

THE HALL OF THE OLD CHARTERHOUSE.

Drawn by William Thomson.

GLIMPSES OF THACKERAY.

The old time London scenes in which the author of "Vanity Fair" lived and worked, and amid which he set the characters of his famous novels.

He was a cynic! By his life all wrought
Of generous acts, mild words, and gentle
ways;
His heart wide open to all kindly thought,
His hand so swift to give, his tongue to praise!

He was a cynic! You might read it writ
In that broad brow, crowned with its silver
hair;

In those blue eyes, with childish candor lit,
In that sweet smile his lips were wont to wear.

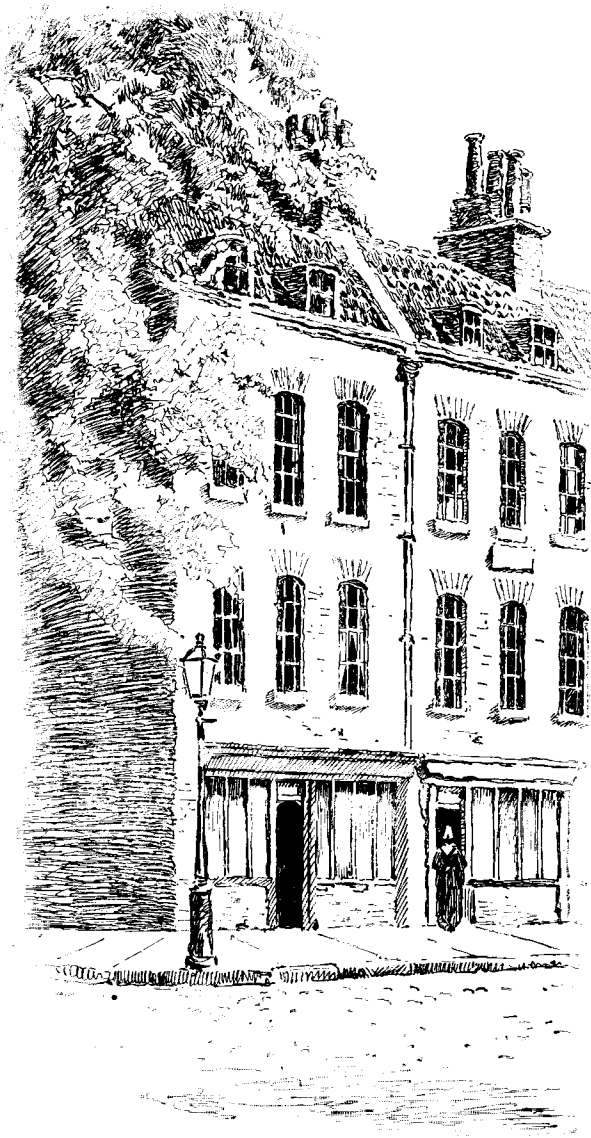
He was a cynic! By the love that clung
About him from his children, friends, and kin;
By the sharp pain light pen and gossip tongue
Wrought in him, chafing the soft heart within!

SHIRLEY BROOKS wrote this poem in memory of Thackeray, just after the great novelist's death, and he caught the spirit of the man he and so many others had loved. That the author of "Vanity Fair" was cynical in some of his work can hardly be denied. He took a positive delight in crushing a foible wherever he found it, and he had such a horror of snobs and snobbishness that sometimes, when he saw a grain of this failing, he could not resist the temptation

to make the whole lump which it contaminated ridiculous. But after all, he himself believed in human nature. Where in his books has any one been taught that happiness in this world ever comes from anything save honor and frank virtue? That is not the teaching of a cynic.

Thackeray's life has been so little known generally that the world might have believed almost anything of him. The one person who could write it fully, who could give the perfect character sketch that would put the living man before us, would be his daughter, Anne Thackeray Ritchie; but he made her promise, before his death, that she would write no biography of him.

We know that for two hundred years the Thackerays had belonged to the best professional class in England, and had had in their veins some of its best blood. For two centuries they had won their way to fame and fortune through their pens, or tongues, or swords.



28 CLERKENWELL ROAD, WHERE THACKERAY LODGED AS A YOUNG MAN.

Drawn by William Thomson.

William Makepeace Thackeray was born in Calcutta, where his father and his grandfather had been in the Indian civil service. His father, Richmond Thackeray, as a young man, was the leader of the gayest set in the Asiatic city. His mother was only nineteen when she married, and twenty four when she was left a widow; but she was not to be one long. She married Major Carmichael Smith, who remained Thackeray's intimate and

close friend until the day of his death.

The boy, whose father had left him a fortune of about a hundred thousand dollars, was brought home from India very young, and was sent to Charterhouse School, which is now at Godalming, in Surrey, but which then occupied its old quarters in the heart of London. We find him there, a gentle, timid little fellow, who never cared to play games, and had no skill in them. He gave up his play time to making very bad parodies and to editing a school magazine.

In his early days Thackeray disliked the school very much, and always spoke of it as "Slaughterhouse," but as he grew older all its unpleasantness faded away, and he saw the literary value of the place, which he drew in the "Grey Friars" where gentle *Colonel Newcome* ended his life.

Before he was eighteen Thackeray went up to Trinity College, Cambridge, but he did not remain there long enough to take his degree. It was long enough, however, to father a little paper called *The Snob*, which bore on its title page the information that it was "not conducted by members of the university."

When he left Cambridge, he told his stepfather and his mother that it was his intention

to become an artist, and he set off to Weimar to study there. He spent most of the next few years traveling backward and forward between Germany and England. As a boy, he was idle; indeed, and in spite of all the work he did, he had a strong inclination for idleness throughout his life. One of his friends said of him that he detested "the elbow grease of thinking." At this time he thoroughly enjoyed himself. He had

money enough to do what he pleased, and he did it. He never learned to draw. Perhaps it was not in him to learn to draw correctly, but he could always illustrate—which is a different thing altogether. We never find his illustrations to his own stories inefficient. He conveys the feeling of his text, and that is something which not one artist in ten, nor in twenty, can do.

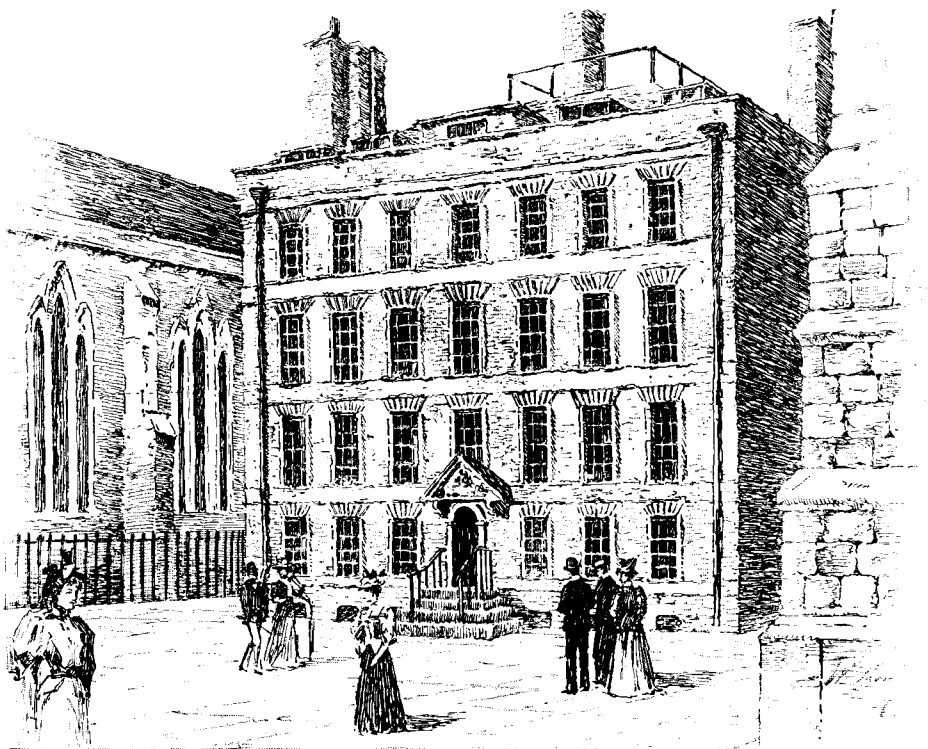
Then he came of age, and went home, to take his fortune into his own hands, and to squander it all within about a year. Some of it disappeared in an Indian bank, a good deal of it was lost at cards, and the rest went into a newspaper. Like every novelist, Thackeray was fond of using his own experiences as material, and he has given the history of this disastrous journalistic venture in "Lovel, the Widower." After telling how he was swindled into buying *The Museum*, he describes the futile ambitions in which he indulged:

I daresay I gave myself airs as the editor of that confounded *Museum*, and proposed to

educate the public taste, to diffuse morality and sound literature throughout the nation, and to pocket a liberal salary in return for my services. I daresay I printed my own sonnets, my own tragedy, my own verses—I daresay I wrote satirical articles—I daresay I made a gaby of myself to the world. Pray, my good friend, hast thou ever done likewise? If thou hast never been a fool, be sure thou wilt never be a wise man.

It was after the loss of his fortune that Thackeray went to Dickens, in 1835, and proposed to become the illustrator of the rising young novelist's next book. Dickens declined the suggestion because his drawings were not good enough, and then he turned to literature. Literature is such an easy thing to turn to! Any one can command pen and paper.

Although the world has long ago agreed that Thackeray was her gifted child, literature was not very kind to him in the beginning. He had a terrible struggle. He wrote for newspapers, but he had no permanent place until he was taken upon the staff of *Fraser's Magazine*. He had to live very poorly, and



LAMB COURT, TEMPLE, WHERE "PENDENNIS" LIVED.

Drawn by William Thomson.

his path was still a hard one even after he became one of the props of the magazine. His first story was "The Great Hoggarty Diamond," and it was so little esteemed that the publishers asked him to shorten it.

It was then that Thackeray's friends found in him the great despondency

since his death many of us have hunted up Lamb Court, where *Major Pendennis* had so much trouble in climbing three flights of "abominable black stairs."

Thackeray lived in a great many places, from his old lodgings in the Clerkenwell Road to the beautiful house which he built in Kensington Gardens,



THE OLD CHARTERHOUSE, THACKERAY'S "GREY FRIARS."

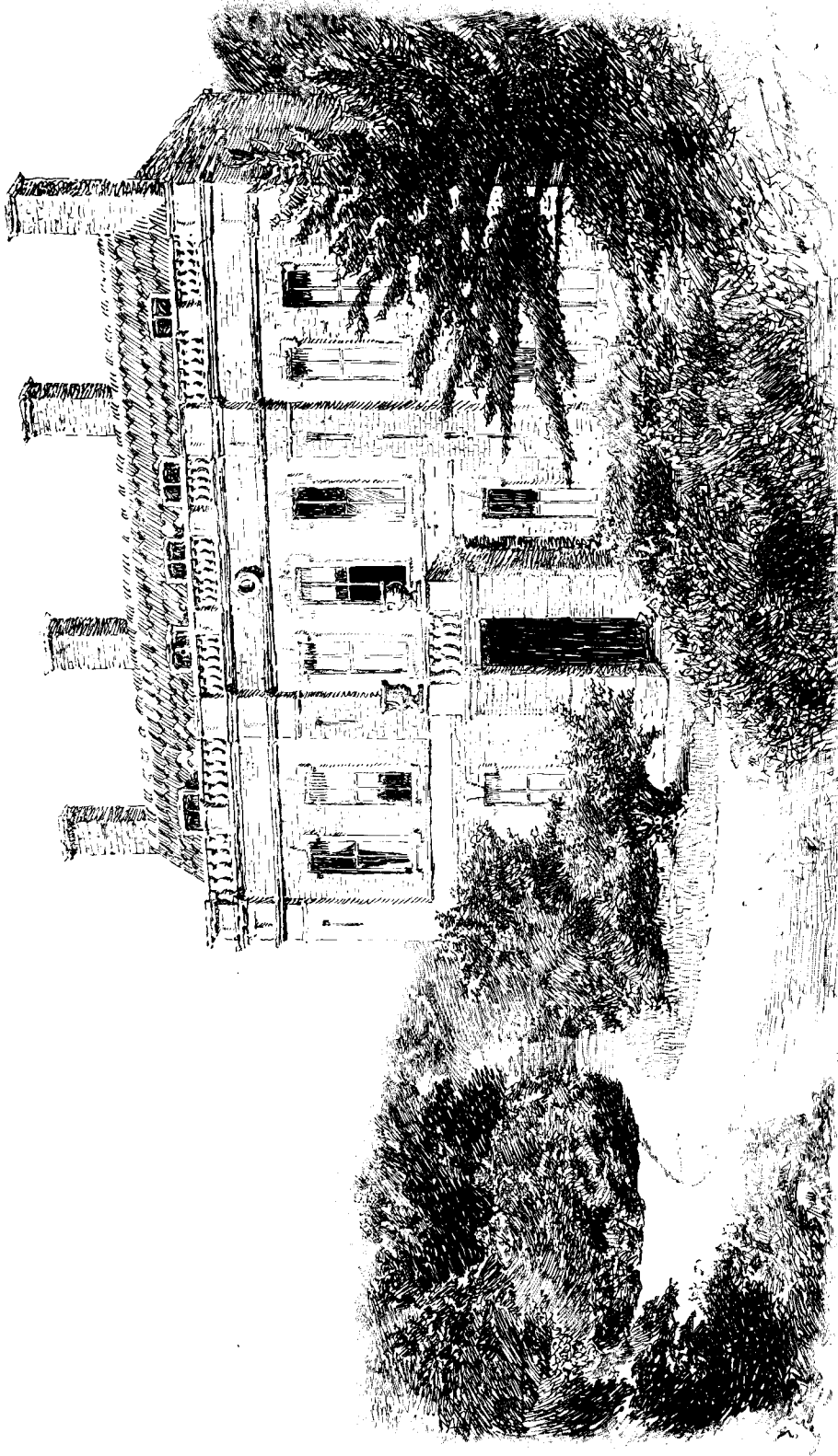
Drawn by William Thomson.

which came upon him now and then all through his life. He was not sure of himself. He knew that there was in him the ability to write a clever story, but he distrusted his power to keep himself up to the mark in his task. He did not enjoy his work. He had no confidence that the public would like his books, or that he would be able to continue writing. Even until the last, he doubted the continuance of his popularity.

Much of Thackeray's own experience, and of his youthful ideas of life, he put into "Pendennis." It was a labor of love to tell of the starting of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and of the life in chambers in the Temple. He knew the Temple and the streets about it thoroughly, and

and in which he died. That house is standing yet, next to one covered with old ivy, which gives it a picturesque background. He liked Kensington, and after he moved away from 16 Kensington Square, he was in the habit of coming back to look at the place until he was a well known figure on the streets, and till he finally built the house in the Palace Gardens.

It was in Kensington that "Vanity Fair" was written. Looking back from today, it seems almost impossible that there ever could have been a time when Thackeray was not famous, but "Vanity Fair" was the first book upon which he put his own name. Before that he had kept to his humorous *nom de guerre* of



NO. 2 KENSINGTON GARDENS, WHERE THACKERAY DIED.

Drawn by William Thomson.



THE CLOISTERS OF THE CHARTERHOUSE.

Drawn by William Thomson.

"Michael Angelo Titmarsh." It was not until 1848 that he achieved what might be called success with this story, the publication of which was completed that year.

Eleven years before, young Thackeray had married Miss Isabella Shawe, the daughter of a colonel in the army. He had three children, two of whom—Mrs. Ritchie, whose work is so well known, and Mrs. Leslie Stephen—grew up to be the greatest delight to him, as if in compensation for his terribly unhappy married life. After the birth of her third daughter, his wife became ill, and lost her mind. At first Thackeray would not believe that it was anything but illness, and night after night, after his work at the office of *Fraser's* or *Punch* was over, he would sit up with the poor demented creature, when everybody but the devoted husband could see that there was no cure for her. It was finally necessary to put

her into an asylum, where she lived, hopelessly insane, long after her husband's death.

It was during these terrible years that Thackeray was writing the sense and nonsense, the fun and satire, which, with John Leach's pictures, were making the reputation of *Punch*. Into every joke there must have gone an aching heart.

At first the publishers fought very shy of "*Vanity Fair*." It was different from anything they had ever had before, and they hardly understood it. Thackeray said that people had become accustomed to abnormal characters in fiction. Heroes were made what men ought to be, and heroines what women would like to be, with the consequence that they were like no real men and women that ever lived. He intended his characters to be natural.

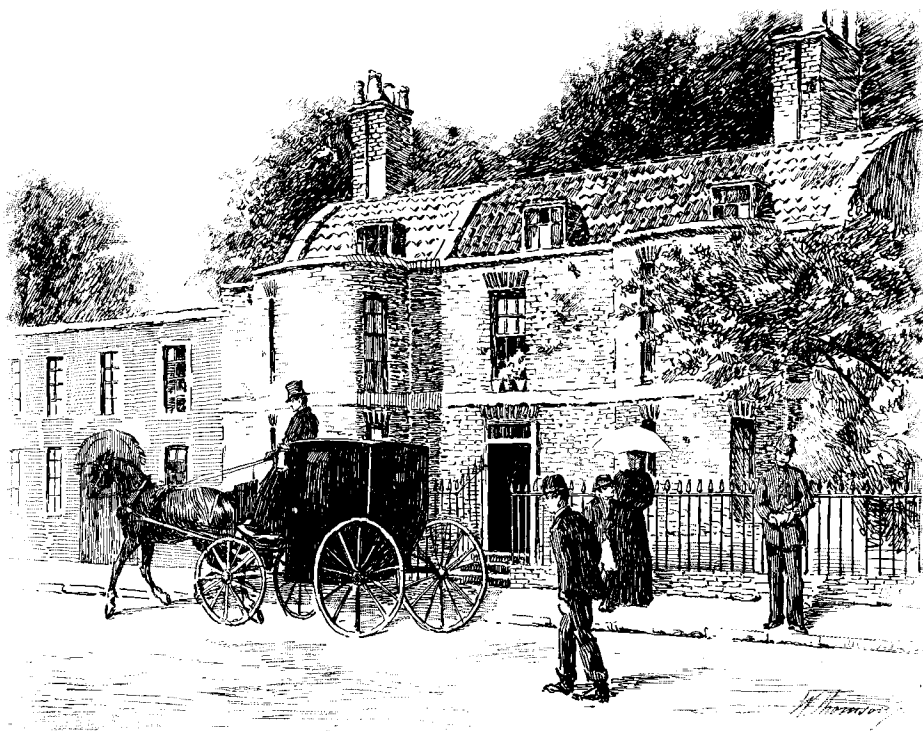
The story was brought out in thirty seven numbers, and as it neared its ending, Thackeray found himself a

famous man. He had fairly opened his oyster with his pen. Before this he had been a figure of some prominence in the literary set of London, principally through his connection with *Punch*, and people of distinction had already sought him out; but the general public did not know him as it knew Dickens, until after the publication of "*Vanity Fair*." His intimates of those days all give the same account of him, as the ever genial, kind hearted friend. "If," said one, "I could only remember the impromptus which fell from his lips, or only had the drawings of his which we used to chuck around as though they were worth nothing!"

On all occasions of jollity he would hide the melancholy that was a part of his nature, and let the spirit of fun take full possession of him. These ought to have been happy days for Thackeray; and but for his never ending sorrow over his wife, they probably would have been. He

had made money; fame and friends were his. He had an attractive personality and a splendid physique. He was six feet four inches in height, with hair that was prematurely gray. His broad shoulders, full chest, and distinguished air always made the London crowd turn aside to make a way for him. His children and his friends were all in all to him, and

"Esmond" that he wrote his lectures upon "The English Humorists of the Eighteenth Century," and brought them to America, where he delivered them to great audiences. "Esmond" did not at once take its place, even among the critics, as its author's best book, and with the general public it never has ousted "Vanity Fair." He sorrowed over its



16 KENSINGTON SQUARE, ONE OF THACKERAY'S HOMES.

Drawn by William Thomson.

his relations with them were very beautiful; but always there went with him the sorrow of his life. It made all things, even his fame, seem unsure. Young children, however sweet, cannot make a home, and Thackeray was driven back to the clubs for friends and companionship. Presently—it is hardly to be wondered at—he began to select his characters from the people he saw there, and from the club windows.

In 1849 he wrote "Pendennis," and then "Esmond" and "The Newcomes." "Pendennis" fairly wrote itself, but for "Esmond" he saturated his mind with the history and literature of Queen Anne's time. It was while he was at work on

lack of instant popularity, and then said, "Well, after all, *Esmond* is a prig!"

In 1857 Thackeray was a candidate for a seat in parliament, standing for Oxford, and coming within fifty votes of an election; but it was his great good fortune that he missed it. He was not made for official work. He was anything but methodical, and how he would have despised the British legislator when he saw him daily at close range! His home was in the Bohemia he loved, and in the society of the men who had come through it with him. The every day commonplace was always intolerable to him.

Two years later he undertook the great work of his life in the editorship of

the *Cornhill Magazine*. Thackeray had name enough, now, to give éclat to anything with which he was connected. He associated with himself such people as Alfred Tennyson, Mrs. Browning, Charles Lever, Anthony Trollope, John Ruskin,

into his stories places that he knew. The *Osbornes'* house in Russell Square, *Becky Sharp's* little house in Curzon Street, the haunts of *Pendennis* and *Warrington*, the "back rooms" in the dingy byways around Fleet Street where they



THE SMALL ROOM AT THE BACK OF 28 WILDERNESS ROW.

Drawn by William Thomson.

Matthew Arnold, and his daughter, Mrs. Ritchie. He kept the editorship for only two years, but he continued to write for the *Cornhill* up to the day of his death, on Christmas Day, 1863. He found editorial work too tedious and confining.

He took a great deal of pains with his own novels, in the way of hunting up local color, and verifying his ideas of places and scenes, but this was more play than work to him. He enjoyed putting

worked or made merry with their fellow knights of the quill—all these were places he could see not only in his mind, but with his bodily eye. And then, too, under all of his stories ran that sermon which he felt it was his mission to preach :

Methinks the text is never stale,
And life is every day renewing
Fresh comments on the old, old tale
Of folly, fortune, glory, ruin.

Anna Leach.

THE CHRISTIAN.*

BY HALL CAINE.

Mr. Caine is one of the strongest writers of the day, and "The Christian" is the strongest story he has ever written—stronger than "The Manxman," stronger than "The Deemster." It is designed by its author to be a dramatic picture of what he regards as the great intellectual movement of our time in England and in America—the movement toward Christian socialism.

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTERS ALREADY PUBLISHED.

THE central figures of the story are John Storm and Glory Quayle, and its opening scene is laid in the Isle of Man. John Storm is the only son of Lord Storm, and nephew of the Earl of Erin, prime minister of England. The two noblemen are estranged through jealousy, both having loved John's mother. Lord Storm brings up his son for a career in public life, and is bitterly disappointed when the young man decides to enter the church.

Near Lord Storm's place in the Isle of Man is the house of Parson Quayle, whose only son marries a Frenchwoman, the daughter of an actress. Both the young people die, leaving a little girl, Glory, to the care of her grandfather. At twenty Glory determines to earn her own living, and when young Storm, whom she has known since she was a baby, goes to London to his curacy at All Saints', Belgravia, she accompanies him and obtains a position as hospital nurse. In London Glory forms associations which cause Storm much uneasiness. Polly Love, an associate of hers at the hospital, comes to grief through Lord Robert Ure, whose friend Drake proves to have been Glory's playmate years ago. The directors dismiss Polly, but ignore Lord Robert's complicity, in spite of John Storm's emphatic protest. The utter worldliness of Canon Wealthy, the vicar of All Saints', is a severe shock to the earnest young curate. Disillusioned and sorely distressed at his apparent inability to accomplish any good in such an environment, he resigns and enters a conventual institution known as the Society of the Gethsemane. But even here he fails to find the spiritual refuge he seeks. A lay brother, Brother Paul, is tormented by fears as to the fate of his sister, Polly Love. When these are confirmed by an incautious admission of John Storm, he goes to the father superior and begs to be allowed to make an effort to reclaim the erring girl. His petition is refused. John Storm, who has been made guardian of the gate, cannot endure the sight of Brother Paul's suffering, and in defiance of the monastic rule he lets Brother Paul out at night, telling him to go to the hospital and inquire for Glory, who will direct him to his sister.

But meanwhile, on learning of John Storm's determination to enter the monastery, Glory breaks the hospital rules in a fruitless attempt to see him, and is dismissed in consequence. She bravely resolves to win a place for herself yet, and seeks the assistance of Drake. The latter misinterprets her motives, however, and she flees from him in grief and shame. She tries to obtain an engagement to sing or recite, but her attempts to gain a footing on the stage end in nothing but humiliation. Glory is finally persuaded by Agatha Jones, a young woman with whom she has become acquainted, to try the cheap foreign clubs, where entertainments are given. Here her efforts meet with frantic applause, but the shame and humiliation of it all overcome her, and when an encore is demanded she breaks down. Fortunately Carl Koenig, a composer and the organist at All Saints', who has heard Glory's voice at the hospital and has been looking for her, chances to be in the house, and he takes the girl under his protection. Glory is installed at his own home in care of his wife, and the musician not only secures an engagement for her to sing at All Saints', but also arranges to bring her out at the fashionable houses as a social entertainer.

In the morning after Brother Paul's departure from the monastery, he is still missing, and John confesses all to the father superior, who tells him Paul's tragic life story. John Storm learns with horror that another sister of the missing lay brother had been wronged and that Paul had slain her betrayer. To show his unshaken faith in John Storm, in spite of his recent lapse, the father reappoints him guardian of the gate. Early the following morning Paul returns to the monastery. He has failed to find either his sister or Glory Quayle, but brings John the tidings of the latter's dismissal from the hospital. Maddened by preying doubts and fears, John, at his own urgent request, is confined in his cell under the rule of silence and solitude. His cell adjoins that of

*Copyright, 1897, by Hall Caine.—This story began in the November, 1896, number of MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE.