seen,
So thick the trees were round it,
There stood a beech of giant bole,
Upon a velvet, mossy knoll;
And birds sang all around it.

A brook flowed softly, close beside,
And tree and knoll upon its tide
Could see their glassy doubles;
The whispering trees in love bent nigh,
And joined their arms when winds blew high,
Dividing all their troubles.

But—O! to be a famous tree,
And landmark great for all to see,
Was then this tree's ambition,
And now, behold, a clearing's made;
Surrounding trees the axe has laid,
To give the beech position.

The brook, beneath the burning skies,
Has shrunk to half its former size;
The birds have all departed.
A landmark, now, this lonely beech,
Far-placed beyond his neighbor's reach,
Is well-nigh broken-hearted.

—Rush C. Farris in American Magazine.

ONE OF MANY.



HEY had been married for rather more than a year—Jim Carrol and his pretty little wife—and their babydaughter was two months old.

He was a fine fellow, was Jim—well set up and good to look at; chivalrous, upright and honest as the day. But though he came of good old stock—of which he was the last—he was only a clerk in a London architect's office with a miserable salary of £100 a year, which, of course, he might lose with his situation any day. It will be clear, I hope, to the meaneast understanding that under these circumstances he had not the smallest right to think of matrimony. So when he had the audacity to propose for Marjory Linton—niece and ward of the pompous and wealthy old Joseph Linton of Manchester—that gentleman gave him a very short shrift and promptly showed him the door. And when, a month later, pretty independent Marjory ran away with the same handsome, impecunious Jim Carrol, her irate uncle—to use his own expressions—"washed his hands of her, and closed his door against her and her husband forever." At this terrible sentence Marjory did not trouble herself very much; nor did her husband suffer it to affect his peace of mind. He was too happy to care whether all the rich old men in Europe closed their doors against him—or otherwise.

They lived in a tiny house in a red-bricked, pointed-gabled terrace at Camberwell; and they had enough to do to pay the rent, and to make ends meet generally, especially after the baby came. But they loved each other passionately, and that made things easier. Marjory was the most sunny-hearted and hopeful of little women, and she was quite sure that some day Dornton & Cox, awakening to a sense of Jim's abilities, would take him into partnership and make his fortune.

But, alas! for Marjory's dreams, on the particular evening on which this story opens, Carrol was wending his way homeward dejectedly enough; for Dornton & Cox, having had heavy losses lately, were reducing their staff of clerks, and among those dismissed to-day was James Carrol. Jim felt stunned and bewildered; for situations were not as plentiful as blackberries in London in 1884, any more than they are now.

"Oh, Jim, how late you are!" cried little Mrs. Carrol as she flew to the door to meet her husband. I thought you were never coming, I had to put baby to bed, at last."

"Had you, dear?" he answered absently, as he followed her into the small but cozy sitting room.

He looked depressed and out of sorts, Marjory thought. Perhaps he had one of his bad headaches. But, like a wise little wife, she asked no questions, only poured out his tea and gave him his slippers. He did not eat anything, she noticed, but sent up his cup again and again, draining it each time feverishly. He was very silent, too.

"Is anything the matter, dear?" his wife said at last, in anxious tones.

"Yes, Marjory," he answered, with an effort. Then, after a pause, he told her.

For a moment her sunny face was clouded; this was a contingency which they had never contemplated. Then she said bravely:

"Never mind, Jim. It will not be difficult for you to get another situation. I see scores of advertisements in the papers every day."

But Carrol was not so sanguine. He was of a more gloomy temperament than Marjory, and would not be cheered, not even when baby woke up and smiled and cooed in his face as was her wont.

They studied the paper diligently day after day. Carrol answered innumerable advertisements, both by post and personally, but in vain; though he spent an alarming sum in postage stamps, and returned night after night, weary, heart-sick and footsore.

The days went on; quarter-day drew near and passed, and the Carrols' little store of money melted away.

Another week passed. Jim searched with anxious diligence in each evening's paper the column devoted to "vacant situations," and answered various advertisements which seemed singularly suitable. But those who have studied that column—not for amusement or curiosity, but for

dear life—know that of these advertisements only too many are simply swindles, and that the comparatively few which are bona fide are speedily secured by those who have either the influence or the experience, which Jim Carrol had not. He set off every morning for the city, neglected no opportunity, left no stone unturned, but in vain.

In September they moved out of their pretty home to a very small and dingy cottage which stood alone, a little way back from a side street, behind a timber yard. It was not an attractive dwelling, but it was very cheap; and the rent of their former house was now out of the question. To defray the various inevitable expenses connected with the removal, and one or two other necessary outlays, they sold some of their furniture, and a few other things besides.

Marjory's jewelry had all gone long ago.

One day, in walking westward along Fleet street, Carrol met an old fellow clerk, by name Archie Lyle.

"Hallo, Carrol!" Lyle exclaimed, grasping the former's hand heartily, and turning to walk alongside. "How are you? Haven't seen you for a month of Sundays. Why, you look down in the mouth, old man! What's up, eh?"

"Nothing particular," replied the other, coldly enough, "except that I have been out of a situation since I left Dornton & Cox. Inspecting public buildings, when you have a wife and child to keep on nothing, is not a particularly exhilarating or lively occupation, he continued bitterly.

"By Jove, no!" said the other in serious tones.

"By the way," he said suddenly, when they had crossed several streets in comparative silence, "you are a good draughtsman, are you not? You have a good idea of plans and that?"

"I ought to have," returned Carrol dryly, "seeing I have been a clerk in an architect's office for the last three years."

"Ah, yes, to be sure. Well, I know designs are wanted for a new hospital somewhere near Manchester. The premium is a hundred pounds. Now—"

"For God's sake, tell me," interrupted the other eagerly and hoarsely, "do you think I have any chance?"

"Well," said Lyle, "I was going to have a try. My father has an idea I ought to distinguish myself in that line; but I'm an awful duffer on plans—always was. So if you care to go in for it—it's a goodish premium—it might be worth your while. And, by the way, Carrol, don't sign your own name for I believe old Linton, your wife's uncle, is to be one of the judges. He is still no end down on you, and—it might make a difference. See? Sign it—oh, anything you like, and send it under cover to me. You can trust me not to father it," he added, laughing. "I'll send you all the particulars to-morrow, and let you know whenever the things's decided."

"Lyle, I cannot thank you sufficiently," said Carrol unsteadily, though I fear there is very little chance for me."

"Pooh!" replied the other in airy tones, "you've as good a chance as any of the rest."

Carrol declined his companion's invitation to accompany him, and with a grasp of the hand the two men parted. Jim turned down a side street, and from thence through the Embankment gardens to the river.

Marjory met him with her usual cheery smile; but he fancied her sweet face was paler and more worn looking than ever; and the baby's eyes, unnaturally large and bright, seemed to follow him reproachfully. His wife clapped her little hands joyfully when he told her of Lyle's proposal; and she was so merry and hopeful all the evening that Jim felt his spirits rise. She prepared a nice little supper for him, too; and Jim did not notice, for a wonder, that one or two of their cherished books had disappeared. Baby was very good to-night; she did not cry at all; and the evening was the most cheerful they had passed for some time.

In the evening of the following day came a letter from Lyle; and as soon as it was light the next morning Carrol began his task. He worked hard and patiently, but he suffered terribly from nervous headaches; he took even less food than usual; and the baby's constant monotonous wail made him sometimes feel half crazy.

At last the drawing was finished. Carrol signed it "Isola, care of A. Lyle, Esq.," as his friend had suggested. Marjory thought it beautiful, and had no doubt of its being successful; but Carrol was not so sanguine. However, he sent it off at once; and Marjory already began to calculate how long a time must elapse before its fate would be decided.

It was weary waiting, though; and to Jim—ay, and to Marjory too—the once dreaded pawshop became sadly and painfully familiar. Meanwhile their baby was slowly but surely fading away from them.

One afternoon Carrol returned somewhat earlier than usual from the city, whither he had been in answer to some luring will-o'-the-wisp advertisement. It was a dull, wet day; and as he turned up the narrow street which led to his home, his heart sank with a curious, undefined dread. They had been up with the baby all night, but she had seemed better and brighter when Jim left in the morning.

Marjory met him, as she always did, at the door. At a glance his fears were quickened.

"What is it?" he said hastily. "The child—is she worse?"

"Jim," she answered, looking up at him with dry, grief-stricken eyes, "Jim—baby is dead!"

He followed her silently to the room where the tiny creature, with waxen features so like his own, lay cold and still and smiling.

"When?" he asked in a choked voice.

"Just three hours ago," she replied monotonously.

Carrol stood looking down on all that

was, left to him of his baby daughter and smoothed the short, fluffy hair with a strange, wistful look in his dark, sunken eyes.

"Poor little thing!" he said, sadly and brokenly. "God knows what she is spared!"

There was a silence, for Marjory could not speak. The rain dripped on the window sill outside; the wind shook the casement and moaned in the chimney. Then, with a quick, dry sob, Carrol took his wife in his arms and they mingled their tears together.

So the autumn dragged on. At last—one dreadful day, when even Marjory broke down and when Jim looked so weak and ill as he set off on his weary and fruitless quest for work that it almost broke his wife's heart to see him—at last, privately, and with many pangs of humbled pride, Mrs. Carrol wrote her uncle. She did not tell her husband, for she knew that if she did nothing would induce him to let the letter go. The answer came soon enough; and it so chanced that Carrol met the postman at the door and took the letter from him.

He gave to his wife, and waited while she read it; then, seeing her face blanch, took it from her trembling hands, and with compressed lips glanced at the few words it contained. It was short and to the point:

DEAR MARJORY—If you like to leave your husband, I will take you back to your old home. On no other terms and in no other way will I help you. You took your own way; and now you may take the consequences.

JOSEPH LINTON.

It is said much for Jim's utter heart-sickness that he did not even show any displeasure at Marjory's having written. He only said gently:

"You should not have asked him, dear."

But the passionate little Marjory tore up the letter and threw it into the fire-place.

It haunted Jim, though. If it were not for him, he thought wretchedly, his Marjory would be cared for again as she ought to be. He knew her too well to think she would leave him. No word had come of his drawing; he had almost given up hope; a deadly, horrible depression seemed to have taken possession of him. Every way seemed closed to him—save one.

"Dear," he said one night with an effort—they had been sitting silent for a long time in the dismantled little sitting room—"would you not like—to go back—to Manchester?"

"What, without you, Jim?" she cried, with incredulous amazement in her tired little voice.

"Yes," very steadily.

"Ah, Jim," tones of keen reproach, "do you want me to go?"

"My darling, you need not ask me that," and Jim's voice shook slightly.

"But—it would be better—for you."

"Ah, my dear," she said with an attempt at her old sauciness, "you need not hint; you can't get rid of me. Don't think it!"

Then she suddenly laid her curly head on his knee, and began to cry.

"O, Jim," she sobbed, "don't send me away! How can you speak so? You break my heart! Ah, darling, you could not do without me, could you?"

"Post these letters for me, King—will you?" said Archie Lyle, one October forenoon. "I'm off in a tearing hurry to catch a train. Don't forget them, there's a good fellow."

"All right," said the young man addressed, and he put the letters carelessly into the breast-pocket of his overcoat.

"Hang it all!" King said to himself the next day, "I've forgotten to post Lyle's letters. However, I don't suppose it matters much. He'll be none the wiser." He dropped them into the first pillar box he came to, and lighting a cigar, sauntered on his way.

On the morning of this same day Carrol and his wife were standing, pale and silent, at the window of their sitting room. They were watching for the postman. They had watched for him unspokenly, feverishly, despairingly, for many days. Soon they heard the sharp rat-tat on the doors in the distance. He came nearer. He knocked at the door of the house nearest theirs. Then—he passed on!

"Oh, Jim!" said the little wife despairingly.

Carrol was white to his very lips. "Never mind, childie," he said, putting his arm round her, and trying to speak steadily.

"Oh, my dear, I can't help it," she sobbed.

There was a long pause; then Marjory said, almost cheerily, "Perhaps if you went to Mr. Lyle, he could tell you, Jim—"

"I did go, Marjory, yesterday," he interrupted, quietly, but he has gone from home for a fortnight. If my drawing had been successful, he would have written before he left. Try not to grieve, darling; it can't be helped." Jim went on, with a sickly smile. "We must try something else. I may hear of something to-day."

Perhaps there will be a letter to-night," said Marjory, with renewed hope, as she bade her husband good-by at the door.

Jim came home about six, looking terribly weary and depressed. He had been unsuccessful—once more.

"No letters yet, dear," said his wife, hastening to answer the unspoken question in his eyes. As she spoke they heard the postman's knock in the distance. It came nearer and died away.

"Perhaps there will be one in the morning," Marjory went on; but her voice faltered.

In the morning! Another long, awful, sleepless night of hoping against hope, of maddening, steadily growing despair! Jim shuddered. He was worn out, physically and mentally; and he felt as though he could not stand the sickening suspense longer. As he looked at his wife, her wan, changed little face, with its pale ghost of a smile, seemed to pierce his heart.

A strange, terrible, determined look settled round his mouth, but Marjory was leaning her curly head against his arm, and did not see his face.

The room was quite dark now, but they were still standing at the window. For a time Carrol was very still. Then he said:

"I am very tired, Marjory darling. I will lie down for a while. Don't disturb me. I—I didn't sleep last night" (nor for many nights, he might have added).

"But won't you have a cup of tea first, Jim?"

"No, I don't care for any."

"A long sleep will do you good, dear," she said, anxiously and caressingly. "You look dreadful."

"Yes," he answered, in a strangely quiet voice, "a long sleep will do me good." Then, suddenly, "Kiss me, Marjory!"

"Ah, my own dear, disappointed boy!" she cried, throwing her arms round him.

He held her to him tightly, and kissed her again and again.

"My darling!" he said hoarsely.

"My own darling!"

Then he let her go, and went away. She heard him go up stairs, and his footsteps echo in the room above.

Marjory sat at the window for a long time, and watched the stars grow brighter and clearer in the soft dark sky. Somewhere in the distance a street organ was wailing out an old hackneyed waltz tune. It stirred her heart strangely.

She remembered dancing that waltz with Jim, so very, very long ago—like everything else that was bright and hopeful. Even Marjory's brave little heart was heavy to-night. What would become of them, she wondered. God only knew.

The clock on the neighboring church tower boomed out on the night air; and as the last stroke died away there was a sharp knock at the door. It was the postman. Marjory took the one letter he held out to her, and closing the door, she went back to the sitting room. With trembling fingers she lighted the candle and examined the envelope eagerly. Yes—it was Mr. Lyle's handwriting! Marjory recognized it without difficulty, for it was a peculiar hand. With a beating heart she stole softly up stairs—she did not take the candle, for fear of waking Jim, should he be asleep—and peeped into the bed room. All was still. In the pale starlight she could just make out the dim outline of his figure on the bed.

"Jim," she whispered.

No answer. He was evidently asleep. Ah! It seemed a pity to wake him, she thought; and perhaps, after all, the letter held bad news. She softly laid a shawl over him in the semi-darkness and crept down stairs again.

After looking at the fateful envelope for some time, she slowly opened it. She could not wait; and she knew Jim would not mind. In another moment she uttered a little glad, involuntary cry, and her lips parted in a joyful, half incredulous smile. "Could it be possible! Yes, Jim's design had been selected as the best; the premium would be his! And this was not the only good news the letter contained; for Lyle went on to say that he had heard of a vacant appointment, which he thought he could—through his father's influence—secure for Carrol.

Marjory hid her face in her hands; for a moment the revulsion of feeling was almost too much. Then in a passion of tears and thankfulness she fell upon her knees. But she could only say, "Thank God! Thank God!"

An hour passed. The moon was drifting among the stars, and streaming in through the uncurtained window on Marjory's face wet with many tears. The candle had burnt itself out.

Ah, what a joyous waking Jim's would be! Should she lay the letter on his pillow to surprise him when he awoke? Or should she rouse him? Perhaps he was already awake.

She lit a fresh bit of candle, and, still holding the precious letter, went up stairs. She laid the candle, down just outside the bedroom door, and entered very gently.

How *dearly* still the room was!

"Jim!" she said softly.

But Jim did not answer. How soundly he slept!

Marjory came nearer and bent over him in the throbbing darkness. The moon had hidden herself behind one solitary cloud.

"Jim!"—a little louder.

Still that strange, weird hush. A vague fear stirred her heart. She did not even hear him breathe. What if he had fainted!

The moon sailed out again, illuminating part of the room, but leaving the bed in deep shadow.

"Jim, darling," leaning over him and laying her arm across his neck, "a letter has come! It is—" With a sudden sickening terror she stopped and raised herself, for she felt—that her sieve was *wet!*

Snatching up the candle she held it over the bed, and by its flickering light she saw—ah, dear heaven, what did she see!

Not her Jim, surely?

A white, dead face—a dark-red stain on the coverlet—a ghastly wound—and cold, nerveless fingers, still holding—*what!*

Ah, cruel Jim!

A long, shuddering cry rang out on the autumn night—wild—agonized—despairing. Again and again it echoed. Then all was still.

In the asylum at S—there is a fair, slender woman, with solemn, child-like eyes and sunny hair.

"Hush!" she says to the doctors every day, with lowered voice and uplifted finger. "Hush! Jim is asleep. I must not wake him. He is so tired, poor Jim! He does not know that the letter has come. You will take me to him, will you not? Not now—but when he wakes!"

LEPROSY IN INDIA.

The Number Exceeds 250,000 and is Rapidly Increasing

The official report gives 135,000 as the existing number of lepers in India, but there can be little doubt that they already exceed 250,000, and that their numbers are steadily increasing. Nor whether the disease is propagated by contagion or by heredity it has every ghastly leper begging in the streets and in the balconies of houses. I met them at railway stations and in places of public resort. In one smallazaar a friend of mine told me he had just counted 12. I even heard of one who was employed by an English baker in the making of bread. It is moreover estimated that all the copper hands of lepers. I found in Bombay a man whose hands were covered with leprosy engaged in the railway service as a ticket collector. Who can estimate the danger to the English and native community of many hundreds of railway tickets daily passing through this man's hands? An English lady in the same city had, just before my arrival, fallen a victim to the disease. Lepers, with their revolting miseries fully exposed, associate freely with the community. They marry when they choose; they love a roving life, and thus continually become fresh centres for propagating the disease. I was assured by Mr. MacGuire, the Superintendent of the Leper Asylum in Calcutta, that he could testify, from often repeated observations, that in the congregations of poor people who assemble at the funeral feasts of the wealthy natives, one person in three was a leper. By the same authority I was told that the asylum was generally overcrowded, and that the police do not hesitate to bring in cabs lepers who are in a dying state, and for whom it is necessary to turn out some less imminent cases. Indeed the evil is so widespread that, as Lord Dufferin said to me, one might almost as readily undertake to rid India of its snakes as of its leprosy. Moreover the absence of Indian public opinion on such matters, and the constitutional calousness of the native mind, increase the difficulty in a way that English readers can scarcely estimate. So careless of danger does the Indian fanaticism make men to this evil, that, in the great leper hospital at Tarantam, the authorities—as I was assured by an official there—have to hunt out relatives of the deceased who have come in pretending that they are leprots, and who are actually willing to become infected for the sake of acquiring board, lodging and the power of living an idle life. The Indian desires above all things to be a man of money, and that the leper at Tarantam likes to save two out of the three rupees allowed him monthly, and either to hide them in the ground, put them out at interest, or invest them in jewelry for his wife. One man had thus acquired 600 rupees—at the cost of most wretched diet, and consequent increase of the disease.—Nineteenth Century.

Then and Now.

One hundred years ago the world was rated at 731,000,000, of whom 174,000,000 were Christians; now the population has doubled and the Christians tripled. One hundred years ago the church was asleep on mission work and the governments and nations opposed missions; now, with little exception, all welcome them. One hundred years ago English-speaking people had not one mission society; now they have 150 reported. One hundred years ago educated men could not be induced to become missionaries—the work was too formidable; now we have 7,000 missionaries, nearly one-third of whom are women; also 35,000 native agents, 3,000 of whom are ordained ministers. One hundred years ago there were not 300 bible converts among the heathen; now there are 3,000,000. One hundred years ago it was thought vain to hope for conversions from Mohammedanism; now, in many parts, as in Lahore, India, most of the leading Christian pastors are converted Mohammedans. Within the past two years more than 2,000 young men have gone from the United States and Canada and are laboring with success.—Chicago Times.

A Swindler Betrayed by His Parrot.

Detectives obtain their hints and clues from many sources, but it is not often (the Paris correspondent of the London Telegraph remarks) that they receive them through the instrumentality of parrots; yet this is just what has happened during the re-searches of M. Goron, the head of the Paris Criminal Department. This officer has been lately looking for the chief accountant of the "Cafuse Baud," a fellow named Victor Chevalier, and, going the other day into the rooms of a notorious receiver of stolen goods in Paris, he heard himself addressed in harsh tones as "Good old Victor! there you are!" This was enough for the detective, who having silently satisfied himself that the loquacious bird was the property of the man for whom he was looking, proceeded to search the receiver's den for indications of a more substantial character. After a long and minute investigation of the premises, he found a letter from Victor to the receiver, in which epistle the robber announced that he was in Angers under the name of Felix Crozer. M. Goron immediately set out for that town and arrested the owner of the too valuable parrot in the railway station.

Head of the house—I see that the new girl has a wart on her nose, and is cross-eyed and frowzy. Wife—Yes, John, that is why I married her.