

Mary Raymond Shipman Andrews

HER COUNTRY



HER COUNTRY

BY

Mary Raymond Shipman Andrews

www.saptarshee.in

First published by www.saptarshee.in India.Pin:-413305

Phone:02188-299295

Email: saptarsheeprakashan@gmail.com

This edition copyright ©www.saptarshee.in

While every effort has been made to trace the copyright holders and obtain their permission, this has not been possible. Any omission brought to our notice will be remedied in future editions.

All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form, or by any means, electronic or mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission from the publisher.

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by any way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on subsequent purchaser.

Typeset/Printed by Krutika Printers, mangalwedha

Out on the edge of the city were large places, screened from the road by hedges which had been fifty, a hundred years sometimes, in the growing. Behind one such lay a sunshiny garden, lovely in the June Sunday morning. Down the gravel of a path a girl in a white frock walked, swinging a shallow basket in which scissors rattled from side to side. The girl kept a critical eye, walking, on the wall of Dorothy Perkins roses which, growing over a tall broken lattice, separated the garden from the grounds next door.

“You adorable nobodies, you’re like pink music,” she addressed the million little blooms, and halted, erect and poised, glorying in flowers and sunlight.

Two men watched her. “A colt,” spoke the older, smiling lazily.

“I don’t know. I like long, adolescent lines. You don’t see them after eighteen. Honor’s seventeen. I like her figure.”

“Figure! As much figure as a string.” The older man leaned back in his wicker chair and gazed through half-closed lids at the girl, much like a tall, thin angel of Botticelli, shimmering white against shimmering pink.

With that she turned and came lightly towards them across the grass. “What do you think? Is there anything here fit to send McIvor?”

“Why it’s all lovely, Honor—our rose-garden,” the boy said, looking at her in surprise. “Fit to send him! Why, the Mannering rose-garden’s famous. Has been for a hundred years—isn’t it a hundred years, father?”

“Near enough.” Eric Mannering, the fifth, knocked the ashes from his cigar and considered the end of it

with absorption. "What's the matter with the roses, Honor?" He was half amused, half bored. "Why aren't they good enough for—McIvor, the singer?"

"Nothing's good enough for McIvor, the singer," the girl shot at him, quoting the half-contemptuous tone as well as the words. "The roses used to be wonderful, of course. You say they were a show when you were a youngster. But—why, you know better than I do, dad, that roses are an expensive accomplishment. The fine ones are run out; it's only the hardy ordinary ones that live through neglect. They're sweet and adorable, but they're—well, commonplace."

Mannering took a puff at his cigar and regarded his daughter. "McIvor should not be too fastidious in roses. His normal occupation was as a mill-hand."

"He's a messenger from heaven now." The girl's wide eyes flamed at the indifferent, half-open eyes of the man. "He's—he's—" she stammered with wrath. "He's one of the great ones of the earth. He has, perhaps, the most wonderful voice in the world."

Mannering laughed easily. "Yes? Even that doesn't bowl me over entirely. A professional musician! An ex-mill-hand! And my daughter searches her garden for flowers worthy of him! It strikes me as amusing."

"Don't badger the kid, father," the young man remonstrated, and as he rose and walked a few steps, it was visible that he was very lame. "You know how keen she is about music."

Eric Mannering reflected again deeply, on the subject, apparently, of the end of his boot. Quite at his leisure he announced: "The Mannerings have

always been fond of music. And good at it. But Honor is the first who has wanted to go into the trade.”

Honor rippled young laughter. “Dad, you can be nasty when you want to,” she commented, and dropped on the warm earth and sat there, cross-legged, like a child, like a faun, looking up at him with laughter in her gray eyes. Her fair, loose hair blew about her face. “Now, father,” she admonished him, pushing a strand of pale gold out of her eyes, “you’ve got to be good. You’ve got to be guided by your intelligent children, by Eric and me. Especially by me. You know that you’re not built to fight the world. You’re beautiful, and entrancing to talk to, and finished and accomplished beyond words. But you can’t do a thing with money except squander it—that’s the plain truth. And you’ve squandered and squandered, till we’re all in a hole. We’re in debt, and the rose-garden isn’t kept up, and the house needs painting and window-shades, and Eric had to sell mother’s rubies to pay his way through law school, and now I’ve come along with a voice that people say is worth money. And there’s not ten cents to develop it. And I *will* develop it. I *will* have my chance. If my voice is what Stroble says, two thousand now—next year and the year after—would mean huge sums. The real voices make—almost anything. A hundred thousand a year—almost anything! I could do all the things that are needed—here.” She stared about at the lovely, neglected garden, at the long, low, stone house with its vague air of lack of care. “It’s silly to hamper me, not to help me, when it’s on the cards that I could make a fortune for us all.”

“I hate to hear you talk in that commercial way, Honor,” her brother flashed at her. “You’ve a gift and you’ve a right to want to use it. But to think of art in terms of money—almost wholly in terms of money, as you do! It’s degrading. Also, I’m the one to retrieve the family fortunes. I’m older and a man. It’s up to me. Next year I’ll be through law school and in practise, and you’ll see! I’ll work like ten horses. I’ll make good. I must. And I’ll take care of you and father.”

Mannering, his cigar in his long fingers, stretched his arms to their width with a yawn. “Thank you both so much,” he said. He laughed. “But do I look decrepit? And who owns Garden Court? I or you two? Yet it’s beautiful to see such energy with such youth. And money-making power—though a bit visionary. Eric, do you happen to know any young lawyers who have heaped up immediate fortunes at their profession? I don’t. Honor’s scheme seems to me more businesslike. Only two small ifs between her and a hundred thousand a year. *If* she has a marvellous voice, and *if* she can get it trained. If I consent is not in the catalogue, is it, Honor?”

The girl sitting before him on the ground, long arms folded, long legs crossed, shook her head. “Not a bit, dad,” she assured him, and though her eyes danced, she meant it.

Mannering smiled lazily. “Odd how I don’t influence my offspring,” he commented impersonally. “I didn’t want Eric to sell those rubies, but he would. And I suppose that length of mediæval saint, lined throughout with pure paganism, squatting on the lawn like a toad—I suppose Honor will do

exactly as her mature judgment decides. Won't you, Honor?"

"Uh-huh," the girl agreed.

"There's one thing—you won't get two thousand dollars out of me, or one thousand, for a musical education, for I haven't got it. What are you going to do about that?"

"I'm going to earn it." The young lips set tight as her gray glance shot up to the man's lazy eyes.

"How?"

"A job."

"What?"

"Secretary for Mr. Barron."

Mannering whistled softly. He smiled, amused. "When?"

"Monday."

"Nonsense." Mannering scratched a match with deliberation and lighted a fresh cigar. "You know nothing about business."

"But I do. You know I've been in town three days a week for six months."

"Yes."

"I told you I was studying. You didn't bother to ask what I was studying. I was at a business college. I've taken my course."

"The devil you say!"

"Uh-huh." She sprang lightly to her feet. "Mr. Barron knew about it. I told you I had a secret with him and you took no interest. Now—will you be good? I'm going to make money. And save it, for myself. And in two years I'll have enough to go to New York and study music, and make my own career, and no thanks to anybody."

Mannering stopped smoking and stared again at the polished toe of his russet shoe. He was silent for a long minute; then he laughed. "The whole scheme is distasteful to me," he stated in pleasant, even tones. "But I don't see that I can prevent it. I won't squabble. I can't stand family quarrels, but I'm not proud of what you've done. There has been an Honor Mannering in this house for a century, but never an Honor Mannering in a business college. Business! Secretary to the head of a knitting-mill! Honor Mannering! Can't you feel the grotesqueness, the sordidness of it?"

"Not a scrap, dad," answered the girl blithely. "Of course, I'd rather go at the music now, and leave out the business. But I can't, so why bother? Mr. Barron's giving me a thousand a year if I make good. And I will make good. I'll make so good that I think he'll give me more the second year. Don't you see, father—I've *got* to have money! Even—music is just for that. I'm so sick of debt and pretending and keeping up appearances—having a car and a chauffeur and fine clothes, and skimping on meals and the servants' wages and letting the house go to pieces! It's demoralizing. You won't make money; Eric can't, for ever so long. I've *got* to. And I've this voice which has got to do it for me. You see?"

"Not I," announced Mannering with a shrug. "No woman of my house ever found it incumbent on her before to make money."

"Honor," demanded the boy, "is that why you're taking flowers to McIvor? You're not—trying to work him?"

The girl laughed, tossed up her head defiantly. "If he should hear me sing—and say to himself: 'That's

a good voice; it's the girl next door; can I help her develop that voice?' what harm's that? Eric, how horrid you are to pin me! I dare say—when I said I'd bring some roses for McIvor—when he came to the Barrons from the hospital—why—I'm not ashamed if I did think of that, partly. That he might help about my voice. Why shouldn't he? Musicians are glad to discover a new big voice. So I shall sing in the garden if I please. And if McIvor hears me and asks me to sing for him—who knows what might happen? Now I'm going to get the best roses we have. And I'll sing too, if I choose. Too bad he's not there yet; he can't hear me."

She ran across the grass with the confident ease of a boy, and suddenly, as she stood again at the rose-hedge her voice, full, strong, effortless, filled all the air with jubilant music.

She had made a mistake. McIvor was there. From the hospital in the city where his valuable throat had been under treatment for a week, the Barrons' big car had brought him to the Barrons' house an hour ago. Ten years back the great musician was spending his days shifting machinery in Henry Barron's knitting-mill, unconscious of the Golconda mine waiting, unused, in his voice. He sang in the noon-hour, sometimes, for his mates, and on a day Barron heard him. Barron, music lover, philanthropist, and not ignorant, recognized the gift of his workman as remarkable, and for love of music and of mankind gave the beautiful voice a chance, and found that it was a great voice. Between the two men had grown a friendship. When McIvor's throat got troublesome it was natural that Barron should arrange with the famous specialist who ruled over the hospital in his

city, and natural that as soon as the operation was safely done McIvor should come to Barron's house for his convalescence.

Carefully covered from even the June breezes, luxurious on a wide divan among pillows, he lay now on the gallery and revelled in the soft air and flowers and country stillness, and considered thoughtfully, as he often did, the contrast of his early life with this, for McIvor liked all things lovely, and never forgot who had opened the gates of such a world to him. His beauty-loving eyes lingered on the tall lattice all but hidden with extravagant masses of Dorothy Perkins roses. The lattice ran for two hundred yards, a wall of glory, and that it was broken here and there counted unto it for righteousness to McIvor. That gave atmosphere, history. Anybody could have a new lattice. As he regarded the large hole approvingly, through it suddenly floated the music of heaven. The singer, tingling in every temperamental nerve, regarded it so.

"My God!" whispered McIvor reverently.

It seemed nothing less than the touch of a divine hand that after his hideous week of suffering he should alight in this lovely place, cradled in peace, and music should come to him through a wall of roses. It was one of his own songs she was singing, one of the simple, hackneyed, undying Scotch melodies which his mother had taught him thirty years ago by the Firth of Tay, to which he went back gladly still from difficult operatic work of which he had come to be past master. He lifted himself on his elbow among the pillows, and his face was brilliant.

“Maxwelton’s braes are bonnie,
Where early fa’s the dew.”

The voice brooded among the low notes, clearly,
happily. It went on:
“An’ ’twas there that Annie Laurie
Gie’d me her promise true.”

McIvor waited, anxious to see what would happen
when the air jumped inches of scale.
“Gie’d me her promise true!
Which ne’er forgot shall be!
An’ for bonnie Annie Laurie—”

The high notes floated to him, full and clean, and
then dropped deliciously to the croon of the world-
old love-song.
“I’d lay me down and dee.”

McIvor, leaning on his elbow, revelling in the
flooding sounds, frowned. He shook his head. “It’s a
pity,” he murmured, and then shouted, “Henry—
Henry!” He shouted at the top of his lungs.

Henry Barron, reading inside, dropped his
magazine and dashed through the open door. “What
in the name of heaven’s the matter? You’re not ill?”

McIvor did not smile. “Ill—no. Who’s that
singing?”

“Oh!” Barron looked relieved. “Now see here, old
man—you’re there to rest, not to get excited. Dr.
Thomas said you were to do no talking or even
thinking for two hours.”

“Dr. Thomas go to the devil. That voice—who is it?”

“Little Honor Mannering, next door. It’s a fine voice—yet——”

“Exactly,” McIvor caught him up. “Something lacking. But a great music machine, the throat that’s doing that peaches and cream. I want her to sing for me. I want to see what’s the trouble—why that voice isn’t a miracle. Can you get her to——”

Barron was looking into the sunlight of his drive. “Here she comes,” he said.

The white, tall, thin figure was moving, facile of movement as the voice, up the broad gravel; the shallow basket, rioting color, swept casually back and forth in the girl’s hand. Barron went down the steps.

“For Mr. McIvor,” she called, swinging the mass of reds and pinks at him as she came. “I wish they were better. They’re all we have, but they’re only common roses.”

“The sweetest kind,” said Barron, and the girl stood gazing at him, her eyes shining with the romance of bringing flowers to a hero.

“When’s he coming?” she demanded. “I’m going to stand in our garden and sing and sing till he asks me to do ‘Carmen’ for him. Do tell him to, Mr. Barron. When’s he coming?”

“He’s here,” some one spoke from the gallery, back of the flower-boxes. The girl stood rooted. “And ‘Carmen’ has been sung by worse voices. Seldom better.”

“Oh,” groaned Barron, “he ought not to be stirred up; come and see him, then, but don’t stay over a minute.”

The girl came, breathless, shy a bit, but blissful.

“To-morrow morning, then, you’ll sing for him,” said Barron three minutes later. “And now go away, my dear, for he mustn’t get tired.”

In the Barron drawing-room, while McIvor’s secretary played an accompaniment, the girl stood next morning and sang.

McIvor lay outside among his pillows and stared at the tossing pink veil clothing the broken lattice. The girl sang as confidently as any bird in a tree, taking the difficult changes and the trying high notes without any effort. Her voice was astonishing in its power. McIvor looked at her as she came smiling through the door.

“You’d do for a church organ,” he said. “Where does all that noise come from, you wisp of a child? Turn sideways.” She whirled, laughing. “I see. You fooled me. You’ve got the deep chest of a prima donna. Healthy, aren’t you?”

She nodded. “As strong as my brother. Never ill since measles. I can run up-hill and not get winded.”

“You’re fit,” said McIvor. The girl looked at him, waited.

In a moment: “You’d be awfully good—if you’d tell me about my voice,” she brought out, and flushed. The surface hardness which she had forced on herself did not go deep yet. Quickly she went on, and her young face grew oddly keen. “You see—Mr. McIvor—I’ve *got* to make money. And I’ve been

told—my voice was—good for it. Not a little money—lots! I hate—getting along—being hard up. If you'd say—that I've got a real voice——”

McIvor drew his brows together. “Make money! And you seventeen!” he said as if to himself, but his eyes were stern. “Miss Mannering, you are going the wrong way to be an artist. Art is an exacting mistress. The price she asks for success is one's heart. If ye cannot give that, if ye cannot love music for music's sake”—McIvor dropped into Scotchness at odd times; it was a sign of strong feeling—“ye'll not be great. Ye certainly hae a fine organ for singin'; it's a grand machine God has gi'en ye. But I know now what's troublin' me about your voice—the soul's not there. An' gi'en ye persist in wantin' money first, the soul will not find its way in. Ye'll be no true singer. It's mechanical, that lovely big voice of ye, and it'll move no man. What the true singer wants is to stir the hearts of people and send them awa' to help the world, because his music has helped them. Would na' ye like to do that?”

Honor's soft mouth was firm. “No,” she said. “I don't care. I want their money.” McIvor shook his head.

The girl stared at him. She was fearless and obstinate. Not easily did she let go a purpose. “Mr. McIvor,” she said at last, “you don't understand. I've *got* to make money. And my voice is my one way. Thank you for listening. You know everything, and I very little, but—people who can judge have told me I could do a lot with my voice—and I'm going to. You say yourself it's a good—machine. I've—I've—” She was half sobbing with angry

distress. Yet she was determined. "I've planned my career, and I'll stick to it. I'll succeed. I'll make lots of money. You'll see."

Suddenly she whirled and, springing down the steps, ran full tilt across the lawn to a break in the lattice, and dropping to the ground, slid through like a rabbit.

McIvor looked up at Barron. The two men laughed a little, and then the musician sighed. "The poor baby," he said. "She's got so much, and she's likely goin' to throw it away. Money! At seventeen! An' she with the face of a seraph and a voice out of ten million!"

"Perhaps she'll grow up. She's only a baby," Barron considered, and went on to explain a bit to the other how things were at the Mannerings, and the influences that had shaped the motherless girl.

"If," said McIvor, "she has the right stuff, life will come along some day with a big emotion, and money and such trash will go smash. And the world will get one of its great music-makers. But a singer without a soul is no good."

Two years after the McIvor episode the Mannering household had changed little outwardly. But young Eric had been now for a year a practising lawyer, with a beginning of a reputation already, and Honor, secretary to Henry Barron, president of the Empire Knitting Mills, was a capitalist. She had fifteen hundred dollars salted away in a savings-bank.

"When it's two thousand I'll bolt for New York," she told Barron, "and in six months from that I'll be

a success. You'll see. Stroble says my voice is better and better."

About that time she awoke with a start to a huge movement in the world; the world was swaying on its foundations, and she in her self-centred little orbit suddenly was shaken. America was at war. On a day it came to her what war meant. It was Eric, chafing at his lameness, his helplessness to fight, Eric burning with patriotism, who roused her. The boy had developed into a speaker of promise, and was being used at a variety of meetings. One day an older speechmaker said to him:

"Make them sing something before you begin. It limbers an audience and focusses its attention. It does your first five minutes' work for you."

"Honor, do you want to go with me and sing at a factory meeting to-morrow at noon? I want a verse of 'America' to stir the meeting up before I speak."

"Why, yes," the girl agreed easily. "I can get off. And it's good advertisement. My voice will be known a bit."

"Young pig!" The brother apostrophized her. "Isn't it in you to consider your flag?"

Honor reflected. "I don't think so," she decided with honesty. "Lots of people are doing things for the flag. I'm glad to have 'em. Me, I've got my voice and my career; that's all I can attend to. I'm like a horse, capable of only one idea at a time."

"Isn't it in you," interjected her father, unhurried, soft-voiced, "to consider your breeding? Your family traditions? A daughter of the Mannerings of Garden Court—singing to factory-hands! My word! the race is degenerating."

“Not at all, dad. It’s improving. Family traditions don’t cut any ice,” remarked Honor tersely. “If Eric and I bothered with them we’d get nowhere.”

“For Eric it’s permissible,” Mannering stated. “It’s a statesmanlike accomplishment to make speeches. But you—entertaining workmen! Hideous! I suppose if I definitely objected it wouldn’t make any difference.”

“Don’t definitely object, dear child,” Honor adjured her father. “You know you’re not fitted to handle Eric and me. But we do hate to go bang into your theories. So put ’em on a high shelf out of our reach, beautiful one. They don’t go with us at all, but they’re simply lovely on you.”

Eric Mannering laughed, not ill-pleased. It was comfortable to be assured that it was of no use trying to influence these handsome and unmanageable children of his. It would have disturbed his placid laziness to argue. “I can’t understand,” he considered, “how people in general control their young. I never could.” And with entire amiability he let it go at that.

“Your brother makes a corking speech, Miss Mannering.” She was driving next day with Eric and three other men, politicians, across the city to the great motor-factory.

“He told me he did,” Honor answered, her gray eyes dancing. And the men laughed in a big chorus.

“She’s a young infidel,” Eric asserted, laughing, too, “and has no respect for age or genius. If I could once stir her with a speech I’d consider I’d made a real hit. I don’t believe she knows what the Liberty Loan means, and as for the country, she takes no more responsibility for it than a squirrel up a tree.”

“Not a patriot, Miss Mannering?” asked one of the men. “I’m surprised, with your family record—your grandfather the ambassador, and your great-grandfather the governor.”

“I don’t believe I particularly belong to my family,” the girl reflected. “I don’t care about their record. If I can make my own way with my voice—make money—that’s all I want. I’m too busy with that to bother much about the country, you see.”

And the men laughed again, not disapprovingly, because of her beauty and her youth, and thought Mannering’s young sister charmingly democratic.

The car sped along miles of city, through streets which Honor had never known existed, and came to the Black-Lewis Factory, and turned into a large bare yard between buildings. Around the walls stood hundreds of men, marshalled compactly. The men in the car got out and shook hands with two or three who seemed to be in charge.

Then, “Ready, kid,” Eric said to her. “Stand up in the car.” Honor caught her breath; she was frightened a little, unexpectedly. She was not used to audiences; but she stood in the tonneau of the car as Eric directed, tall and slim like a flower, and looked gravely, with a sudden shy dignity, at the observing faces of five hundred working men.

“Now, Honor—‘America.’”

The girl’s eyes lifted from all those eyes regarding her, lifted high to avoid that trying many-barrelled regard, and with that she caught a flash, from a building, of a flag tossing bright colors against the sky. To her astonishment a thrill caught her. “Isn’t it in you to consider your flag?” Eric had asked. There

it was, the flag that had guarded her waking and sleeping all her life; it was in danger; enemies were waiting to dishonor it, to tear it down; suddenly her whole vigorous, fresh being rose to it in warmth and in loyalty. The flag! America! Into the dusty air, upward, the full notes poured:

“My country, ’tis of thee,

Sweet land of liberty,

Of thee I sing!”

The girl sang, and the grimy, tired men, listening, felt, each one, something that had been hard softening inside of him, something catch in his throat, a contraction around the eyes. Eric watched, well pleased.

“Will you all join in the second verse?” he spoke.

Again the girl lifted the strong and sweet tones, and into them were gathered, following, not obscuring the volume of her voice, half a thousand voices of men, rolling sweet thunder through the buildings where only the hum of machinery, on other days, filled the air.

“It’s good dope. It works to a charm,” Eric commented silently, as the big music ended and the ranks of men stood touched, open-souled, ready for an impression.

He lifted himself to the running-board of the car and the one halting step laid a claim on every man there before he said a word. This chap could not fight; fate had tied him with lameness, but he was doing the best he could for his country. One read his speeches every day in the papers. His sister looked at him, proud of his height and beauty and finished

accent, and the straight, strong English which came from his lips, proudest of all of an intangible something which she felt, and which all these men felt, the secret of the charm of young Eric Mannering. It was an unphrased assertion that he and they were brothers in a cause so large that all differences of caste were straws on an ocean. Eric Mannering, the sixth, grandson of an ambassador, great-grandson of a governor, with his air of race, his speech of breeding, cared most to be what all these workmen were—American. He talked as an American to Americans, and he talked from an absolute sincerity, and the trained brain and speech which were vehicles for his words were good, to him, because they might serve the cause of America. By some force of reaction both the Mannering children were democrats, and as the brother spoke the sister approved. Yet she did not listen intelligently at first. Eric was saying things about a good investment, four per cent only, but safe as the granite hills. A good investment. It did not interest her. She was not going to buy bonds. She was going to New York to learn to sing, to make a fortune with her voice. But listen—Eric was talking about—the flag. Still shaken with the thrill of leading those five hundred deep voices, shaken with the tremendous meaning of the words she had sung, still startled with that unexpected wind which had swept her upward into the colors against the sky, as Eric spoke she caught her breath and listened. And behold his words were a bugle-call. This was what the papers meant by Eric's power of stirring audiences. Rebellious, half angry, she realized that he was stirring her. The papers had been full of the

patriotic duty of buying Liberty Bonds; she knew that public men were urging the people, rich and poor, to put their savings into the loan, to help the country raise money to use for the war. The campaign left her cold. She had saved fifteen hundred dollars in two strenuous years for a purpose. She meant to use it for that purpose. She had no intention of side-tracking any of it in Liberty Bonds. She was clear about that. But, listen. Eric in that appealing voice of his, whose unconscious power came, she thought always, from the long suffering of his lameness, was talking about the country—our country—America. The land about which she and the five hundred men had been singing, America needed their money, Eric was saying, for her very life. The girl listened. *She* was going to New York; that was settled; she hoped Eric would influence these men to put their savings into Liberty Bonds; it was good; it was public-spirited; people ought to do it, probably, but not she. She had a fixed purpose, and it would be silly to let it go. The girl was tenacious. Not for one speech of Eric's would she change her two years' decision. Yet a seed of discomfort was springing in her mind. Eric's voice, with its sincerity, its throb of old pain, flowed on.

“Do you realize, men, what it means that the country shall have money to carry on this war? Suppose you lived in a street at the end of which was a dangerous river. Suppose you lived two doors from the wall which guarded that river. Suppose the river was high and threatening to break through, and the family next door was tired out building up the wall. Suppose it was certain that if the river broke, all your city would be destroyed. Would you or wouldn't you

drop work and play and turn anything, everything, into material to build up that wall? The river is Germany, the house next door is England and France—the Allies. The wall is mostly England's fleet. It's England's fleet that has protected us from invasion for three years. As sure as we are here today, just so surely Germany will invade America if she can starve out England and make her give up that fleet. We are all nestling behind England's fleet. We've got to see that England isn't starved; we've got to help her fight. She deserves it of us if we were in no peril at all, because she has fought our battle for three years—but we're in deadly peril. This is our cause—America's. Our government has got to have money to feed England and to care for our soldiers who are going across—now—to fight for us. It is for our own boys, our good American flesh and blood that the government asks you to buy these bonds. So that they will not be cold and hungry, and short of guns and ammunition to do our fighting. Let us—who cannot go——”

Eric's voice faltered, and the girl felt the shock of sympathy through the audience like a blow. He cleared his throat and smiled boyishly.

“We who cannot go and fight for dear America—for the high mountains and the broad rivers and the cheerful towns, and the big, strong, generous people whom we love as our own heart's blood—we'll do our part here with a rush and a good-will like an irresistible flood; we'll buy this Liberty Loan with a surplus over, that will be like a great shout to Germany that America will take care of her own—that America is going to win!”

The thrilling young voice stopped, and for a second there was silence, and then the audience burst into a storm of clapping and applause, and with that they broke ranks and began crowding about the men who had come in the car with the two Mannerings, the workers.

“I want a bond—I want two—I’ve got to stick in a bond to build that wall,” the men were saying over each other’s shoulders.

Eric, flushed, happy, watched them and shook hands with them, and introduced them to his little sister, and both enjoyed every moment of the scene with the hot, happy, pulsing blood which real living brings.

“Honor, you never sang like that before,” the boy said, and Honor laughed.

“You don’t know yet what your tame prima donna can do,” she answered easily.

“Do you want to go with me to-morrow?” Eric asked.

Day after day Eric spoke, working far into the nights to make time for this work which he offered to his country instead of the body which he might not offer. And it came to be that on most days Mr. Barron’s secretary went with him, Mr. Barron sending her gladly for the cause, to sing patriotic songs. The two were soon a feature of the Liberty Loan campaign, and booked for all their time. Meetings at great factories, meetings in large schools, meetings in country towns where farmers must be aroused to the importance of their savings for Uncle Sam’s safety—many sorts of meetings heard Eric speak and Honor sing, and always the two

were a success. Always there was, in their wake, an uncommon sale of Liberty Bonds.

So it happened that on a Saturday the committee sent Eric to speak at the Lynden Knitting Mill. The girl drove with her brother and the three other men, the “workers,” across the city and down into the manufacturing district, and the car slid to a stop before a large square brick building. They went up steps and into a hall-way, and wound through ten-foot piles of boxes to a glassed-in office, where were the “boss” and other unexplained officials, and a girl stenographer or two, lifting their heads to regard this other girl, who sang. She was beginning to be known for her singing, her work with her brother; the papers spoke of her when they reported Eric’s speeches.

Shortly they were taken through mountainous piles of more boxes, and more, through lanes in a dark ware-room, lanes between piled-up boxes, around corners of boxes, into a great place of mysterious machinery, with a large open space. Along the sides of this space and among the machines—which were stopped—stood girls, girls, girls, the factory-hands. Eric and his party, behind the manager, marched between the lines of girls and came to a manner of stage, although in truth it was only a part of the floor, with half a dozen chairs for the visitors. The girl and the “workers”—the men who were to explain and try to sell the bonds, after Eric’s speech—sat down in the chairs, and the manager said a few words to his employees, while Eric stood by, flushed, breathless as always with the excitement of his coming speech. Then the manager stepped back and Eric spoke, with his voice, his glance of a comrade.

“I think before I begin that we might all like to sing a verse of a song which we love,” and he turned to the girl.

She had been staring at these other girls, two hundred of them, and her heart was beating oddly. She understood what she was there to do—to stir up emotion in this young, pathetic company, so that her brother’s speech might have quicker and stronger appeal. For a moment she shrank—how could she help to wring money from these? She had heard the men in the office saying that most of them earned five and six dollars a week. To ask them to save a dollar a week! Then it flashed to her that it was for their good; it was not begging their money—it was giving them a chance to invest it safely. Swiftly she was on her feet, and the lovely, untired voice floated out among the silent engineers and the tired mill-hands.

“My country, ’tis of thee—

Sweet land of liberty—”

The two hundred girls, with their worn young faces, with their pitiful efforts at finery, cheap, light-colored shoes that meant heart’s blood, slimsy dresses, cut in a far-off imitation of millionaires’ daughters’ dresses—they listened to the girl’s voice, hypnotized. Discouraged faces brightened, defiant eyes softened; Eric Mannering was indeed doing a wise thing to send his sister’s voice as a messenger to prepare his way.

Then, coming forward with the one or two halting steps which, unknowingly, did so much to open the way to the hearts of his audiences, he spoke. He caught his listeners at an emotional moment and held

them there. He said much the same things always, but always with the instinctive fitting of the phrase to the people, which is the gift of a born speaker. And he ended when it was quite clear that the Liberty Loan was no charity but a great chance for good business, with an appeal to patriotism.

“I know you haven’t much money,” he said. “I know it’s hard to make both ends meet; and you save and pinch already. But everybody here can give up something—that thing you’ve been planning to do and saving to do, the thing you want to do a lot. I ask you to give up that for this country of ours—of our very own—which is in danger—which needs you—needs you—and you. Don’t do it just because it’s a good investment—though it is the best investment in the whole world to-day, to lend your savings to America. But do it also for this—because you love your country and want to help her keep free; do it because the whole land stands in peril of a thing more terrible than can be said, and you’re brave enough to want to lift your hand with your countrymen to ward off this danger. Do it because you want to be able to say to your children, years from now, when the world is safe for freedom: *‘I helped make the world safe. I stood by America when she needed me. I bought a Liberty Bond,’*” Eric turned suddenly, shaken by his own strong feeling, and met his sister’s eyes, and it was as if he had said the words to her.

Honor did not sleep much that night. Over and over she whispered in the darkness her brother’s words, “*I helped make the world safe. I stood by America when she needed me. I bought a Liberty Bond,*” and closer and closer drew the spell which

the words threw about her. How would it be when a day came that children of hers gathered around to ask questions of the great time when half the world battled for democracy, for freedom? How would it be when one said:

“And you, mother? You did your bit? You helped the country with all that you were, and all that you had?” How would it be with her that day if her eyes might not meet questioning young eyes?

The girl was tenacious of a purpose; she had promised herself not to be carried away by oratory and the excitement in the air. She knew what she wanted; she had thought out her plan. She had lived for it these two years; it was her work, her affair. The rich could give millions to the Liberty Loan. Why should she sacrifice her hard-earned all when it meant so much to her, and would mean so very little to the country? Only fifteen hundred dollars! Fifteen one-hundred-dollar bonds! How much would that help? Not the firing of a big gun twice! And to her it was her future. If her voice was not trained now it would soon be too late. Let the rich do it—they could buy thousands of bonds and not suffer. Let the rich do it. Daylight was seeping in at the window when she fell asleep with that thought.

But the tide of battle was turned. Possibly most of the fights of humanity are decided two generations or more before one arrives on the field. The powers of inheritance and of tradition are strong and cumulative. The girl had said that she did not belong to her family, yet to-day when the country needed its children, blood asserted itself in her veins as the very blood of an American five generations ago who had fought and died for the thirteen

colonies at King's Mountain; of a woman, a girl, who about the same time had put her two babies behind her and fired steadily on the Indians at Cherry Valley; of two young great-uncles who had fallen, one on each side, for the right as each saw it, at the first Bull Run; of the great-grandfather who had sacrificed his waning strength to be a war governor, and the grandfather who had left this Garden Court which he loved, because the country needed him at a foreign post. Whether she willed it or not patriotism was in the girl's blood, and while she steeled herself against its upsetting influence, that slow-rolling flood of tradition and inheritance which had shaped her was, subconsciously, shaping her still. Forces of good are strong as well as forces of evil, and the habit of one generation is the inborn tendency of another.

"Eric, are you speaking anywhere in civilization this week?" inquired his father. "If it isn't too colossal an effort, I'd like to hear you."

The two tall, handsome men, alike in build and feature, sharply different in expression, sat of another June Sunday morning, in wicker chairs, smoking tranquilly, in the rose-garden. The Dorothy Perkins lattice was a bit more broken, the gravelled walks a bit greener with weeds, the aspect around a bit more neglected than two years ago. About the garden moved as before the tall, thin figure in a white frock, swinging a basket, piling into the basket masses of red and pink. She came and stood before them at the sentence as a bird might halt in its careless flight.

"Do, beautiful one," she urged. "He makes a dream of a speech, and you'd be proud. You might

even buy Liberty Bonds—you might. Everybody loosens up and buys bonds when Eric stands there and turns on his winning way.”

Mannering’s sarcastic, easy smile came before his slow words. “I? Buy bonds? With what? I haven’t money to be patriotic.”

“Oh, yes,” the girl threw at him like a random arrow. “Eric tells ’em that everybody can give up something and get bonds. Now, Cousin Alured sends you a thousand for your vacation in Newport. You could give that to your country for once. Why not?” Mannering’s weak mouth set. His manner of high-bred indifference flushed to what was as near excitement as one often saw him in. “Not by a long shot. Sacrifice my one luxury of the year! You’re a saucy young devil, Honor. My word! What are you giving up, who are so free with suggestions? The bank-account that’s to turn you into a prima donna? Come—we’ll bargain. I’ll buy Liberty Bonds with my check from Alured Mannering, which is due next week, if you’ll draw that fifteen hundred of yours and use it for the same purpose.”

Mannering, startled for once to indignation by the daring hand on his most precious self-indulgence, yet believed himself quite safe. But he had reckoned without the host of past-and-gone influences which made up a part of that complicated mixture, his daughter. He had forgotten the revolutionary soldier and the Indian fighting-woman, and those others who lived in her. The tall girl, standing before the heavy, handsome man lolling in his deep chair, smoking lazily, smiling at her triumphantly through half-closed eyelids, stared at her father. The color as

she stared went out of her face and left it pale. Then she spoke one word in a queer, wooden voice.

“Done,” said Honor Mannering, and put out her hand.

The cigar dropped from Mannering’s fingers. “Nonsense!” he said, and did not stoop to pick it up. “Why, it’s a joke, Honor. Don’t be melodramatic.”

“It’s not a joke. You said ‘we’ll bargain.’ You stated your bargain and I agreed. I mean it. If you’re a man you’ll keep your word. It’s a debt of honor.” The hand was still held out.

Mannering, his armor of indifference stripped, gazed at her horrified, and knew that he must indeed keep his word. For there were a few things sound yet in Eric Mannering’s flabby code, and the girl’s finger was on one. He stood up, and the gods and his ancestors gave him grace to put out his own hand. “You have me, Miss Mannering,” and he smiled again lazily. “Done.” He gripped the girl’s hand savagely, and turned and walked into the house.

“Honor, what kind of an apple-cart have you upset now?” her brother demanded, stepping to her with his uneven gait.

She smiled at him, white still. “Did you see? Wasn’t he gorgeous? It was hard as death—but he wouldn’t—betray—the Mannering word. Oh, Eric, *it is* good to feel proud of him,” and she finished under her breath—“for once.”

“*It is*,” Eric agreed soberly. “It will make over his life to help the country, like the others—grandfather and such. I can’t see how you dared dream—” And then he caught her by the shoulder. “But, Honor—you’ve thrown away—your career.” He gripped her

so that it hurt. She swayed a bit, standing facing him, looking into his eyes almost on a level.

“Don’t you suppose—I realize?” She gasped the words. “It’s been coming—I’ve been—fighting against it. I—I love—my country.”

With that she slid from his hand and tumbled in a heap, and the pink and red roses splashed about her. “Oh, Eric—Oh, you’re such a donkey—” she sobbed, with her face in her hands. “Listening to you—your speeches—going right to my heart—these weeks! Oh—you idiot, don’t pull my hair down! And me just human. What did you think I was—cold boiled fish? Oh, Eric—I adore you so—and that voice of yours gets right through—everything. Selfishness, and ambition, and—and piggishness—it’s all no use. You’re such a—a horrid saint. *I have* to—do as you say. And Eric—darling old Eric—it’s mostly on account of my children, anyhow.”

“Your children!” the astounded Eric managed to put in there, and both went off into shrieks of mad laughter.

“You *awful* stupid,” the girl sobbed through laughing. “You said—they’d ask what we’d done—to make the world safe—to help America. And I won’t have any upstarts of children—taunting me—that I—I didn’t buy Liberty Bonds. So—so I’m going to put in every penny—and then I’ll throw it in their old teeth—and I hope it’ll break ’em.”

“Honor,” spoke young Eric, and caught his breath to speak. “Honor, you’re the sweetest and finest thing in the world, and I’m prouder to be your brother than of anything on earth.” And Honor knew that no voice to come in life would ever sound

sweeter in her ears than her brother's as he said the words.

Later, when the two had taken in hand the new situation, Eric, his arm about his sister's shoulders, sitting beside her on the grass of the old garden, spoke. "There's a thing I want to tell you, Honor, but I hate to for fear it may bother you."

"What?"

"McIvor is coming."

"Here?—McIvor? *The* McIvor?"

"Yes, to finish up the Liberty Loan campaign. He's to sing in St. Margaret's Square, in the open, the night of the 27th. It's thought his voice will be worth a hundred thousand of subscriptions."

Honor began sucking her thumb violently; the boy had seen her do that in moments of stress from babyhood. Then she suddenly stopped and whistled. "Whew! I hate it like anything—his coming. He said I wouldn't get anywhere, and I haven't. It's two years. And now I won't ever. Well—likely he won't remember a word about me. But I want to hear him. Can you get me a place, Eric?"

"You bet I can," pronounced Eric. "I'm the chairman of the committee on arrangements, and if you don't have the best seat in the whole blamed show, I'll eat my hat. Mr. Barron had me made chairman—he's getting McIvor to come, of course."

"The old fox," commented Honor. "And never peeped to me."

"'Fraid you'd be sore, and it might put you off singing for meetings," explained Eric.

“Men are silly,” Honor reflected as to that. “McIvor was right and I’m wrong, but does Mr. Barron think I can’t take my medicine, I wonder?”

“You’re a game sport, Honor, besides being a peach of a girl, and I’m certain you’ll be the best singer on earth yet. That’s what,” Eric assured her impressively.

Saturday night, in early June, came off warm and clear, and the square where towered the court-house and the cathedral and the library was turned into an out-of-doors auditorium, streaming with the colors of the Allies. A platform gay with flags stretched across the huge, pillared, gray stone of the court-house, and down in front of it were two thousand seats. From every side streets led into the square; these spaces, it was hoped, would also fill with people, drawn by the famous singer, and inspired by his singing to subscribe to the Liberty Loan. The arrangements had been worked out in every detail, so that the sequence slipped like oiled machinery. At seven o’clock Henry Barron went to the train at the head of a committee to meet the great man.

“It’s too good to be true, Mac,” said Barron, seizing the big figure stepping from the Pullman car. “It’s wonderful of you to help us——”

“In the name of mercy, Henry, shut up,” answered McIvor, and Mr. Barron and the committee behind him jumped and stood horror-struck. For the cryptic words that came from the singer, the star, the reliance of the whole meeting, came in a hoarse wheeze.

“Mac—damn you——” pleaded Barron, hot and cold all over.

And McIvor responded grimly: "It's so. Had a tickle in the wretched throat when I started, and the whole tunnel caved in on the train. Take me to Dr. Thomas, quick. Maybe the man works miracles. It's the only chance. The Lord He knows how sorry I am."

A mad car sped to the specialist, and the specialist did what science might—but a miracle did not happen. And the two thousand seats were filled, and the seven streets which led into the square were filling with an ever-swelling crowd eager to hear the glorious voice of the musician fling "America" to the winds of heaven, freely and without price, and for love of a great country and the cause of humanity. So it stood when the musician arrived on the platform.

Flags painted the evening breeze; electric lights caught the colors, and multiplied, with long rays and long dancing shadows, the flags and the thronging multitude. There was a hum of contented voices through the square. The town was jubilant; things had gone well; it was the greatest occasion for years; no other city could boast such an ending as this to its liberty campaign—to have McIvor himself journey to them to give his voice for the cause! The six million of their allotment would be raised—McIvor's voice was worth six million in itself. And still the crowd came, and when McIvor, muffled, appeared on the platform, everybody in the crowd recognized him, even across the uncertain lights and shadows and the waving flags and the moving branches of the elms of the square. Applause broke tumultuously from the amphitheatre of seats, from

the shifting fringe outside, from far down converging streets.

McIvor stepped sharply forward and bowed once, and then, before the clapping ended, had turned and was talking to Mr. Barron, to Eric Mannering, the chairman of the committee on arrangements.

“It’s damnable,” he whispered. “You’ll have to tell them, Mr. Mannering. I hoped it might come back up to now, but it’s well gone. I can think of but one possible thing to do. If there’s a person in sight who can turn a tune and make a noise, fetch him up—and I’ll stand beside him and wish luck on him—if I can. It’s all I can do now,” and he coughed through the words.

Eric, thunderstruck, stood bewildered. What could one do? McIvor was particularly all the show. How might any other man substitute for him? One could make a speech and explain the disaster and send the workers about to get what money they could from a disappointed crowd, and then one could let the crowd go home. What else? Suddenly, as his eyes stared helplessly into the rows of people, he met Honor’s clear gray gaze lifted. She had got a front seat as he had promised. There she was, twenty feet from him. Eric swung about.

“Mr. McIvor,” he stammered, “you’ll think me presuming likely, but—my sister sings. She’s young, but she has a big voice.”

McIvor’s eyebrows drew together, considering. The great man had forgotten an incident two years back. Yet “any port in a storm.” “Bring her,” he coughed, and in half a minute Eric was down in the audience, bending over a startled girl. Henry Barron, as the brother and sister made their way to the stage,

went to the singer and the two spoke together a moment. The singer looked curiously at the young girl as she came to him.

Behind palms on the stage they wrapped the tall figure in a flag, and she walked forth, another flag in her hand, a young Goddess of Liberty, lovely enough in the swaying, dreamy lights and shadows, with her fair hair loose, for any country's ideal. Mr. Barron told the townspeople briefly of Mr. McIvor's illness, and begged their kindness for his understudy. The people, after a moment's startled silence, were gracious in their disappointment, and clapped, not over-heartily, with friendliness the still young figure standing at McIvor's side. The band began softly, suggesting the air.

Then a sudden volume of sound soared effortless above the instruments and flowed across the packed square, out through the June evening and out through the flags and overhanging branches of the trees. The audience, astonished, forgot to breathe. Had this voice gone about among them, unknown? Eric, listening, thought that he had never before heard his sister sing at all. And the girl singing, singing from something within her that flamed and ached and triumphed, did not know that she lived, was only a voice set there to pour out love of country and sacrifice and unending devotion.

“My country, 'tis of thee,

Sweet land of liberty,

Of thee I sing!”

With a swing as of one movement every person in the great place was standing, and with the second

stanza more than three thousand voices emptied, as mountain-streams empty into a river, into the flood of the young, tremendous voice.

The strong melody ended and there was silence. In a second Honor was a shy girl again. Had she done well or ill? Anxiously she turned to McIvor at her side. No syllable had come from him, and as she looked she saw that tears were frankly running down his cheeks. He stared at her a second. "Bairn, ye've found your soul," he said, and bent and kissed her hand. And with that, the mass of people burst into a storm.

After a while they quieted, and Barron, smiling, stepped up beside the girl. "Mr. McIvor wishes me to tell you," he said, and the crowd, sobbing, laughing, held its breath to listen—"Mr. McIvor wishes me to tell you that he thanks God for his sore throat, which made it possible for him to hear one of the great voices of the world."

The girl's eyes opened. What was this? Was it McIvor? Was she dreaming these impossible words? She stared at her brother, who was close to her, now, looking at her with a face she had never seen before. "Eric!"

And McIvor growled roughly: "Let my angel alone, Mr. Mannering. She'll gang her ain gait now, and I'll help her. Bairn, sing 'The Star Spangled Banner'? It's for liberty—for America—sing!"

Into a hush ten thousand deep she sang, and the audience swayed as it stood, and then rolled into the chorus, lost in the huge psychical storm which that young, innocent, great voice created. McIvor reached for a chair and dropped at the girl's side, and put his head into his hands and shuddered with

emotion, complex machinery of nerves and temperament that he was. But the wonderful voice rang on.

“Oh, long may it wave,”

the young voice sang, and Honor shot up the flag which she held—

“Long may it wave

O’er the land of the free and the home of the brave.”

There was, perhaps, no heart in the great place so tired, so dead, that it did not lift as on wings to the words and the voice. The workers were among the shaken people before the great moment ended. The workers themselves were shaken, all but crying.

“It’s for the flag, for liberty—it’s the Liberty Loan itself. Now’s the time if you love your country.”

Such things the men said as they passed the paper pledges about, things such as they had never said before. And the pledges came back, filled out generously, like leaves in a gale.

McIvor came to the girl as she sat, stupefied, at the back of the stage. “Once more, child. It’s the six million sure now, and we’ll get some over,” he said. “I’ve just heard about your bonds, your money—how you offered up your career for your country. And—and—” Honor, flushing, half angry at Eric who had told family secrets, forgave her brother because of that catch in McIvor’s words, and because she knew that it was not the sore throat which choked him then. “Ye’re goin’ to hae an education and a future—ye’re goin’ to learn to sing as no American ever sang before. Ye do now,” stated McIvor recklessly. “Put that thought in your pipe,

and now get up, bairn, and gie 'em 'The Battle Hymn of the Republic,' while they're signing away their souls. Sing it as if ye were singing the Germans out of New York harbor—as if ye were singing glory to your country and eternal peace into the universe.”

With a spring she was on her feet and standing close at the edge of the platform. The orchestra, at a word, played the notes that were needed:

“Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the
Lord.”

The magnificent words with their rhythm of marching armies rolled out in the fresh, tremendous tones with the new-born soul in them, with a throb in them not to be described. The voice gathered the overwrought people into one person—one person who signed pledges as they came, and rejoiced to sacrifice and to renounce for the dear country, the beloved country—great America.

“In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the
sea—

With a glory in his bosom that transfigures you and me.

Since He died to make men holy, let us die to make men
free,

For his truth goes marching on.”

And in the depths of each human being in the great square, each one knew, as we all know, that through dangers and sufferings that may be coming, America is safe—humanity is safe with America. Not sorrow or poverty or death is too high a price for

American men and women to pay to safeguard liberty, and the truth indeed is marching on.