Faith stood looking out the third story window. Her eyes surveyed and took in the city for blocks around. There was the fountain on the square and, as usual, there were many fascinated and eager-eyed children playing around it or admiring it.

One little girl particularly caught her attention. She looked very attractive and alert, from the point of vantage in the big bank building, but Faith noted her poor attire and the limp when she walked. She must find out who the child was and where she lived!

Quickly, she put a shawl around her slender shoulders and, stepping into the hallway, turned the key in the door and put the sign where everyone could see. "Be back in fifteen minutes," it read.

She hurried down the stairway and over to the fountain on the square. The intelligent looking child stood in the same spot, watching the water bubbling and spraying from the fountain.

"You like that, don't you?" Faith said softly, coming up beside the child.

"I think it's beautiful," was the reply. A radiant smile played across her face.

"Do you get to see it often?"
"When Mommie feels I'm strong enough to walk down here to it," she replied honestly. Looking down at the lame leg, the child continued, -- "You see, I'm crippled. I had polio. Some days my leg is too weak for me to be on it for a long time."

"A brace would help you, dear child," and a tear coursed down Faith's cheek.

"The doctor said that too. But," and the sincere-spoken child brushed a quick tear aside as she smiled bravely and added, "We're just too poor. Don't you ever tell my Mommie I said that for she would be very unhappy with me if she knew I told a stranger." Then, looking deep into Faith's tender eyes, she added in almost a whisper, "I . . . I like you! You're real nice." Again her countenance was illuminated with a radiant smile.

Faith said nothing as she studied the honest, open and frankly-sincere face of the dark-haired girl before her.

"Would you like a brace?" Faith asked cautiously. "Would I like a brace? Oh, to be sure I would, Mrs. ...."

"It's Miss, honey. I'm Faith Hopewell and I work in that big tall new bank building you see in front of you. I saw you from that window up on third floor."

"You . . . you did?" the child asked, puzzled. "You saw me?"

"I saw you and I watched you," Faith said, patting her lovingly on the silken hair. "And what is your name, Miss?"

Again the bright eyes shone up at Faith and she laughed musically as she replied, "I'm Magayra Music and I live in an apartment a little way from here. ' '

"What a lovely name!" Faith answered. "I'd like very much to meet your mother, Magayra. Could you take me to her?"

Eagerly and happily, the girl led the slow walk to the apartment building. Faith's heart bled with each step the child took for she could sense the walk was being made in much pain.

"Here's our house," Magayra said as she opened the door and called, "Mother, see who's here?"

An equally honest-looking and beautiful but poorly clad woman entered the room. Seeing the stranger, she said pleasantly, "I can't remember ever having met you. I'm Mrs. Music."
"And I am Faith Hopewell," Faith began. "Do pardon my intrusion. I shall be only a few minutes for I must be back to work; however, I have come to discuss a matter with you."

"Please be seated, Faith. I am happy to meet you. I'm always happy to meet Magayra's friends," the mother said. "She chooses well for a child."

"But, Mother, Miss Faith found me!" Magayra replied happily.

"I saw her standing by the fountain," Faith began. "Something about her was . . . well, I guess I should say, different. I noticed her limp and I should like to outfit her with a brace."

Mrs. Music's mouth opened; she tried to speak. But Faith continued, "I work for an excellent doctor and I shall speak with him. You may bring Magayra in anytime. I shall assume the cost of the doctor bill as well as the braces."

"That is so kind of you," Mrs. Music said tearfully. "But I cannot allow you to do this, knowing that I may possibly never be able to repay you."

"I want no remuneration other than to see Magayra walking and running about like other girls her age," Faith said, rising from the sofa.

"Think it over, Mrs. Music," she continued, "and when you decide, here's my card. Bring this with you to Dr. Nolte. He's excellent with children."

She walked briskly back to the office and removed the sign. The waiting room was full of patients and Dr. Nolte would be in any minute. Quickly, she donned her white smock and checked on the instruments that were being sterilized in each receiving room.

A few days passed by. One day the lovely Magayra and her beautiful mother walked into the office.

"I decided to come." Mrs. Music spoke softly to Faith.

"See my new shoes?" Magayra asked brightly. "Mommie saved money until she could buy them for me," and she lovingly brushed a bit of dust off the shiny black patent.

"They're beautiful!" Faith exclaimed. Noticing the embarrassed expression on Mrs. Music's face, she added, "I'm so happy you've come. You'll not be sorry. I shall see that Dr. Nolte sees Magayra and you in a very few minutes."

For days after the child was properly fitted with a corrective brace, Faith paid short, brief calls at the Music house, always taking some much appreciated thing or
foodstuff along for the child or the family, and her heart was doubly repaid when Dr. Nolte told her the child would someday be walking almost entirely normal again.

This was Faith's life--a life of giving, of self-sacrifice and doing for others. That's why, when, on that lovely moonlight night, as she made her way down Silver Creek Lane to Whispering Pine Road and as she neared the house then turned off the ignition key, she couldn't understand what had happened. There in front of her unbelieving eyes was the sign -- clearly visible and plainly readable in large letters -- SOLD.

She blinked harder, trying to chase the stinging, burning tears away. This was to have been her house! Hers and John's, that is! And now it read "SOLD" -- in daring bold letters. Mr. Haney, the realtor, knew John wanted to buy it for his and Faith's future home! He knew it, and he had promised John before he went abroad on business, "I'll keep it till you return, John," he had said. "That is," he added, "providing it's ever up for sale!"

Now he had sold it! Faith got out of the car and walked down the winding cobblestone sidewalk to the front porch. Looking heavenward, she wept uncontrollably, "Thy will, dear Lord, not mine! Thy blessed will and Thine alone."

The moon seemed to be smiling upon her and the crickets chirped softly all around her as she wept softly, silently, every facet of her being completely surrendered to His will.

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"Love endureth all things," Faith said softly aloud as she made one last visit to Hilltop House. The new owners, Mr. Haney had said, were to be there by tonight sometime. "Go see the place," he told her only yesterday. "In fact, go tomorrow. I know how much it meant to you." He breathed heavily as he said it.

At first she thought she could not endure the thought of someone else occupying the house she and John had always hoped and prayed would be theirs. But the longer she thought about it, the more determined she was to keep victorious over all circumstances. She prayed much that early evening, then drove resolutely down Silver Creek Lane to Whispering Pine Road and up the hill to the small, neat and compact bungalow. There it stood, so cozy-looking and so inviting, silhouetted against a rosy-tinted sky. Off a short distance to the right, a wood thrush warbled its beautiful song for her. On the weeping willow tree back near the large dining room window, a small excited wren sang lustily and the pines whispered softly, sweetly in her ears.

She walked down the winding cobblestone walk to the front porch, then stopped. She knew the rooms all too well for she had been through the house many times since
the "FOR SALE" sign had been erected on the lawn. Mr. Haney had given her a key. "Go up as often as you like," he said.

"You need to get away from the office more."

She walked around the side of the house and meandered slowly, thoughtfully, to the far side of the deep lot where pine trees swayed their needly branches gently in the soft evening breeze. For a long while, she stood watching the ribbon of stream that gave Silver Creek Lane its name; then, with full resignation of heart and will, she fell to her knees and prayed. For a long time, she remained in sweet communion with the Lord. Suddenly she was startled by bright lights. She had prayed the sunset into dusk and darkness and had become totally oblivious of time. "The new owners have arrived," she said to herself, "and I am blocking the driveway."

Hurrying across the deep lot, she reached the house and saw no one but heard only voices. Seeing her car blocked on all sides, she stepped lightly to the front door and knocked. Mr. Haney met her.

"Why, Faith," he began. "Where have you come from?" Then, extending his hand in a welcoming gesture, he said, "Do come in."

"I . . . I'm . . . sorry, Mr. Haney," she apologized. "I didn't mean to block the driveway and I had no intention of staying here this late. Forgive me, please!"

"Certainly! Certainly!" the realtor asserted, smiling. "Now step inside and meet the new owner of Hilltop House." With that, he led Faith through the small entranceway into the living room where the crystal chandelier was shimmering and glowing beautifully.

Suddenly, from every room, there was a rush of feet and a ripple of happy laughter.

"Welcome to our new home, Faith," John said stepping through the kitchen doorway as lights flicked on in every room of the house.

Faith stood speechless, looking first from John to Mr. Haney and the houseful of people, then back to John again. Suddenly, unashamedly she buried her face in her hands and wept. John came to her side and, taking both her small, kind hands in his, he whispered, "It's yours, dear--yours really!"

"But John! You didn't tell me you were coming. This is too..., too..., much for me." Again she wept.

"I planned it this way. I wanted to surprise you. Now smile, you always look prettier when you smile, you know," and he gave her a long, pleased look.
"I'll explain everything when the crowd's gone," he whispered happily.

"Miss Faith," and a familiar musical-sounding voice spoke softly, "here's a small present for your kitchen from Mother and me," and Faith turned toward the beautiful upturned face.

"Magayra!" she exclaimed happily, throwing her arms around the girl whose limbs were now so much improved. "Magayra! My dear, dear child! How did you ever get here and where is Mother?"

"Dr. Nolte brought me," the child exclaimed happily, beaming up at the old doctor's kind face. "And Mother had to care for tiny Tim who's got a high fever or she would have been here with me. She sends you her love."

"Faith." Mr. Haney stepped to the forefront now, "We have all gathered here tonight to pay tribute to one of the most unselfish women in the world. These, your friends, have expressed their appreciation to you in various ways," and he began leading her on a tour of the beautifully-furnished rooms.

On the dining room table was a placard reading, "Given with much love to one who sacrificed of her means to put me through school that I might be able to study and prepare myself more fully for the Master's work. Signed Rev. and Mrs. J. Porter."

"But I wanted to do it!" Faith exclaimed. "I wanted no compensation other than to help your family out." And Brother Porter said, "This is merely a small expression of our deep appreciation and thanks for what you've done to help us when we were not able."

There was a lovely early American wing-back sofa with two matching chairs from Dr. and Mrs. Nolte, a kitchen set from Mayor and Mrs. Downey--"For helping me up to a higher plane of living when I was down and out," it read, "and for leading me from sin's dark paths into the glorious light of the gospel."

"That's the least I could do," Faith said, taken completely aback by their kindnesses.

On the one bedroom wall, hung tastefully in keeping with the warm furnishings of the golden maple bedroom suite, were lovely plaques from the Rondo's of the far Orient--"In loving thoughts for you. Ronald and Margaret Rondo."

A sudden gush of tears coursed down Faith's cheeks.

"Don't cry," John said tenderly. "It's a mere expression of their appreciation to you for keeping them on the mission field when the missions board said there was no longer adequate funds to keep them there."
"But who's going to keep them there when Miss Faith gets married?" It was Andy, the poor little shoe shine boy whom Faith had often helped out with clothing and food supplies, coal and bedding for the family.

Before Faith could answer, John spoke up, "From here on out, Andrew Simon," and he squeezed the frail boy's hand, "Mr. and Mrs. John Baines shall work hand in hand from Hilltop House. We will feed the hungry, clothe the poor, help support missionaries on the field and give unto others as the Lord has so abundantly blessed us. Yes, Hilltop House shall be a beacon light, a helping hand--reaching out beyond self to others."

Tears of joy streamed copiously down Faith's radiant face. It was worth every sacrifice--every time she had gone without meals that others might eat and hear; every dollar she had given to clothe others while she herself was clothed in modest, inexpensive second hand clothes from the Next to New Shop. Yes, it had paid big dividends; and it would continue paying--so long as Mr. and Mrs. John Baines had a dime between them. The thought sent a thrill through her. She smiled sweetly.

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THE END