

*The More That
They Have*

Beatrice Redpath

Illustrated by
Roy Fisher

*** A Distributed Proofreaders Canada eBook ***

This eBook is made available at no cost and with very few restrictions. These restrictions apply only if (1) you make a change in the eBook (other than alteration for different display devices), or (2) you are making commercial use of the eBook. If either of these conditions applies, please contact a <https://www.fadedpage.com> administrator before proceeding. Thousands more FREE eBooks are available at <https://www.fadedpage.com>.

This work is in the Canadian public domain, but may be under copyright in some countries. If you live outside Canada, check your country's copyright laws. IF THE BOOK IS UNDER COPYRIGHT IN YOUR COUNTRY, DO NOT DOWNLOAD OR REDISTRIBUTE THIS FILE.

Title: The More That They Have

Date of first publication: 1925

Author: Beatrice Redpath (1886-1937)

Illustrator: Roy Fisher (1890-1953)

Date first posted: July 7, 2023

Date last updated: July 7, 2023

Faded Page eBook #20230711

This eBook was produced by: John Routh & the online Distributed Proofreaders Canada team at <https://www.pgdpCanada.net>

The More That They Have

By BEATRICE REDPATH
ILLUSTRATED BY ROY FISHER

*"The more they have, it seems to me,
The more polite you ought to be."*

Christine Gregory stopped in the doorway of the sitting room with a start of surprise, seeing her husband still seated before the fire reading the evening paper.

"What's the matter, Angus, won't you be late? I thought I heard you go out some time ago."

Angus Gregory let the paper slide to his knees with a sigh and turned to look towards the window against which the rain pattered like peas.

"It's such a vile night," he protested, limply, "surely he won't expect me."

"But you know he will," Christine said, searching in a work basket for a pair of scissors. "Uncle never thinks of the weather," she added, as she found them. She proceeded to settle herself comfortably in a large chair beneath the yellow shaded lamp that stood in one corner of the tiny sittingroom.

"He never thinks of anything except of his own convenience," Angus remarked, rising unwillingly and casting a reluctant glance at the fire which was burning brightly. "I have half a mind not to go to-night. I want to finish that book I brought up from the office. I never get a chance to read at all."

"Oh, don't be ridiculous," expostulated Christine. "You know you've simply got to go. You can't possibly afford to offend Uncle. He'd be terribly angry if you didn't go."

A flush of annoyance rose in Angus Gregory's face. He resented the absurd emphasis which Christine put into the words. It was much the way in which she would speak to the children. He looked frowningly at her as she sat quietly sewing, the light from the lamp falling on her dark hair which was always so well done, on her small capable hands, and straight little profile. He realized, as he always did, whenever any discussion came up between them that Christine had a faint contempt for him. He wondered if in her heart a woman always had a shade of contempt for a man who wasn't an

outstanding success. He didn't feel that he wanted to do anything to lessen that feeling she had for him. Since that was how she felt it only had the effect of making him feel cold and defiant.

"I haven't got to go unless I choose," he said, very deliberately.

Christine looked up with an expression of exasperation.

"Angus, what is the use of all this discussion? It's almost eight o'clock. You know if you're late Uncle will be in one of his worst moods." She bit off a piece of thread with small even teeth. Angus watched her for a moment with a rising sense of irritation.

"Every Tuesday and every Friday for five years," he said, with bitterness. "Why doesn't he get a secretary? What has he ever done for us? What did he send you last Christmas? A beastly scarf that you gave to the charwoman."

"It's so childish to go on like this," Christine remarked, in a cool little voice that was like smoothly running water. "He can't live forever. We'll have it all some day. It isn't as though you had got on so well yourself," she added, with a maddening little laugh. "If you offend him it would be just like him not to leave us a cent. That would be a nice look-out for the children, wouldn't it?"

"They'd get on all right without it same as other people do," he said, moving slowly towards the door. "Sometimes, Christine, I think that you don't care about anything in the world except money. You always think it's necessary to be so nice to people who have it. You seem to think it casts a halo around them."

Christine gave her cool little laugh.

"You are so childish at times, Angus," she remarked, without glancing up from her work.

With a feeling of driven exasperation, Angus went out into the hall and took down his raincoat. He thrust his arms into the sleeves and took up his hat with quick angry movements. He was furious with himself for not sitting on beside the fire as he wanted to do. He was furious with Christine for driving him out on such a night. And he was even more furious with David Flinch sitting up there in his big house, thinking that he had only to express a wish and everyone would rush to perform it. And here he was doing the very thing he loathed himself for doing. He had never missed a

Tuesday or Friday in years, except when he had been laid up with a cold, or one of the children had contracted some childish disease. He always gave in to Christine in this same spineless fashion. With a sudden gust of anger he felt that he literally despised himself.

The streets were almost deserted, the street lights throwing long golden reflections on the black slippery pavements. Motors went past with a slurring of wheels. Occasionally a figure beneath a lowered umbrella scurried past. It was a night when even dogs and cats sought shelter, he thought, with an increasing bitterness.

It was all very well for Christine to talk in the way she did. She could go on sitting beside a warm fire in their comfortable sitting room. She didn't have to start out on a night like this. He had never felt such a deadly hatred of David Flinch with his face like a squeezed lemon and his thin bowed legs.

It was always the same irritating work to be done. He would have to go over the accounts and put down the amounts in a book. He would have to write letters to dictation, while David Flinch fumbled to find the word to express his meaning. Then some paper or letter would be lost and there would have to be a thorough search made for it through all the drawers in the desk. Finally it would be found among the papers on the table which David Flinch had warned him not to touch. It was work which might have been done by any junior clerk. David Flinch never asked his opinion about anything of importance; he never invited a suggestion about investments or the management of the estate.

At half past ten the maid would appear with two small glasses of port and a couple of biscuits on a tray. Angus would have to sit long after he had finished the meagre repast and watch the old man crumble his biscuit and sip the port with irritating slowness. Then there would be the usual questions about Christine's health, about how the children were getting on, and it inevitably ended up with reminiscences of David Flinch's own childhood days, to prove that even in those far off times he had had in him the germ of success.

As he went slowly up the stone steps of David Flinch's severe gray stone house Angus felt such a heat of anger rising in him that it was almost beyond his control.

"Mr. Flinch has just been telephoning," the prim maid remarked in dry clipped tones; "he thought that perhaps you weren't coming."

Angus glanced towards the grandfather's clock at the foot of the stairs. It was just seven minutes past eight. The old man couldn't even allow him that amount of leeway. He handed his raincoat and hat to the pert maid while a frown settled over his face. David Flinch appeared in the doorway of the library, peering over the rims of his glasses.

"Well, I thought you were never coming," the old man said, in a high fluting voice that had querulous notes in it. "I've just been telephoning your house. Christine said you had been a little late in starting."

"It's only seven minutes past eight," Angus said coldly, following David Flinch into the large book-lined library. The room at least always gave Angus a feeling of satisfaction. He liked the deep chairs of Spanish leather, the rows of books that mounted to the beamed ceiling, the great black oak table that filled the centre of the room with its carved legs. Sitting in that room, evening after evening, listening to the old man's mumbling talk, Angus would plan what changes he would make when the house belonged to him. He would remove some of the clutter of pewter pots that were ranged along the grey stone mantle, and banish the brass lamp with its mottled glass shade. There were quite a number of small changes that he would make when it was his room.

"Seven minutes are seven minutes," David Flinch went on argumentatively, "and it's just the little things like that which make all the difference between a man's being a success or a failure. Now when I was a young man I counted the minutes as well as the pennies. And that's why I am where I am to-day."

The complacency in the old man's tones was insufferable. And again, for the second time that evening the insinuation that he was a failure had been flung at him. Something seemed to leap in Angus Gregory. He gripped the back of the stiff chair that had been placed for him opposite to the comfortable one in which David Flinch sat, and looked at the old man with concentrated hatred.



“You think because you have money you can make people crawl to you. Well, I’ve finished crawling—”

David Flinch seated himself stiffly and looked up to see the younger man still standing. A scowl of impatience crossed his wizened face.

“Come on. Sit down. Let’s get to work now that you are here at last. There’s no use wasting any more time.”

Angus felt every muscle in his body grow taut.

“We’re not going to do any work to-night,” he said, each word dropping like a stone, “at least, I’m not.”

David Flinch peered at him over the top of his spectacles.

“What’s this, what’s this?” he exclaimed, impatiently. “I said sit down and we’d get to work.”

“And I said I wasn’t going to do any work for you,” Angus replied, his voice rising. “You can get someone else to do your work, and pay him for doing it,” he added, with emphasis.

David Flinch opened his mouth but no sound came. He sat for a moment, his mouth hanging open like an expiring fish. Then in a fit of weak rage, he pounded on the table.

“If that’s the way you’re going to talk, you don’t need to expect a cent of my money.”

“I don’t,” Angus retorted. “I don’t either expect it or want it. You think because you have money you can make people crawl to you. Well, I’ve finished crawling. And you can hire someone else to write your letters for you in future. I’m through.”

He turned sharply on his heel and went through the hall to find his raincoat. There was no sound from the library as he came out of the cloak room. He was sorry that the pert maid hadn’t been summoned to open the door for him. He would have liked to have shown her that he wasn’t going to stand for the old man’s nonsense any more. He opened the heavy door and banged it shut behind him. He could feel how that slam reverberated through the house. It was like a gesture of defiance flung in the wizened face of that old man sitting at his writing table. He gave a short laugh as he ran down the steps, picturing David Flinch with fury depicted on his face, seated before that untidy litter of papers. This evening Christine’s uncle would have the pleasure of writing his own letters, of searching for his own papers. If he got anyone else in the future to do it for him he would have to pay for it. He could imagine how that would sting David Flinch. He would hate to have to pay for what he had got for nothing all these years.

The rain had almost stopped and the damp night air seemed cooling and refreshing. Angus walked quickly, his steps ringing on the empty sidewalks. He felt an amused defiance with the whole situation. He had, too, a gratified sensation of having flung off a burden which had become intolerable. He had been nothing but a slave to the old man. Last year when Ames had offered him the management of their Western office, Christine had insisted that it was out of the question for them to go away as long as her uncle was alive. And after he died, she had gone on to say, there would be no need to make such a move. She had finally argued him into refusing the offer and

David Flinch had seconded her. And yet now they threw it in his face that he was a failure. If he was a failure whose fault was it? Well, for that matter it had been his own fault for listening to them. He should have had a will of his own. He should have accepted that offer in spite of what they said. Christine's idea was always to keep on the right side of some person with influence or money, rather than take the risk of depending on one's own efforts. And he had given in to Christine because she was a person whom it was very hard to resist. She had a weapon that never failed to bring him to terms. Tears. He had only to see tears welling up in her big blue eyes, tears twisting her soft mouth, blotting her delicate features, to give in at any cost. But after this he felt that he couldn't give in to her tears. He must show her that he intended to depend upon himself instead of striving to make himself indispensable to wealth or power.

He opened the door with his latchkey and took off his raincoat in the hall. Christine's voice with a note of surprised inquiry in it floated to him from the sittingroom.

"Angus, whatever is the matter? Why are you back so soon?"

He walked to the door of the sitting room and met her eyes raised from her work, staring, wide open.

"What's the matter?" she insisted. "Is Uncle ill?"

He gave a laugh and came into the room and sat down in the chair he had so recently left. The evening paper was still lying on the floor where he had tossed it. He stooped and picked it up.

"No, he's not ill. At least he was all right when I left him."

"They why are you back?"

"Because I chose to come back," he replied, steadily, glancing down the columns to find what he had been reading before he went out.

Christine sat with her needle held motionless, staring at him out of wondering blue eyes.

"Angus, you really are too aggravating. Why can't you tell me the reason you are back?"

"Because there's nothing to tell. I simply didn't like messing over his old papers to-night. I told you I didn't want to go out. Your uncle's manners are too abominable. He thinks he can order me around as though I were a school boy. He found out to-night that he couldn't any longer. I told him that he could pay someone to do his work for him after this."

Christine's eyes widened.

"You didn't," she cried. "Angus, you never had a row with Uncle?"

"I wouldn't call it a row. I told him that he could hire someone after this to be his bookkeeper. That's all there was to it."

"Oh, Angus," Christine cried in agonized tones, "I can't believe you really did such a thing." She threw aside her sewing while her eyes filled with tears. "Are you crazy?" she went on, her voice threatening to break. "Why, he simply won't leave us a cent."

"So he said," Angus returned from behind the sheets of his newspaper.

There was a choking gasp from Christine. Angus lowered the paper and looked at her. She seemed very small and young and pitiful with tears blotting her face. He threw aside the paper and got up, struggling with himself not to be too much moved by the sight of those tears.

"Christine dear, don't be silly," he said, standing helplessly in front of her. "Your uncle has been like a noose around our necks. It couldn't go on. I've been feeling that for some time. But you would never listen. He was becoming more and more exacting until we couldn't have called our souls our own. We don't want his money. Let him leave it to charity."

"To charity!" Christine cried in despair. There was an audible sob in her voice. "Oh, dearest, then it's really true and you've offended him hopelessly? I couldn't have believed that you would have done such a thing. Didn't you think of the poor children? Apparently you never thought of me."

"I thought of you and the children and myself," Angus said slowly, in steady tones, "and I thought that the children would rather have a father they could respect than one whom later on they would despise. I thought you might prefer to have a husband you could respect. And for myself I cared more for my own self respect which I had almost lost than for anything your uncle could leave us."

"It's so childish to talk like that," Christine moaned, "and it's all because you didn't want to go out to-night. I wish now that I had telephoned to say you wouldn't go. But I never really imagined that you would fly into a horrible temper and ruin all our lives."

"Christine, I wish you wouldn't talk nonsense," Angus said abruptly, walking over to the fireplace, his sympathy for her weakening beneath her continued reproaches. "It may have been the rain that started me thinking

what a slave I had become. And I haven't ruined your life yet. And I don't intend that it shall be ruined. I can make money myself."

Christine gave a half hysterical, half ironic laugh.

"You . . . make money?" she scoffed. "You've never made very much yet. Oh, I don't see how you could have done such a dreadful thing. Do you suppose if I went to see Uncle—"

"If I ever heard of you going to see your uncle," Angus broke in sharply, "to apologize for my behavior you'd never see me again as long as I live. That's not just an empty threat. I mean it."

A sob broke from Christine and she hid her face in her handkerchief. He moved towards her, and putting his arm around her drew her to her feet. "Go on up to bed, dear," he said quietly. "You are tired. And don't bother about your uncle. It's the best thing I've ever done in my life. You'll see."

Christine made an effort to dry her tears with a tightly rolled handkerchief.

"Perhaps he may forget about to-night," she said, with a note of hope in her voice. "His memory is getting pretty bad. I can't believe that he'd actually alter his will just because you flew into a temper and said things you'll be sorry for saying to-morrow. If you are very nice to him the next time he may overlook it."

"Go on up to bed, dear," was all Angus replied.

But if the discussion was over for that night it wasn't over for the next day or the days that followed. Christine apparently could think or talk of nothing else. She ran the gamut of every mood in a vain effort to bring Angus to a more reasonable frame of mind. But it was like hitting against a stone wall. In the process she began to respect the very determination which she was striving her utmost to break down. She had never known Angus to be so determined. She had always before defeated him in any argument.

Seeing that there was nothing to be gained by appealing to Angus any more in the matter, she made up her mind that she would go and see her uncle in spite of what Angus had said. She was not afraid of his threats or his anger when it was turned against her. She knew that it melted like ice in the sun. If he heard that she had gone to see David Flinch he would undoubtedly be angry. But it wouldn't last for long.

It may have been the fact that he had been so opposed to this visit which made her lose some of her self possession as she sat opposite to her uncle in

the small chilly reception room which was used only for the receiving of tradespeople or callers on business. The very fact that she had been ushered into this room instead of into the more intimate seclusion of the library made her feel at once the folly of her visit.

“You know, Uncle,” she explained, nervously, “Angus has a very quick temper. But he doesn’t mean all he says.”

David Flinch sat facing her, his elbows resting on the arms of his chair, the tips of his fingers together, while he listened to her with an amused expression.

“So you have come to try and repair the damage, have you?” he inquired in his high thin tones. “I suppose that means that Angus has thought better of insulting me. I was quite sure he would when he came to think the matter over. I was waiting for a visit. Only I expected Angus to come himself. It seems to me the young man shows rather a lack of character to send you instead.”

Christine’s face grew painfully scarlet.

“He didn’t send me. He wouldn’t do such a thing. He had no idea whatever that I was coming.”

David Flinch smiled a slow unbelieving smile.

“You are very loyal to him, my dear. But as I said he shouldn’t have sent you,” he repeated with irritating persistence. “You can take back this message, however. Tell him if he comes himself I might listen to what he has to say. I don’t say that I shall entirely overlook his rudeness and ingratitude. But I won’t even listen to any apologies that he sends by a messenger.”

Christine rose quickly to her feet. Her blue eyes blazed with anger. At that moment she didn’t blame Angus for having lost his temper with her uncle. In a moment she herself would say things that would finish everything.

“Very well, Uncle,” she said, quickly, “if that’s how you feel it’s no use my saying anything. I thought it was a pity for relations to quarrel. You are the only relation I have. But it had nothing whatever to do with Angus. In spite of what you may think, he didn’t know I was coming.”

“A great pity, as you say,” David Flinch said, with a cackling laugh. “It is a great pity to quarrel with one’s relations. I daresay Angus feels the same by this time.”

Christine left the house with her head high but with a heavy feeling around her heart. She didn't know exactly what she had hoped from the visit, since Angus refused to go back in the evenings, but in any case she had failed. There was nothing more to be done. She allowed herself to sink into a mood of depression whenever she thought of all that money going to strangers.

She would sit with her chin in her hand in the evenings, staring into vacancy, her sewing lying untouched in her lap. It annoyed her terribly to find that Angus paid little or no attention to these moods. He was exasperatingly cheerful. He seemed to her almost a stranger. And while at times she hated him, yet she felt somehow differently towards him than she had ever felt before. She asked his opinion once or twice when formerly she would have deemed his opinion quite worthless.

It was some weeks later that she met her uncle's housekeeper on the street and the woman informed her that a young secretary had been engaged to come every Tuesday and Friday evening.

"Does he seem quite satisfactory?" Christine inquired with a sudden flash of interest.

"As far as I know, Mrs. Gregory. For a time the old gentleman seemed sort of upset. But now he's quite himself again. But my," she went on, "it does seem a pity for Mr. Gregory not to have got on better with the old gentleman. He can't be with us much longer and then where is all the money to go? It doesn't seem right for relations to quarrel."

Christine went home feeling thoroughly dejected. At dinner that evening she told Angus of what the housekeeper had said.

"Well, I hope he's paying the poor devil decently, that's all," Angus said, without a hint of regret in his voice.

Christine felt maddened by this cool complacency.

"We'll have to begin thinking of the children's future," she said, with the sound of tears in her voice. "Jane will have to work."

Angus suppressed a smile. The thought of work for six-year-old Jane asleep in her cot up-stairs did not seem to him very imminent.

"I should hope she would do something when she grew up," Angus returned, "but there doesn't seem to be any particular hurry about deciding. I'd hate to think she was simply going to do nothing with her life. Fortunately that state of affairs is out of date."

"I never thought there would have been any need for my daughter to earn her living," Christine said, freezingly.

"Well, if that is how you felt about it perhaps it would be a good thing if there was," Angus replied calmly. "That's excellent soup, my dear."

Angus felt the most tremendous relief following upon his break with old David Flinch. It was as though now that he had flung off a burden that had become intolerable he could go about his own affairs with an undivided mind. He realized that he had spent a great part of his time and energy these past years in a baffled state of resistance that had worn him out physically and mentally.

Now that he could put the old man and his constant demands upon his time completely out of his mind, he took a greater interest in everything. His work was no longer just something to be got through. And besides, Christine's attitude had aroused him to a state of defiance. He would show her that he was not altogether the failure which she had put him down as being.

Vaguely, the president of the company, Woodruff Ames, began to feel that there was a new personality in the office. His recollection of Gregory in the past had been of a disappointing nature. That offer of Western management which had promised such possibilities to the right man and which had been summarily refused for no apparent reason, had prejudiced Ames against the younger man. But now, on several occasions Gregory had surprised him with a suggestion which showed at least that he was alive to the business.

Woodruff Ames, sat at his desk one Autumn morning, frowning down at a telegram which was spread out before him. Lester, the man whom he had sent to Alabama to take charge of the Southern office, had been a decided mistake. Lester had got things down there in a bad tangle apparently, and Ames knew no one whom he could send just at this moment to put matters straight. A sudden impulse made him press the buzzer on the side of his desk.

"Ask Mr. Gregory to come here," he said to the stenographer.

"Gregory," said Ames, removing his glasses and swinging them to and fro by their black ribbon, "what made you refuse the Western office? Was it laziness or did you doubt your ability to manage it?"

“Neither, Mr. Ames. It was just pure foolishness. I didn’t know I owned myself.”

“Do you know it now?” snapped Ames, fixing him with a coldly calculating eye.

“I do. But I don’t suppose there is a chance of another opening like that?”

“There might be,” Ames said, cryptically, “but I’ve got to be sure of my man. I’ve made one mistake sending the wrong man and I can’t afford to make another mistake in the same place. Suppose you tell me the reason you refused.”

Angus stated the case in a few words.

“I’ve got back my self respect,” he finished, “and that’s what no man can afford to be without.”

Ames put on his glasses and Angus moved towards the door, seeing that the interview was at an end. Probably he had been a fool to tell Ames about old David Flinch. It simply showed Ames that a man who could be so weak was not the man to whom to offer a second chance.

“Get your transportation for to-morrow,” Ames said, abruptly, as Angus put his hand on the knob of the door, “and take over the Southern office. I’ll wire Lester to come back. He’s not the man to assume responsibility apparently. I want you to go to work to straighten things out down there. They are in a bad tangle. I suppose you can arrange for your family to follow you down.”

To his surprise Christine made no objection to the move. Instead, when he told her she appeared to be delighted with the idea of a change. She even went so far as to remark as she helped him to pack:

“A winter in the South will be splendid for Jane. She’s been having such bad colds lately. After all,” she added, grudgingly, “it is rather nice to be able to go away sometimes.”

“You bet it is,” Angus replied, heartily, trying to cram more things into an overcrowded suitcase. “And it’s nice to be able to call your soul your own. Once I get things in hand down there you won’t have to keep on regretting your uncle’s money. I see great possibilities ahead. You’ll see,” he added buoyantly, “you won’t always have to despise your husband.”

Christine dropped a pile of shirts on the bed and encircled his neck with her slim arms.

“Oh, dearest, I never despised you,” she protested vehemently. “I only sometimes thought you were rather foolish about Uncle.”

“And you still think so, don’t you?”

Christine’s brow puckered. She remembered her interview with the old man. She had never spoken of it to Angus. She saw no reason to speak of it now, but it made her respond quietly.

“I do think he was rather exasperating at times. But I hate to think of all that money going to charity.”

It took Angus almost a year before he had the Southern office running the way he had planned. It was quite true that Lester had got affairs badly tangled. Customers were dissatisfied and the whole territory was disorganized. But he didn’t put all the blame on Lester after he had been there some time. It was Ames himself who was at the bottom of all the trouble. He was forever forwarding directions; making comments on the management; putting forward suggestions. Ames could quite see that a man without a will of his own would soon be hopelessly entangled.

“Either I run this office or I don’t run it at all,” Angus exploded angrily to Christine one evening after they had been there only a couple of months. Christine looked at him in alarm.

“Angus, you’re never going to dispute anything that Ames says?”

“You bet I’m going to dispute it. He blamed Lester for getting things in a mess down here. Lester was afraid of him, that was the trouble. He’ll find that I’m not Lester and at first he won’t like it. I don’t want all these instructions forwarded to me in every mail.”

“Angus,” her voice was beseeching. “Oh, don’t behave like that. The first thing you know you’ll lose your position and I am just getting to love it down here. And it’s doing Jane so much good. You must remember that now that we’ve lost any chance of Uncle’s money our whole future depends upon being nice to Mr. Ames.”

“My dear, don’t be silly,” Angus said rising and pacing up and down the broad veranda. “I shouldn’t have told you anything about it. I won’t lose the office. And if I do this company isn’t the only company in the world. Either Ames gives me a free hand in running things or I get out.”

“Oh, don’t talk like that,” expostulated Christine on the verge of tears. “You’re just going to be the same as you were with Uncle. I see that. And I thought we were going to be so happy. I simply love this little bungalow and now you’ll lose your position and we’ll have to go back.”

“Christine dear, after this I musn’t tell you anything about business. It only worries you. I can see that.”

“Well, if you don’t tell me anything then I’ll know everything is going wrong and I’ll worry all the time,” she declared. “If that’s what you want.”

“Dearest, can’t you trust me?”

“How can I trust you when I know that any time you’ll fly into one of your terrible tempers and be rude to the very person upon whom our whole future depends.”

“My dear child, our future depends upon no one except ourselves. If you’d only believe that instead of thinking that your uncle or Ames holds it in the hollow of their hands. It isn’t exactly flattering to me, is it?” he asked, with a faint laugh.

In the middle of that winter Ames, finding that some of his instructions had not been carried out, took a trip down to Alabama, half for the pleasure of escaping for a time from the cold weather at home, and half with the intention of calling Gregory down for not carrying out his suggestions more fully.

“I find you’re taking too much responsibility into your own hands,” Ames remarked crisply. “Now in that matter I wrote you about last month I find that none of my instructions have been attended to.”

“What about the sales during the last three months?” Angus said with a steady coolness.

Ames tapped the desk with his glasses.

“That’s all right. I know you’ve been increasing the sales right along. But that doesn’t say you should ignore my instructions the way you have been doing.”

Angus regarded the older man steadily for a moment. Then he remarked slowly:

“You must remember, Mr. Ames, that my territory is a little different to the home territory. It can’t be managed in the same way, and it can’t be managed from a distance. Lester fell down on the job, didn’t he? Well, it

wasn't exactly Lester's fault. He tried to carry out your instructions to the letter. And that was why he failed. If you feel that someone else would manage things better, why I am quite ready to resign. I have had an offer," he felt among the papers in his pocket and taking out a letter he handed it to Ames, "which I was going to refuse. I'm just showing you this so that you needn't feel that you are in any way obliged to keep me on."

Ames glanced down at the letter, lifting his heavy eyebrows slightly. "You say you were going to refuse this?" he remarked, tapping the letter, "yet I see that they are offering you more than you've been getting."

Angus shrugged his shoulders.

"You don't do the work I've been putting in without becoming interested in the company. Frankly, I don't want to leave you. But that is a matter for you to decide. I only showed you this to make you feel you were perfectly free to do whatever you thought best for the company." He paused for an instant. Then with a change of tone. "You're coming up to the house to have dinner with us, aren't you, sir? Will seven-thirty suit you?"

"Ah—why—yes," Ames stammered, slightly taken aback by the abrupt change of tone, "that is very kind of you, Gregory."

Angus paused for a moment as he was leaving the office.

"Perhaps you will tell me in the morning the decision you have come to."

He didn't wait for a reply from Ames. He wanted to give him time to think it over and not hurry him into a decision which he might regret as soon as he had left Alabama.

The dinner passed off very successfully. Christine was adorably pretty in a soft yellow frock, her cheeks flushed and her black hair low over her ears like smoothly-polished wings. She exerted herself to the utmost to amuse and entertain Ames. He responded to her efforts with a gallantry which Angus found vastly entertaining.

"He's a dear, isn't he?" Christine remarked as soon as Ames had left. "I do hope he liked everything. Do you think the dinner was well cooked? I didn't think the fish was very well done. Oh, I do hope he was pleased. I felt that it meant simply everything to you to have things perfect. Do you think everything was all right?" She looked at Angus anxiously.

“Why, of course it was,” Angus responded carelessly. “I was so amused all evening,” he went on forgetting his resolve not to mention business to Christine. “Ames was so very pleasant. You see, just this afternoon we had quite a talk. I intimated to him that if he didn’t let me run things my own way down here that I was quite ready to resign from the company. I showed him another offer I have had lately. I think he was completely floored. He’s used to dictating—”



“Angus,” came Christine’s voice in a muffled cry. “Oh, Angus—How too awful!”

“Angus,” and Christine’s voice rose in a muffled cry. “Oh, Angus. You didn’t tell him you’d resign if you didn’t have your own way? How too awful! And I never had the faintest idea that everything wasn’t all right between you. Why didn’t you warn me? And I was thinking that everything was going off so well. Oh, now we’re just ruined. Everything’s hopeless.”

She subsided in a small crumpled heap of yellow on the couch, while sobs shook her body.

“Dearest, don’t cry like that. Why, it’s simply absurd. Everything’s going splendidly. There’s nothing to worry about.” He sat down on the couch beside her, cursing himself for being a fool. Whatever had made him mention things to Christine. He felt in such incomparable good spirits himself that he hadn’t thought for a moment of just how she would take it. But it was the case of her uncle all over again. He should have known better than to speak of it.

“I was foolish to tell you, dear. But it seemed such a joke. I thought you might enjoy it too.”

“Enjoy it,” sobbed Christine putting down her handkerchief from her face to stare at him with swimming eyes. “I don’t see anything to enjoy. It seems as though there was never anything but trouble. Just when I thought everything was going so beautifully you go deliberately and make a mess of everything.” She got to her feet. “I’m going up to bed,” she said, in a cold small voice. “I’m simply worn out with all this worry.”

Angus came up the path to the bungalow the next day at noon, with eager rapid steps. He looked on the veranda for Christine, but she wasn’t there. Finally, he found her lying in the sitting room, the shades drawn down, her voice depressed and low.

“Well, I suppose everything’s finished,” she said, with a long soft sigh as he came towards her.

“Everything’s settled, if that’s what you mean,” Angus replied briskly. “Ames has offered me five thousand dollars worth of stock in the company if I will stay on and run things my own way.”

Christine sat up and stared at him.

“I don’t believe it. You’re not telling me the truth?”

“Of course, I’m telling you the truth, dear. I have a letter here that will surprise you, though,” he said, drawing an envelope from his pocket. “Your uncle died a few days ago very suddenly. You’ll be amazed to hear that he left practically nothing. He was living on an annuity and the house was mortgaged. There was practically nothing except a little silver and some furniture which goes to a distant nephew.”

Christine's blue eyes opened wide. She got to her feet and threw her arms around Angus's neck.

"Oh, my dear," she cried, "just think if you had neglected the business on account of Uncle. Isn't it a mercy you took my advice and kept in with old Ames. I've always told you that our whole future depended upon him. Now, isn't it true?"

Angus hid the smile that broke over his face as he stooped to kiss her.

THE END

TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Mis-spelled words and printer errors have been corrected. Where multiple spellings occur, majority use has been employed.

Punctuation has been maintained except where obvious printer errors occur.

A cover was created for this ebook which is placed in the public domain.

[The end of *The More That They Have* by Beatrice Redpath]