

THE CHIMES OF ST. MARY'S

It was Christmas Eve. The bells of St. Mary's in the mountain village of Cloister pealed out the fact in joyful numbers. The hills caught up a clang and sent it back and forth in a thousand reverberations. Everything about the village betokened preparations for the morrow's festivities. The street on which the stores were located, was crowded, and foot passengers loaded with bundles...

I've gone on just about as I used to. Mother bought this place about a year ago, and she and I have settled down like old folks. I like the little fellows just as well as ever, so I've hunted up all the boys for miles around. I've trained them to sing like chorals, and we've had ball matches and skating matches, and what not, and he laughed gaily at what he knew to be his hobby. Russell joined him. 'Aren't you ever going to marry and have boys of your own?' he asked. Fairburn shrugged his shoulders. 'I say, Russell, how lucky it is that you happen to know the two ladies. Mother met them at Saratoga last season, and lost her heart with them; that is how they came to be here. The widow is wonderfully appealing, but Miss Adrian is surprising! She always makes me think of a shaft of light. I believe I'm more than half in love with her, but she bewilders me so that I'm not able to calmly analyze the sensation, and determine whether it is genuine or not. How did she impress you, old boy?' His tone was intended to be full of raillery at himself, but there was an element of earnestness in it.

clear, and the chiming leapt from hill to hill and was multiplied until it seemed as if it might come from a hundred different corners. Imogene did not seem either surprised or embarrassed that he had joined her. Perhaps she had expected him to do so. Three years ago that very night he had stood with her at Nice, and looked at the stars and listened to the chimes. It had been her hands in his. The recollection was so vivid that he could feel their thrilling touch that moment. Had she entirely forgotten? Had she handed over so many lovers to her sister-in-law since then that the episode which had marked his life was effaced from her memory? She was gazing at the stars and the white-towered mountains. She looked thoroughly happy and absorbed with her present surroundings. Suddenly she glanced at her watch; it was five minutes past twelve. She turned to him with a kindly expression in her luminous eyes. 'I wish you a "Merry Christmas," she said. He bowed in silent thanks. He was pained. She should not so ignore the past. 'Miss Adrian,' he said, 'it gives a man a regular sensation when he has closed a chapter under which he supposed "his" was written, to turn a leaf and unexpectedly find "to be continued."

ant was feeding it on sugar plums. Both gentlemen looked as if they had been talking about her and had been detected in the act. She did not even seem to notice. She was absorbed in the child. She had looked more beautiful. Fairburn twiddled nervously at his mustache. He was like a man who had been beaten in an argument, who had been forced to abandon a position. Imogene looked both warmly and angrily. Some half-dozen of his young friends claimed him then. 'Aren't you a riddle; I cannot hope to read them,' he said to Russell, with a vain effort for gaiety, as he went off with the boys. Russell stood a silent looker-on, taking no part in the mirth. Just a little way off the widow was hiding spell-bound the pale-faced, white-headed young minister, who had struggled all through the morning service to keep his mind and eyes from wandering to her face. Imogene had given the baby back to the flattered young mother and was assisting Fairburn in starting games. Russell suddenly realized with sudden discontent that he had been noticing but a "looker-on in Vienna" since that experience at Nice. This woman who had been the cause of his isolation took part in every pleasant thing that crossed her path. In fact, he took the principal part, for even now he was seen last forsaking Fairburn for her. Suddenly he took his hat and went out un-noticed. He walked the deserted streets until a gas-lighting time. He knew the festivities were to close soon. When he returned, apparently no one knew that he had been away. As a result of the quiet meditation in that walk, the next day he told Fairburn that he had decided that it would never do for him to stay there selfishly enjoying himself for a whole week, when he had not been near his relations in the city, who would never forgive him, and, promising faithfully to be back for the New Year, he started in all round and left. He had a defeated feeling as he did so, and the feeling increased when he was seated in the cars and it had time to think it over. [Conclusion next week]

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