

A Measure of Success

an Easter Story

by Hope Darling

Francis Jerome looked from his newspaper with a yawn. The train, which had been passing through a scrubby forest where the snow still lingered, halted at a small town. One passenger entered the car. Jerome's wandering gaze was attracted by his face.

"He looks familiar. It—why, it is Tom Jones, my classmate at Cornell."

The next moment the two men were shaking hands and both talking at once.

"No, I don't live up here in this desolate wilderness," Jones said in response to the other's query. "I am practicing law at Molray. It's only a country town, but it has a future before it. I've been up this way on business for a client. Glad to get started for home, for it's Saturday, and I have been away from Nan and the boys all week."

He laughed gayly. Jerome's lips curled under his blonde mustache. It was easy to place his old friend. He was a country lawyer and a family man.

"What of yourself?" Jones asked, after a little. You know the class of 1881 expected great things of you."

Jerome shrugged his shoulders. "What fools we were! It took me two years to get rid of the idea that it was my mission to make the world better. Then I burned my manuscripts, locked up my pen, and went into the wholesale grocery business in Chicago."

"You! A wholesale grocer! I wish you hadn't told me; all these years I have thought of you as uplifting humanity."

His companion smiled cynically. "How are the mighty fallen! I am content. More than that, I am successful,

"Yes, dear. You play it through once before I begin to sing."

"You must stop me if I go wrong. It makes me so happy to think that I can play for you to sing, you, my precious Miss Mildred, who have taught me everything."

There was the sound of glad tears in the fresh young voice. For a moment the two clung together. Then the girl sat down at the organ, while her companion took up a position between the lilies.

Francis Jerome drew a long breath. It was true, this woman, whose crimson-tinted, olive face showed but dimly against the background of pine and cedar boughs, was Mildred Blake, once his promised wife.

He sat still, his breath coming in short gasps. The girl played on. Mildred threw back her head, and the voice that had so often filled his heart with rapture rang out in—

"Christ is risen, risen to-day."

The unseen listener did not stir until the song was ended. Then he rose, opened the door softly, and stepped out into the night.

For an hour he strode along, going over the past. It had been so happy, so hopeful, yet his own hand had closed the door upon it.

Mildred Blake had been his fellow student at Cornell. She it was who had incited him to dream of a glorious and useful future. When he graduated and went west to seek his fortune Mildred was his promised wife.

The estrangement had come slowly. At first he had struggled bravely, clinging to his lofty ideals through disappointments and rebuffs. When he began to turn from those ideals, to seek material success at any price, then his letters to Mildred were further apart and colder.

She was very patient, but there were lengths which even her gentleness could not go. There came a day when Francis Jerome received a letter giving him his freedom.

He accepted it gladly. Life was too busy for him to think of marriage. The years had gone on, and now—

"She must be the minister's wife," he concluded, as at last he turned his steps in the direction of the hotel. "She to be living here! Both voice and touch prove that her musical talent has fulfilled the promise of her youth. But married to a man who would be content to preach here! Bah! Her life is a failure."

The next morning Mr. Jerome went to church. He must know something more of Mildred, and he could not bring himself to question a stranger about her.

The little edifice was crowded with bronze-faced lumbermen and their prematurely aged wives. The stranger had no eyes for them. He even forgot to look for Mildred in his eagerness to see the man whom she had married.

The minister was a small, slight, thoughtful-faced man. It was apparent that he was educated and cultured. He threw himself heartily into the service, doing all in his power to bring home to his listeners a realization of the risen Christ.

And Mildred? Again standing before the snowy Easter lilies, dressed simply in black, she sang of the wondrous love that had broken asunder the bonds of death.

Francis Jerome listened with bated breath. Whatever of success or failure the years had brought Mildred, they had brought her a serene joy in life, to which he was a stranger. He saw this in her face and heard it in her voice.

The service over, he was hurrying from the church when Mildred met him. She gasped. For a moment her color fled. Then she greeted him with simple grace.

"Such a surprise! Ah! you must find the waiting tiresome," as he explained his presence in the town. Then she laid her hand upon the minister's arm.

"Mr. Jerome, one of my college friends, William. Mr. Jerome, this is my brother, of whom you have often heard me speak."

He remembered perfectly. William was her older brother, and had planned to work in the foreign mission field.

"My health would not permit it," Mr. Blake explained. He had overruled Francis's objections to going to the parsonage, and they were on their way thither. "It's all right, though. This work up here is the Master's. Yes; it's lonely in a way, but Mildred and I are too busy and too glad that we can tell the story of the risen Christ to mind."

The parsonage was a tiny house, but the rooms were cozy and dainty. The two men sat before the open fire and talked until Mildred summoned them to dinner.

The roughly-plastered walls of the dining-room were tinted a soft gray, making an effective background for the green vines which wreathed the pictures. The table was spread with lavender and white china and family silver. There were soup, cold meat with vegetables, a salad, coffee and nuts.

During the afternoon Mildred and her brother listened to the story of Francis Jerome's success. The woman sat with her eyes fixed upon the leaping flames, and her face gave no hint of her thoughts.

There was no evening service at the church, as Mr. Blake went out in the country to preach. Rain was falling, so he did not urge Francis to accompany him.

"Indeed you are not to go back to the hotel. Mildred will entertain you, and I will return early."

So it came about that he sat opposite Mildred, while outside the rising wind drove the rain against the windows. Conversation lagged, and at last silence fell between them.

The mind of Jerome was occupied with one question. Had he made a mistake? Not in one way, for his success was assured. Was it too late to right the wrong he had done Mildred? He rose and crossed to her side.

"Mildred, I have never loved any woman but you. I let the busy, grinding world come between us, but I never forgot. Now I can give you every luxury. Promise me you will be my wife, darling."

"I have not forgotten. I shall never forget. All my life I shall love the Francis Jerome whom I once knew. But you—the man who has made the accumulation of gold his life's aim—no, I do not love him."

He stared at her. "What do you mean, Mildred? I am unchanged. Surely you are not sorry that I have succeeded in life."

Unwaveringly her dark eyes met his. Therein he saw something of the depths that separated this woman's soul from his.

"To you success means money." Her voice was low, but firm. "Cannot you understand that I do not care for what you have done as I do for what you are? Nay, Francis, the measure of success you have won does not satisfy me. I cannot be your wife."

He never loved her as at that moment. Whatever she bade him he would do, he would become anything she wished, but Mildred's far-seeing eyes never wavered.

"I do not love the man you are now," was her steadfast reply.

"But the man I may be," he cried.

"Mildred, Mildred, do not turn away from me. Give me some word of hope."

"What can I say? Can you undo the slow work of ten years with a single wish? To me life is service—joyful, radiant service. To you it is success, a success measured by a bank account. We could not be happy together."

"I will change. You shall mold me into what you wish."

She drew back. "I am the architect of no man's fate. In one year, if you are of the same mind, you may come to me again. If then I find in your nature aught of the man whom I loved so long, I will become your wife. It is not what you do in that year; it is what you come to be. Ah, William, you are here. And she turned to greet her brother, who had just entered the room.—Washington Home Magazine.

LOVE ON WHEELS.

BY JOHN WICKLIFFE GRAY.

Would she come to-day?

John Haworth leaned back in his invalid's chair and scanned every vehicle that appeared from the uptown horizon. He was seated in the big bay window that looked out over the trees and meadows and winding roads and paths of the park. Now and then the light June breeze wafted across the street the prattle of half a dozen children at play on the greensward nearest where the invalid sat. To the philosophic and the speculative, it was an ideal spot to study human nature as we find it on the sidewalk—the lights and shadows of the past shining dimly through the features of those who hurry by.

But the speculation of John Haworth ran in another direction. And every morning for two weeks it had been the same. Before that time he had helped to pass the tedious hours by watching the faces just below him on the street from the time they came into good view four doors north or south until they were gone, to give place to others.

There was a look of eagerness on the invalid's face as he glanced at his watch for the fifth time within the half hour. It lacked but five minutes now of the time when the Bicycle Girl, as he chose to call her, would pass through the entrance of the park almost opposite.

"I think he might take a bit more exercise, walking in the park, for instance, in the next day or so." John turned to see his mother and Dr. McRae, the family physician, enter the room. "There will be no further necessity for my services, I think. How does that sound, John?" he added, cheerily.

"Almost as good as the sight of home after two years in the Philippines, Doc. I think—" he broke off suddenly and turned his eyes to the street.

Yes, there she was. The same natty, tailor-made riding skirt and jacket; the same fluffy, dark hair that refused to be kept under the jauntiest of little caps.

The girl glanced up and—was it a bow? Or had she merely turned her head to guide her wheel into the park driveway. Who was she? he wondered, as he had scores of times before in those two weeks he had been sitting by the window slowly regaining the health that a long fever had stolen.

"I think I'll get out my bicycle in a day or so," he continued, after the interruption.

"A good idea, but, mind you, not too much at first. Take it easy, and the exercise will be of as much benefit as double the amount of indoor labor with dumb bells," answered the doctor.

"A case of pleasure and medicine, eh, Doc?" said the invalid, with a smile.

"Yes, pleasure is half the cure, with exercise or medicine," he answered.

It was three days later that John's bicycle, the trusted servant of other days, was brought forth from the attic and, with the help of the porter, put in condition.

Ah, but it was glorious to have even a little strength to pedal, thought John, as he took his first ride through the park. He was on the bicycle path that ran down among the alders, where it wound in and out like a snake, crossed a little bridge and then wormed its way around the hill. It needed only a companion to make the day and his enjoyment perfect. And naturally he reverted to the Bicycle Girl who crossed into the park every morning.

He had not seen her since that day when Dr. McRae was in the room, and now, three days after, in desperation and growing fear that he would not see her again, he had come out alone.

Suddenly, out of a by-path, the girl of his thoughts darted. There was a simultaneous twist of front wheels away from each other to avoid a collision. In a moment they were contemplating each other, with a foot of each on the ground and their handle bars touching.

There was a simultaneous laugh.

"Pardon me," he said, removing his cap.

"There's nothing to pardon," she said, smilingly, as both wheels were righted. John knew instinctively that she would smile like that.

"I see I have bent several spokes," said John. "I suppose I might as well straighten them now," he added.

John took out his kit, only to find his wrench missing.

"May I borrow your wrench?" he asked.

"Certainly, Mr. Haworth," she answered.

"You know my name?" he exclaimed, delighted as well as surprised at the turn of affairs.

"Yes, I was at college with your sister. And I want to thank you for a beautiful silk shawl you sent me, though we have never met. I am Josephine Randall." A scarcely perceptible color mounted to her cheek as she extended her hand. John remembered, now, the shawl he had placed in the homeward-bound box of curios for his sister's chum, Miss Randall, who was frequently mentioned in the letters he had received on the other side of the world.

"Both myself and the shawl are honored," he exclaimed, with warmth.

"We would have met before perhaps, had your sister been at home," Miss Randall went on.

"Now that we have met, may not we finish the ride together?" he asked, wistfully.

And thereafter the invalid soldier pined no more for a companion's wheel. Two bicycles instead of one crossed the street to the park every morning.

HER AGE WAS HER SECRET.

And She Knew How to Baffle the Efforts of the Inquisitive to Learn It.

"Trust a woman to foil a woman," said the receiving teller of an up-town bank much patronized by women who draw their own checks, relates the New York Times.

"One morning when I was trying to get rid of a long line of them there came along a woman who wanted to open an account. I knew her by reputation as an actress at one time popular in New York, but who of late years had been leading a more or less retired life. I could see that most of the other women recognized her, too."

"Your age, please?" I inquired.

"Is that necessary?" she asked, somewhat sharply.

"It is."

"She hesitated a moment and glanced down that line. Every woman was 'rubbering' to catch her reply, but, taking a silver pencil case from her wrist bag, she asked me for a piece of paper. Having written her age upon it, she gave me the slip, saying:

"Hand that back to me, please, when you have made the necessary entry."

"I did so and she walked down the line of women with a smile of disdain that it was worth a day's work to see. All of the others looked foolish."

"The strange part of it is that she should have been so reticent. She is 15 years younger than I thought she was."

The Editor must tell its readers of this marvel. It originated with the largest farm seed growers in the world, the John A. Salzer Seed Co., La Crosse, Wis. It has stiff straw, stands up like a stone wall, is white, heavy, and has long ears, filled to the tip with fat, plump kernels. It is a great stoober, 80 stocks from one kernel.

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to above address, you will get a sample of this Out Wonder, which yielded in 1903, in 40 States from 250 to 310 bu. per acre, together with other farm seed samples and their big catalog. [K. L.]

Witfully Misunderstood.

Miss Butte—He said he knew I'd take a lovely picture.

Miss Chellus—Of course. All you have to do is to pick out something nice to snap and hold the camera steady.—Philadelphia Ledger.

Bobbe—"He's pretty rich, isn't he?"

Slobbe—"Yes, indeed. Why, he has money enough to make a fool of himself without exciting any comment."—Philadelphia Record.

Up Against It—"Russia will fight till the skies fall!"

"Oh, well, a good many of the 'skies,' and also the '—riches' and '—skoffs,' have already fallen."—Puck.

Ethel—"Mamma, what is the society struggle?"

Mamma—"Getting Clothes, daughter; getting the clothes."—Philadelphia Inquirer.

To Care a Cold in One Day.

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Every man on earth has either rheumatism, catarrh or some other hobby.—Chicago Daily News.

I am sure Pijo's Cure for Consumption saved my life three years ago.—Mrs. Thos. Robbins, Norwich, N. Y., Feb. 17, 1900.

A kind no is often more agreeable than a rough yes.—Bengel.

HAPPY WOMEN.

Wouldn't any woman be happy, After years of backache suffering, Days of misery, nights of unrest, The distress of urinary troubles, She finds relief and cure? No reason why any reader

Should suffer in the face of evidence like this:

Mrs. Almira A. Jackson, of East Front St., Traverse City, Mich., says: "For twenty years I never knew what it was to have good health. Every physician consulted said I had liver trouble but their medicines did me no good. Just before I began using Doan's Kidney Pills I was almost paralyzed. I could hardly stand on my feet because of the numbness and lack of circulation. Had a knife been thrust into my kidneys the pain could not have been more intense. My sleep was disturbed by visions of distorted figures. The kidney secretions were annoyingly irregular and I was tortured with thirst and always bloated. I used seven boxes of Doan's Kidney Pills. The bloating subsided until I weighed one hundred pounds less, could sleep like a child and was relieved of the pain and the irregularity of the kidney action. My circulation is good and I feel better in every way."

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"CHRIST IS RISEN, RISEN TO-DAY."

"ve made a fortune, and that is the measure of success in these days."

"Perhaps so," a little doubtfully.

"Still I'd rather have my wife and boys, my home and my dreams of the future than a fortune. Are you married?"

"No, no; time for that. My life has been a busy one. Just now I am taking the place of one of my traveling salesmen for a week. I often go on such a trip, visiting their regular customers and learning how well they do the work I pay them for. My next point is Monroe."

"We are almost there. It's a little box of a place, just a lumbering town."

"Yes, I'll get an evening train on to civilization. Well, good-by, Jones. Glad I met you. When you are in Chicago look me up."

An hour later Francis Jerome was in a decidedly bad temper. He had learned that there was no train out of Monroe until Monday morning, 36 hours later.

"What a beastly shame," he growled, picking his way along the uneven street.

"I will come dangerously near starving at that apology for a hotel. And tomorrow! Wonder if there's such a thing as a novel in the town. Fortunately I've a box of cigars—good ones, too—in my case."

He made his calls upon the retail grocers. As he was on his way back to the hotel he heard music.

"That is no novice's hand," he thought as the organ pealed out a strong, triumphant melody. "The player is a musician, born and trained."

Glancing round Mr. Jerome saw that he stood before a modest church. The door was ajar, and he caught a glimpse of a dim light within.

The music had glided into a tender harmony that thrilled the listener's heart with a half-forgotten memory. Pulling the door open, he stepped within.

The small audience room was lighted only by two lamps in the further end. The elevated platform upon which stood the pulpit and the organ was heavily trimmed with evergreen branches and the wall at the back of the platform was covered with the same. Outlined against this dusky greenness were two stands each holding a magnificent Easter lily, the blossoms gleaming white and pearly in the dim light.

Jerome remembered that the morrow would be Easter. As he looked there was the sound of a side door opening, the music ceased, and the organist rose, saying:

"Ah, you are prompt, little girl."

"How beautiful the decorations are!"

The newcomer was a young girl, and she went on: "Are you ready, Miss Mildred?"

Easter Lilies

○ Easter lilies tall and slight and fair,
Before I leave thee on the altar there
Within the empty church this Easter day,
Hast thou no lesson for me while I stay
To drink thy breath, to touch thy heart of gold?
O! tell me what thy message, what of old
He breathed unto thee for a needy world,
What gem lies in thy waxen cup imperaled?
Soft rousing from their dream of holiness,
The spotless lilies bend my soul to bless,
And murmur sweet and low ere I depart
"Christ taught us, Blessed are the pure in heart!"

HATTIE HORNER.

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