

The City and the World and Other Stories eBook

The City and the World and Other Stories by Francis Kelley

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Page 1

THE CITY AND THE WORLD

Father Denfili, old and blind, telling his beads in the corner of the cloister garden, sighed. Father Tomasso, who had brought him from his confessional in the great church to the bench where day after day he kept his sightless vigil over the pond of the goldfish, turned back at the sound, then, seeing the peace of Father Denfili's face, thought he must have fancied the sigh. For sadness came alien to the little garden of the Community of San Ambrogio on Via Paoli, a lustrous gem of a little garden under its square of Roman sky. The dripping of the tiny fountain, tinkling like a bit of familiar music, and the swelling tones of the organ, drifting over the flowers that clustered beneath the statue of Our Lady of Lourdes, so merged their murmurings into the peacefulness of San Ambrogio, that Father Tomasso, just from the novitiate, felt intensely that he knew he must have dreamed Father Denfili's sigh. For what could trouble the old man here in San Ambrogio on this, the greatest day of the Community?

For to-day Father Ramoni had returned to Rome. Even as Father Tomasso passed the fountain a group of Fathers and novices were gathering around one of the younger priests, who still wore his fereoula and wide-brimmed hat, just as he had entered from Via Paoli. The newcomer's eyes traveled joyously over his breathless audience, calling Father Tomasso to join in hearing his news.

"Yes, it is true," he was saying. "I have just come from the audience. Father General and Father Ramoni stopped to call at the Secretariate of State, but I came straight home to tell you. His Holiness was most kind, and Father Ramoni was not a mite abashed, even in the presence of the Pope. When he knelt down the Holy Father raised him up and gave him a seat. 'Tell me all about your wonderful people and your wonderful work,' he said. And Father Ramoni told him of the thousands he had converted and how easy it was, with the blessing of God, to do so much. The Holy Father asked him every manner of question. He was full of enthusiasm for the great things our Father Ramoni has done. He is the greatest man in Rome to-day, is Ramoni. He will be honored by the Holy See. The Pope showed it plainly. This is a red-letter day for our Community." The little priest paused for breath, then hastened on. "Rome knows that our Father Ramoni has come back," he cried, "and Rome has not forgotten ten years ago."

"Was it ten years that Father Ramoni passed in South America?" a tall novice asked Father Tomasso.

"Ten years," said Father Tomasso. "He was the great preacher of Rome when the old General"—he nodded toward the cloister corner where Father Denfili prayed—"sent him away from Rome. No one knew why. His fame was at its height. Men and women of all the city crowded the church to listen to him, and he was but thirty-four years old. But Father Denfili

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sent him away to Marqua, commanding the Superior of our Order out there to send him to those far-off mountain people of whom the papers were telling at that time. I did not know Father Romani well. I was a novice at the time. But I knew that he did not want to go from Rome; though, being a good religious, he obeyed. Now, see what has happened. He has converted over one-third of that people, and the rest are only waiting for missionaries.”

“And the work is all Father Ramoni’s?” the novice asked.

“All.” Father Tomasso drew him a little farther from the group that still listened to the little priest who had come from the Vatican. “Father Ramoni found that the people had many Christian traditions and were almost white; but it was he who instilled the Faith in their hearts. There must be thirty of our Fathers in Marqua now,” he continued proudly, “and sooner or later, all novices will have to go out there. Father Ramoni has made a splendid Prefect-Apostolic. No wonder they have summoned him to Rome for consultation. I have heard”—he lowered his voice as he glanced over his shoulder to where Father Denfili sat on the bench by the pond—“that it is certain that Marqua is to be made a Province, with an archbishop and two bishops. There is a seminary in Marqua, even now, and they are training some of the natives to be catechists. I tell you, Brother Luigi, missionary history has never chronicled such wonders as our Father Ramoni has wrought.”

From behind them came the rising voice of the little priest, bubbling into laughter. “And as I came through the Pincio all that I heard was his name. I had to wait for a duchessa’s carriage to pass. She was telling an American woman of the times when Father Ramoni had preached at San Carlo. ‘His words would convert a Hindu,’ she was saying. And the Marchesi di San Quevo leaned from his horse to tell me that he had heard that Father Ramoni will be one of the Cardinals of the next Consistory. Is it not wonderful?”

The murmur of their responses went across the garden to old Father Denfili. Father Tomasso, crossing the path with the novice, suddenly saw a strange look of pain on the old priest’s face, and started toward him just as the gate to the cloister garden swung back, revealing a picture that held him waiting. Four men—a great Roman prelate, the General of San Ambrogio, Father Ramoni and Father Pietro, Ramoni’s secretary—were coming into the garden. Of the four Father Ramoni stood out in the center of the group as vividly as if a searchlight were playing on his magnificent bigness. His deep black eyes, set in a face whose strength had been emphasized by its exposure to sun and wind, gleamed joyous with his mood. His mouth, large, expressive, the plastic mouth of the orator, was curving into a smile as he gave heed to the speech of the prelate beside him. Once he shook his head as the great man, oblivious of their coming before a crowd of intent watchers, continued the words he had been saying on Via Paoli.

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“And the Holy See is about to make your Marqua into a Province. Is it not wonderful, Father Ramoni, that you will go back with that gift to the people you converted? And yet to me it is more wonderful that you wish to go back. Why do you not stay here? You, a Roman, would advance.”

“Not now, Monsignore,” the missionary answered quickly. They were passing the group near the fountain, going toward the bench where Father Denfili sat. Ramoni’s secretary, a thin, serious-visaged priest of about the same age as his Superior, with bald head and timid, shrinking eyes, took with the greatest deference the cloak and hat Father Ramoni handed to him. Then he fell back of the old General. The prelate answered Ramoni. “But you are right, of course,” he admitted. “It is best that you return. The Church needs you there now. But later on—*chi lo sa?* You are to preach Sunday afternoon at San Carlo? I shall be there to hear you. So will all Rome, I suppose. Ah, you do well here! *Filius urbis et orbis*—son of the city and the world.’ It’s a great title, Ramoni!”

They had come in front of the bench where Father Denfili told his beads. The prelate turned to the old General of San Ambrogio with deference. “Is it not so, Father?” he asked. But Father Denfili raised his sightless eyes as if he sought to focus them upon the group before him. Father Ramoni, laughingly dissenting, suddenly felt his joy congealing into a cold fear that bound his heart. He turned away angrily, then recovered himself in time. Father Denfili was no longer on the bench beside the pond. He was groping his way back to the chapel.

It was a month before the Consistory met to nominate the new hierarchy for Marqua. It had been expected that the first meeting would end in decisive action and that, immediately afterward, the great missionary of the Community of San Ambrogio would return with increased authority and dignity to his charge. But something—one of those mysterious “somethings” peculiar to Rome—had happened, and the nominations were postponed.

In the month that Father Ramoni remained in Rome he had tasted the fruits of his old popular success. On his first Sunday at home he preached in San Carlo as well as ever—better than ever. And the awed crowd he looked down on at the end of his sermon took away from the church the tidings of his greater power. From that time nearly every moment was taken by the demands of people of position and authority, who wished to make the most of him before he went back to Marqua. He scarcely saw his brethren at all, except after his Mass, when he went to the refectory for his morning coffee. He had no time to loiter in the garden, and the story of the conversion of the people of Marqua was left to the quiet Fr. Pietro, who told the splendid tales of his Superior’s great work, till Father Tomasso and Brother Luigi prayed to be given the opportunity to be Ramoni’s servants

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in the far-away land of the western world. But, if Ramoni was but seldom in the cloister, he did not avoid Father Denfili. The old blind priest seemed to meet him everywhere, in the afternoons on the Pincio, in the churches where he preached, in the subdued crowds at ecclesiastical assemblies. Once Ramoni caught a glimpse of his face lifted toward him during a conference; and a remembrance of that old look in the cloister garden gave him the sensation of belief that the old General could see, even though Ramoni himself, was the only one whom he saw.

On the day the letter from the Vatican came, Father Ramoni, detained in the cloister by the expected visit of a prelate who had expressed his desire to meet the missionary of Marqua, passed Father Denfili on his way to the reception-room. While Father Ramoni, summoning his secretary to bring some photographs for better explanation of the South American missions, went on his way, the blind man groped along the wall till he reached the General's office. He had come to the door when he felt that undercurrent of anxiety which showed itself on the white faces of the General and his assistant, who stood gazing mutely at the letter the former held. He heard the General call Father Tomasso. "Take this to Father Pietro, my son," he said. Then he listened to the younger priest's retreating footsteps.

Father Tomasso, frightened by the unwonted strangeness of the General's tone, carried the atmosphere of tense and troubled excitement with him when he entered the room the prelate was just leaving. Father Pietro glanced up at him from the table where he was returning to their case the photographs of Marqua. Tomasso laid the letter before him and left the room just as Father Ramoni, bidding his visitor a gay good-bye, turned back.

[Illustration: "I can't take it," he was sobbing, "it's a mistake, a terrible mistake."]

Father Pietro was taking the letter from its large square envelope. He read it with puzzled wonder rising to his eyes. Before he came to its end he was on his feet.

"No! No!" he cried. "It is impossible. It is a mistake."

Father Ramoni turned quickly. The man who had been his faithful servant for ten years in Marqua was very dear to him. "What is a mistake, Pietro?" he asked, coming to the table.

"The Consistory," Father Pietro stammered, "the Consistory has made a mistake. They have done an impossible thing. They have mixed our names. This letter to the General—this letter—" he pointed to the document on the table "—says that I have been made Archbishop of Marqua."

Ramoni took the letter. As he read it he knew what Pietro had not known. The news was genuine. The name signed at the letter's end guaranteed that. Ramoni caught the edge of the table. The pain of the blow gripped him relentlessly and he knew that it was a pain that would stay. He had been passed over, ignored, set down for Pietro, who sat weeping beside the table, his head buried in his hands.

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"I can't take it," he was sobbing; "I am not able. It's a mistake, a terrible mistake."

Ramoni put his hand on the other man's head. "It is true, Pietro," he said. "You are Archbishop of Marqua. May God bless you!"

But he could say no more. Pietro was still weeping when Ramoni went away, crossing the cloister on his way to his cell, where, with the door closed behind him, he fought the battle of his soul.

II.

In the beginning Ramoni could not think. He sat looking dully at the softened tones of the wall, trying to evolve some order of thought from the chaos into which the shock of his disappointment had plunged his mind. It was late in the night before the situation began to outline itself dimly.

His first thought was, curiously enough, not of himself directly, but of the people out in Marqua who were anxiously looking for his return as their leader, confident of his appointment to the new Archbishopric. He could not face them as the servant of another man. From the crowd afar his thoughts traveled back to the crowd on the Pincio—the crowd that welcomed him as the great missionary. He would go no more to the Pincio, for now they would point him out with that cynical amusement of the Romans as the man who had been shelved for his servant. He resented the fate that had uprooted him from Rome ten years before, sending him to Marqua. He resented the people he had converted, Pietro, the Consistory—everything. For that black and bitter night the Church, which he had loved and revered, looked to him like the root of all injustice. The more he thought of the slight that had been put upon him, the worse it became, till the thought arose in him that he would leave the Community, leave Rome, leave it all. After long hours, anger had full sway in the heart of Father Ramoni.

At midnight he heard the striking of the city's clocks through the windows, the lattices of which he had forgotten to close. The sound of the city brought back to him the words of the great prelate who had returned with him to San Ambrogio from his first audience with the Holy Father—"Filius urbis et orbis." How bitterly the city had treated him!

A knock sounded at his door. He walked to it and flung it open. His anger had come to the overflowing of speech. At first he saw only a hand at the door-casing, groping with a blind man's uncertainty. Then he saw the old General.

In the soul of Ramoni rose an awful revulsion against the old man. Instantly, with a memory of that first day in the cloister garden, of those following days that gave him the unexpected, uncanny glimpses of the priest, he centered all his bitterness upon Denfili.

So fearful was his anger as he held it back with the rein of years of self-control, that he wondered to see Father Denfili smiling.

“May I enter, my son?” he asked.

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"You may enter."

The old man groped his way to a chair. Ramoni watched him with glowering rage. When Father Denfili turned his sightless eyes upon him he did not flinch.

"You are disappointed, my son?" the old man asked with a gentleness that Ramoni could not apprehend, "and you can not sleep?"

Ramoni's anger swept the question aside. "Have you come here, Father Denfili," he cried, "to find out how well you have finished the persecution you began ten years ago? If you have, you may be quite consoled. It is finished to-night." His anger, rushing over the gates, beat down upon the old man, who sat wordless before its flood. It was a passionate story Ramoni told, a story of years in the novitiate when the old man had ever repressed him, a story of checks that had been put upon him as a preacher, of his banishment from Rome, and now of this crowning humiliation. Furiously Ramoni told of them all while the old man sat, letting the torrent wear itself out on the rocks of patience. Then, after Ramoni had been silent long moments, he spoke.

"You did not pray, my son?"

"Pray?" Ramoni's laughter rasped. "How can I pray? My life is ruined. I am ashamed even to meet my brethren in the chapel."

"And yet, it is God one meets in the chapel," the old man said. "God, and God alone; even if there be a thousand present."

"God?" flung back the missionary. "What has He done to me? Do you think I can thank Him for this? Yet I am a fool to ask you, for it was not God who did it—it was you! You interfered with His work. I know it."

"I hope, my son, that it was God who did it. If He did, then it is right for you. As for me, perhaps I am somewhat responsible. I was consulted, and I advised Pietro."

"Don't call me 'my son,'" cried the other.

"Is it as bad as that with you?" There was only compassion in the old voice. "Yet must I say it—my son. With even more reason than ever before I must say it to you to-night."

The old man's thin hands were groping about his girdle to find the beads that hung down from it. He pulled them up to him and laid the string across his knees; but the crucifix that he could not see he kept tightly clasped in his hand. His poor, dull, pathetic eyes were turned to Ramoni who felt again that strange impression that he could see, as they fixed on his face and stared straight at him without a movement of their lashes. And Ramoni knew how it was that a man may be given a finer vision than that of earth,

for Father Denfili was looking where only a saint could look, deep down into the soul of another.

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“Son of the city and the world,” he said. “I heard Monsignore call you that, and he was right. A son of the city and of the world you are; but alas! less of the city than you know, and more of the world than you have realized. My son, I am a very old man. Perhaps I have not long to live; and so it is that I may tell you why I have come to you to-night.” Ramoni started to speak, but the other put out his hand. “I received you, a little boy, into this Community. No one knows you better than I do. I saw in you before any one else the gifts that God had given you for some great purpose. I saw them budding. I knew before any one else knew that some day you would do a great thing, though I did not know what it was that you would do. I was a man with little, but I could admire the man who had much. I had no gifts to lay before Him, yet I, too, wanted to do a great work. I wanted to make *you* my great work. That was my hope. You are the Apostle of Marqua. I am the Apostle of Ramoni. For that I have lived, always in the fear that I would be cheated of my reward.”

Ramoni turned to him. “Your reward? I do not understand.”

“My reward,” the old man repeated. “I watched over you, I instructed you, I prayed for you, I loved you. I tried to teach you by checking you, the way to govern yourself. I tried to make a channel in your soul that your great genius might not burst its bonds. I knew that there was conflict ever within you between your duty to God and what the world had to offer you—the old, old conflict between the city and the world. I always feared it. All unknown to you I watched the fight, and I saw that the world was winning. Then, my son, I sent you to Marqua.”

The old man paused, and his trembling hand wiped away the tears that streamed down his face. Ramoni did not move. “I am afraid, my son,” the voice came again, “that you never knew the city—well called the Eternal—where with all the evil the world has put within its walls the good still shines always. This, my son, is the city of the soul, and you were born in it. It lives only for souls. It has no other right to existence at all. There is only one royalty that may live in Rome. We, who are of the true city, know that.

“And you, too, might have been of the city. The power of saving thousands was given to you. I prayed only for the power of saving one. I had to send you away, for you were not a Philip Neri. Only a saint may live to be praised and save himself—in Rome.

“When you went away, my son, you went away with a sacrifice as your merit, your salvation. Of that sacrifice the Church in Marqua was born. It will grow on another sacrifice. Ask your heart if you could make it? Alas, you can not! Then it will have to grow on Pietro’s pain.

“I have not seen you, for I am blind, but I have heard you. You want to go back an Archbishop to finish what you say is ‘your work.’ You think that your people are waiting. You want to bring the splendor of the city to the world. My son, the work is not yours. The people are not yours. The city, the true city, does not know you, for you have

forgotten the spirit of sacrifice. You went out to the world an apostle, and you came back to the city a conqueror, but no longer an apostle. Can't you see that God does not need conquerors?"

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The old priest pressed the crucifix tightly against his breast. "What would you take back to Marqua?" he demanded. "Nothing but your purple and your eloquence. How could you, who have forgotten to pray in the midst of affliction, teach your people how to pray in the midst of their sorrows? Marqua does not need you, for Marqua needs the man you might have been, but which you are not. The city does not need you, for the city needs no man; but it is you who need the city, that you may learn again the lesson that once made you the missionary of a people."

Faintly, through the silence that fell the deeper as the old man's words died away, there came the sound of footsteps pacing in another room. Once more the old man took up his speech.

"They are Pietro's steps," he said. "All night long I have heard you both. He has been sobbing under the burden he believes he is unworthy to bear, while you have been raging that you were not permitted to bear it. Pietro was only your servant. He would be your servant again if he could. He loves you. I, too, love you. Perhaps I was selfish in loving you, but I wanted for God your soul and the souls you were leading to Him."

The old man arose. He put out his hand to grope his way back to the door. It touched Ramoni, sitting rigid. He did not stir. The hand reached over him, caught the lintel of the door and guided the blind man to the hall. Then Ramoni stood up. Without a word he followed the other. When he had overtaken him he laid his hand gently on the blind man's arm and led him back to his cell.

When he came back the door of the chapel was open. Ramoni, going within, found Pietro there, prostrate at the foot of the altar. Ramoni knelt at the door, his eyes brimming with tears. He did not pray. He only gazed upon the far-off tabernacle. And while he knelt the Great Plan unfolded itself to him. He looked back on Marqua as a man who has traveled up the hills looks down on the valleys. And, looking back, he could see that Pietro's had been the labor that had won Marqua. There came back to him all the memories of his servant's love of souls, his ceaseless teaching, his long journeys to distant villages, his zeal, his solicitude to save his superior for the more serious work of preaching. Pietro had been jealous of the slightest infringement on his right to suffer. Pietro had been the apostle. Before God the conquest of Marqua had been Pietro's first, since he it was who had toiled and claimed no reward.

A great peace suddenly mantled the troubled soul of Father Ramoni, and with it a great love for the old General whose hand had struck him. He thought of the painting hanging near where he knelt—"Moses Striking the Rock." The features of Father Denfili merged into the features of the Law Giver, and Father Ramoni knew himself for the rock, barren and unprofitable. He fell on his face, and then his prayer came:

"Christ, humble and meek, soften me, and if there be aught of living water within, let me give one drop for thirsty souls yet ere I am called."

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He could utter no other prayer.

Morning found both master and servant, now servant and master, before the altar where both were servants.

III.

It was fifteen years later when the brethren of the little Community of San Ambrogio gathered in their chapel to sing the requiem over their founder and first General, Father Denfili, who died, old and blind, after twenty years of retirement into obscurity. But there were more than his brethren there. For all those years he had occupied, day after day, the solitude of a little confessional in the chapel. He had had his penitents there, and, in a general way, the brethren of San Ambrogio knew that there were among them many distinguished ones; but they were not prepared for the revelation that his obsequies gave them. Cardinals, Roman nobles, soldiers, prelates, priests and citizens crowded into the little chapel. They were those who had knelt week after week at the feet of the saint.

But there was one penitent, greater than them all in dignity and sanctity, who could not come. The tears blinded him that morning when he said Mass in his own chapel at the Vatican for the soul of Father Denfili. At the hour of the requiem he looked longingly toward Via Paoli, where his old spiritual father was lying dead before the altar of the cloister chapel; and the tears came again into eyes that needed all their vision to gaze far out, from his watch-tower, on the City and the World.

THE FLAMING CROSS

I.

It was already midnight when Orville, Thornton and Callovan arose from a table of the club dining-room and came down in the elevator for their hats and coats. They had spent an evening together, delightful to all three. This dinner and chat had become an annual affair, to give the old chums of St. Wilbur's a chance to live over college days, and keep a fine friendship bright and lasting. Not one of them was old enough to feel much change from the spirit of youth. St. Wilbur's was a fresh memory and a pleasant one; and no friends of business or society had grown half so precious for any one of these three men as were the other two, whom the old college had introduced and had bound to him.

The difference in the appearance of the friends was very marked. Thornton had kept his promise of growing up as he had started: short, fat and jovial. Baldness was beginning to show at thirty-five. His stubby mustache was as unmanageable as the

masters of St. Wilbur's had found its owner to be. He had never affected anything, for he had always been openly whatever he allowed himself to drift into. Neither of his friends liked many of his actions, nor the stories told of him; but they liked him personally and were inclined to be silently sorry for him, but not to sit in judgment upon him. Both Orville and Callovan waited and hoped for "old Thornton"; but the wait had been long and the hope very much deferred.

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Callovan was frankly Irish. The curly black hair of the Milesian spoke for him as clearly as the blue-gray eye. He shaved clean and he looked clean. An ancestry of hard workers left limbs that lifted him to almost six feet of strong manhood. His skin was ruddy and fresh. Two years younger than Thornton, he yet looked younger by five. And Callovan, like Thornton, was inwardly what the outward signs promised.

Orville was tall and straight. The ghost of a black mustache was on his lip. His hair was scanty, and was parted carefully. His dress showed taste, but not fastidiousness. He was handsome, well groomed and particular, without obtrusiveness in any one of the points. He was just a little taller than Callovan; but he was grayer and a great deal more thoughtful. He was a hard book to read, even for an intimate; but the print was large, if the text was puzzling. He looked to be “in” the world, but who could say if he were “of” it?

All three of these friends were very rich. Thornton had made his money within five years—a lucky mining strike, a quick sale, a move to the city, speculation, politics were mixed up in a sort of rapid-fire story that the other friends never cared to hear the details of. Callovan inherited his wealth from his hard-fisted old father, who had died but a year before. Orville was the richest of the three. He had always been rich. His father had died a month before he was born. His mother paid for her only child with her life. Orville’s guardian had, as soon as possible, placed him in St. Wilbur’s Preparatory School and then in the College; but he was a careful and wise man, this guardian, so, though plenty of money was allowed him, yet the college authorities had charge of it. They doled it out to the growing boy and youth in amounts that could neither spoil nor starve him. It was good for Orville that the guardian had been thus wise and the college authorities thus prudent. He himself was generous and kind-hearted; by nature a spendthrift, but by training just a bit of a miser. He had learned a little about values during these school and college days.

“Your car is not here yet, Mr. Orville,” said the doorman, when the three moved to leave the club.

“Very unlike your careful Michael,” remarked Callovan.

Orville came at once to the defense of his exemplary chauffeur. “I gave him permission to go to St. Mary’s to-night for confession,” he said. “Michael will be here in a moment. He goes to confession every Saturday night and is a weekly communicant. I can stand a little tardiness once a week for the sake of having a man like Michael around.”

“Good boy is Michael,” put in Thornton. “I wish I could get just a small dose of his piety. Candidly, I am awfully lonesome sometimes without a little of it.”

A page came running up. "Telephone for you, Mr. Orville," he said; and at almost the same moment the doorman called out: "Your car is here now, sir." Orville went to the telephone booth, but returned in a moment.

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"Lucky for us that we waited," he said. "It was Marion who called. She is at the Congress, and she wants me to take her home. She came down-town with her brother to meet the Dixes from Omaha, and that worthless pup has gone off and left her. She knew that I was here to-night, and 'phoned, hoping to catch me. We will pass around by the hotel and take her back with us."

When the friends came out, Michael was standing with his hand on the knob of the big limousine's door. "I am sorry if I made you wait, sir," he said. "I had a fainting spell in the church and could not get away sooner. A doctor said it was a little heart attack; but I am all right now."

Orville answered kindly. "I am sorry you were ill, Michael, but we are glad enough that you were late. That ill wind for you blew good to us, for we have Miss Fayall home with us. If you had been on time we would have missed her. Go around to the Congress first."

The car glided down Michigan avenue to the hotel, where Marion was already waiting in the ladies' lobby. She looked just what she was, the pampered and petted daughter of a rich man. Tonight her cheeks were flushed and her hand was very unsteady. Orville noticed both when she entered the car. He was startled, for Marion was his fiancée. He knew that she was usually full of life and spirit; but this midnight gaiety worried him, and all the more that he loved the girl sincerely.

Marion talked fast and furiously, railing continually at her brother; but she averted her face from Orville as much as possible and spoke to Thornton. Orville said nothing after he had greeted her.

The car sped on, passed the club again and down toward the bridge at the foot of the avenue. Marion was scolding at Thornton as they approached the bridge at a good rate of speed. Orville was staring straight ahead, so only he saw Michael's hand make a quick movement toward the controller, and another movement, at the same time, as if his foot were trying to press on the brake; but both movements seemed to fall short and Michael's head dropped on his breast. Alarmed, Orville looked up. He had a swift glimpse of a flashing red light. A chain snapped like a pistol shot. He heard an oath from Thornton, and a scream from Marion. Then, in an instant, he felt the great weight falling, and a flood of cold water poured through the open window of the car. He tried to open the door, but the weight of water against it made this impossible. The car filled and the door moved. He was pushed out. He thought of saving Marion; but all was dark around him. He tried to call, but the water choked him. He could only think a prayer, before he seemed to be falling asleep. Everything was fading away before him, in a strange feeling of dreamy satisfaction; so only vaguely did he realize the tragedy that had fallen upon him.

II.

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When light and vision came back to Orville, he was standing up and vaguely wondering why. Before him he saw Thornton and Marion, side by side. Near them was Callovan with Michael. All were changed; but Orville could not understand just in what the change consisted. In Thornton and Marion the change was not good to look at, and Orville somehow felt that it was becoming more marked as he gazed. Michael was almost transformed, and was looking at Orville with a smile on his face. Callovan was smiling also, so Orville naturally smiled back at them. Thornton was frowning, and Marion looked horrible in her terror. Orville could understand nothing of it. He glanced about him and saw thousands of men and women, all smiling or frowning, like his companions. Several seemed to be about to begin a journey and were moving away from the groups, most of them alone. Some had burdens strapped to their shoulders and bent under them as they walked. Those who were not departing were preparing for departure; but Orville could see no guides about. All the travelers appeared to understand where they were to go.

Orville watched the groups divide again and again, wondering still, not knowing the reason for the division. Some took a road that led upward to a mountain. It was a rough, hard and tiresome road. Orville could see men and women far above on that road, dragging themselves along painfully. Another road led down into a valley; but Orville could not see deep into that valley, because of a haze which hung over it. He looked long at the road before he noticed letters on a rock which rose up like a gateway to it, and he vaguely resolved that later he would go over and read them. But first he wanted to ask questions.

"Michael, what does all this mean?" Orville said; all the time marveling that it was to his servant he turned for information.

Michael still smiled, and answered: "It means, sir, that we are dead."

Orville was astonished that he felt neither shocked nor startled. "Dead? I do not quite understand, Michael. You are not joking?"

"No, sir. It happened quickly. We went over the bridge a minute ago. Our bodies are in the river now, but we are here."

"Where?" asked Orville.

Michael answered, "That I do not know, sir, except that we are in The Land of the Dead."

"But you seem to know a great deal, Michael," said Orville.

“Yes,” answered Michael; “I died a minute before you, sir, so I came earlier. I was dead on my seat when we struck the chain and broke it. One learns much in a minute here. But tell me, sir, can you see anything at the top of that mountain?”

Orville looked up and saw a bright light before him on the very summit and seemingly at the end of the road. As he gazed it took the form of a Flaming Cross.

“I see a Cross on fire, Michael,” he said. Michael answered simply: “Thank God.”

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"I can see a Flaming Cross, too," said Callovan, speaking for the first time. "I can see it, and what is more, I am going up to it; let us not delay an instant"; and Callovan began to gird his strange-looking garment about him for the climb.

Then Orville knew that he himself was drawn toward that Flaming Cross. There was a something urging him on. His whole being was filled with a desire to get to that goal, and he, too, prepared quickly for the ascent.

"Wait a moment, sir," said Michael. "Do the others see nothing on the mountain?"

Thornton and Marion, still frowning, were looking down into the haze of the valley. They were paying no attention to their friends.

"Come, let us go," said Thornton to the girl, as he pointed to the road which led down into the valley.

"No, no," said Michael, "not there. Look up at the mountain. What do you see?"

Both Marion and Thornton glanced upward. "I see nothing," said Marion.

"I see a Cross, but it is black and repellant-looking," said Thornton. "Come, Marion, let us go at once."

Orville, alarmed, called out: "Marion, you will surely come with me."

The frown on her face changed to a look of awful sadness, but she put her hand into Thornton's while saying to Orville: "I can not go there with you—not upward. I must enter the valley with him." She moved away, her hand still in Thornton's. Orville watched them go, only wondering why he had no regrets.

"Michael," he said, "I loved her on earth. Why am I unmoved to see her leave me?"

[Illustration: "But when their feet touched the road, they turned and looked their terror."]

But Michael answered, "It is not strange in The Land of the Dead. There are stranger partings here; but all of them are like yours—tearless for those who see the Cross."

Thornton and Marion by this time had entered the valley road and were on the other side of the rock gateway. But when their feet touched the road they turned and looked their terror. Suddenly they recoiled and struck viciously at each other. Then they parted. With the wide road between them they went down into the valley and the haze together.



Orville read the words on the rock gateway, for now they stood out so that he could see plainly, and they were: "*The road without ending.*" "Michael," he said, "what does it mean?"

Michael answered, "She could not see the Cross here, who would not see it on earth. It repelled him, who so often had repelled it in life."

III.

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Neither Orville nor Callovan was at all moved by the tragedy each had witnessed. Orville's love for Marion was as if it had never existed. The friendship of both for Thornton did not in the slightest assert itself. They felt moved to sorrow, but the overpowering sense of another feeling—a feeling of victory for some Great Friend or Cause—left the vague sorrow forgotten in an instant. Both men knew that Thornton and Marion had passed out of their ken forever, and in the future would be to them as if they had not been. All three made haste to go toward the road which led up to the Flaming Cross. Then upon Orville's shoulders he felt a heavy burden, but still heavier was one which was bending Callovan down. Michael alone stood straight, without a weight upon him.

"It will be hard to climb to the Cross with these burdens, Michael," said Orville.

"Yes, sir, it will," said Michael, "but you must carry them. You brought them here. They are the burdens of your wealth. They will hamper you; but you saw the Cross, and in the end all will be well."

"Then these burdens, Michael, are our riches?" asked both Orville and Callovan in the same breath.

"They are your riches," replied Michael. "I have no burden, for I had no riches. Poor was I on earth, and unhampered am I now for the climb to the Cross. Look yonder." He pointed to a man standing at the fork of the roads. His burden was weighing him to the earth. "He brought it all with him, sir," continued Michael; "in life he gave nothing to God. Now he must carry the burden up to the Cross, or leave it and go the other road. He sees the Cross, too; but it will take ages for him to reach it."

The man had thrown down the burden and now started to climb without it. But unseen hands lifted it back to his shoulders. Men and women going to the other road beckoned him to throw it away again and come with them; but he had seen the Cross and, keeping his eyes fixed upon it, he crawled along with his burden upon him, inch by inch, up the mountain.

"In life he was good and faithful, but he did not understand that riches were given him to use for a purpose and that he was not, himself, the purpose," said Michael. "It was a miracle of grace that he could see the Cross at all."

"I knew that man in life," said Callovan. "But why is not my burden heavier than his? I was richer by far."

"You lightened it by more charity than he," said Michael, "but you did not lighten it sufficiently: Had you given even one-tenth of all that you had, you would now be even as I am—free of all burden."

“I wish I had known that,” said Callovan.

“But, alas! you did know,” replied Michael. “We all knew these things. We are not learning them now. But look up, sir, and see the old man with the heavy burden above you. You are going to pass him on your way, yet he has been dead now for a year.”

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Callovan looked up and gasped: "My father!"

"Yes; your father," said Michael. "You had more charity than he, and when you did give you gave with better motives; yet he always saw the Cross more plainly than you. He was filled with Faith."

"Is it possible that I will be able to help him when I get to his side?" asked Callovan.

"I think," replied Michael, "that you may; but you could have helped him better in life by prayers and the Great Sacrifice. You probably may go along with him, when you reach him, for you both see the Cross, and perhaps you will be allowed to aid him up the mountain."

They had by this time reached the first steps of the climb. Orville could read the words which marked the mountain road: "*The road of pain and hope.*"

"But the Cross draws much of the pain out of it," said Michael. "We must leave you here, sir," he said to Callovan, turning to him. "You have far to go to reach your father; but your load is heavier than my master's, and then you must be lonely for a while."

"But why must I be lonely?" asked Callovan.

"For many reasons, sir," replied Michael. "You will know them all as you go along. Knowledge will come. I may tell you but a few things now. In life you loved company, and it was often an occasion of sin to you. You go alone for a while in the Land of Death, on this pilgrimage to the Cross, so that you may contemplate God, Whom you failed to enjoy by meditation, when you could have had Him alone. Then you have few to pray for you now, for such companions as you had in life did not and do not pray. They will cover your coffin with flowers; but the only prayers will be those of the poor whom you befriended. One priest, after your funeral, will offer the Great Sacrifice for you. He was a friend whom you helped to educate. He will remember you at your burial, and again, too, before the climb is over."

"But, Michael," said Callovan, "I gave a great deal to many good works. Will none of the gifts count for me?"

"Yes, sir, it is true that you did give much, but," answered Michael, "the gifts were offerings more often to your own vanity than they were to God. Motives alone govern the value of sacrifice in the Land of Death. Look, now, behind you. There is one who can best answer your question."

Callovan turned to see an old and venerable looking man at the fork of the roads. He was gazing anxiously at the mountain, as if he dimly saw the Cross; but his burden was terrific in its weight. It rested on the ground before him. He scarcely had the courage to take the mountain road, knowing that the burden must go with him.

“I have seen that man before,” said Orville. “They gave him a reception at our club once. He was a great philanthropist—yet, look at his burden.”

“Philanthropist he was, but I fear he will go on *The Road without Ending*,” said Michael. “He has many amongst those who can hate for eternity to hate him.”

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Suddenly from the multitude of the dead came men and women, who looked with hatred upon the old man, and surrounded him on every side and menaced him with threatening fists. "Beast!" shouted one. "I saw the Cross in life, when I was young. The unbelief your work taught denies me the sight of it in death. I curse you!"

"One year in the schools you founded," wailed another, "lost me my God."

"Why do you stand at the foot of the hill of the Cross, you hypocrite?" cried another. "You have, in the name of a false science, encouraged by your gifts, destroyed the Faith of thousands. You shall not go by The Road of Pain and Hope, even though you might have to climb till Judgment. You shall go with us."

Screaming in terror, the old man was dragged away. They could hear his voice in the distance, as the multitude drove him along The Road without Ending.

"Alas, I understand—now," sadly said Callovan. He gazed at his friends with some of the pain of his coming solitude in his eyes. "Good-bye. Shall we meet again?"

Michael answered: "We shall meet again. Your pain may be very great; but there is an end. He who sets his foot on this Road has a promise which makes even pain a blessing."

Callovan was left behind, for Orville and Michael climbed faster than he.

"Michael," said his master, "I am greatly favored. He was much better in life than I, yet now he climbs alone."

"You are not favored, sir," answered Michael. "Many pray for you, because you loved the poor and sheltered and aided them. He has all that is his, all that belongs to him. You have all that is yours. Do not forget that we are marching toward the Sun of Justice."

And so they went on, over The Road of Pain and Hope. Orville's feet were weary and bleeding. His hands and knees were bruised by falls. The adders stung him and the thorns pierced him. Cold rain chilled him and warm blasts oppressed him. He was one great pain; but within a voice that was his own kept saying: "I go to the Cross, I go to the Cross," and he forgot the suffering. He thought of earth for an instant; but the thought brought him no longing to return. His breast was swelling and seemed bursting with a wonderful great Love that made him content with every tortured step. He even seemed to love the pain; and he could not stop, nor could he rest for the Flaming Cross that was drawing him on. He longed for it with a burning and intense desire. His eyes were wet with the tears of devotion, and his whole being cried out: "More pain, O Lord! more pain, if only I may sooner reach the Cross!"

But Michael tried to ease his master's burden.

At last Orville said to him: "How many ages have passed since I died?"

"You have been dead for ten minutes, sir," answered Michael. "The minutes are as ages in the Land of Death until you reach the Cross, and then the ages are as minutes."

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IV.

They kept toiling on, but had known no darkness along The Road of Pain and Hope. Orville's hand sought Michael's, and it opened to draw him closer. "Michael, my brother," he said, "may you tell me why there is no night?"

Michael smiled again when Orville called him "brother" and answered: "Because, my master, on The Road of Pain and Hope there is no despair; but it is always night along The Road without Ending."

"Can you tell me, Michael, my brother," said Orville, "Why my eyes suffer more keenly than all the rest?"

"Because," said Michael, "your eyes, master, have offended most in life, and so are now the weakest."

"But my hands have offended, too," said Orville, "and behold, they are already painless and cured of the bruises."

"Your hands are beautiful and white, master," said Michael, "and were little punished, because they were often outstretched in charity and in good deeds."

They had come to the brink of a Chasm which it seemed impossible to cross, but they hoped, for they knew no despair. Multitudes of people were before them on the brink of the Chasm looking longingly at the other side. A few pilgrims were being lifted, by unseen hands, and carried across the Chasm. Some Power there was to bear them which neither Orville nor Michael understood. Many, however, had waited long, while some were taken quickly. Every hand was outstretched toward the Cross, and it could easily be seen that waiting was a torture worse than the bruises.

"Alas, Michael," said Orville, "it is harder to suffer the wait than the pain."

"Yes, master," Michael replied, "but this is The Chasm of Neglected Duties. We must stay until those we have fulfilled may come to bear us across. The one who goes first will await the other on the opposite side."

"Alas, Michael," said Orville, "you must wait for me. I have few good deeds and few duties well done."

Even as he spoke, Michael's face began to shine and his eyes were melting. Orville looked and saw a little child with great wings, and beautiful beyond all dreaming. Her gaze was fixed on Michael with the deepest love and longing. Her voice was like the music of a harp, and she spoke but one little word:

“Daddy!”

“Bride! My little Bride,” whispered Michael.

Orville knew her, Michael’s first-born child, who had died in infancy. He remembered her funeral. In pity for poor Michael, and feeling a duty toward his servant, he had followed the coffin to the church and to the grave, and had borne the expenses of her burial. His friends wondered at such consideration for one so far beneath him.

“Daddy,” whispered the beautiful spirit, “I am to bring you across, and master, too. God sent me. And, daddy, there are millions of children who could bring their parents over quickly, if they had only let them be born. It was you and mother, daddy, who gave me life, baptism and Heaven. Had I lived only a minute, it would have been worth it. And, daddy, mother is coming soon, and I am waiting for you both.”

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Then the beautiful child touched and supported them, and lo! they were wafted across The Chasm of Neglected Duties: Michael, because he followed the command and made his marriage a Holy Sacrament to fulfil the law of God; Orville, because he had shown mercy and recognition of his servant's claim upon him.

Without understanding why, Orville found himself repeating over and over again the words: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." Michael heard him and turned to say: "Yes, master, and 'Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God'! How well it was for us that we had the heart of a child to plead our cause when we came to The Chasm of Neglected Duties."

V.

"Michael," said Orville, after a long and tiresome climb over a steep part of the Road, "these rocks are sharp and treacherous, and I have toiled hard and have made but very little progress."

"I know, master," said Michael, "but these rocks are the little faults of our lives. Such rocks cover the mountain at this spot and are constantly growing more numerous, yet one meets only one's own. The Plain is not far away now. We are just reaching it, and these stones are the only way to it."

"What Plain is it, Michael?" asked Orville.

"It is called, master," said Michael, "The Plain of Sinful Things. It is between us and the foot of the Cross."

"Is it hard to pass over, Michael?" again asked Orville.

"It is very hard to most men, sir," said Michael. "No one knows how hard who has not been on it; and yet when one has been over, one remembers nothing, for all is forgotten when The Flaming Cross is reached."

They stood now at the top of the stones, and on the edge of the vast Plain, which lay white and scorching before them. Multitudes, as far as the eye could see, were upon it. They struggled painfully along; but none stopped to rest, for all faces were turned to The Flaming Cross.

Michael took but one step and a great change came over him. Orville looked at him again and again, but Michael did not seem to notice the change in himself. His face shone with a marvelous beauty. His garments became robes of brilliant white. About his head a light played, the like of which Orville had never seen. It was more wondrous than dreams of Paradise. His bleeding feet were healed and shone like his visage.

Orville thought that he heard sweet voices about Michael, but voices which spoke to Michael only.

“Michael, my brother,” he said, “what is this; tell me?” and Orville’s voice sounded soft, as if he were praying. “Michael, who are you?”

But Michael only smiled kindly and humbly. “I am none other than your servant, sir,” he answered. “He who serves, reigns; for his glory is in the service. I will be with you to the foot of the Cross. In life you were a good master. You will need me until you reach your own Master there.” Michael pointed to where the Cross shone out over the blistering Plain.

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Then they went on, but the heat penetrated to Orville's very marrow and he seemed to faint under it, yet he always kept struggling forward. The burning sands cooked his bleeding feet, but the anguish did not halt him. Torrents of tears and sweat rolled down from him, but his hunger for the Cross made him forget. To his pain-racked body it felt as if the Cross gave out the great heat, but Orville was more grateful than ever for it.

"Does this heat really come from the Cross, Michael?" he asked.

"Yes, from the Cross, master," said Michael, "for this is The Plain of Sinful Things, and the Cross is the Sun of Justice."

Then like a flash Orville began to understand, even as Michael had understood from the beginning. Michael saw the change in him. His face became more radiant before he spoke.

"Master," he said, "my service is almost over. It was my prayer constantly that I could return your goodness to me and mine; but on earth you were rich and I was poor. Here, master, in The Land of the Dead, I am rich and you are poor. God let me make my pilgrimage with you. The child you buried when I had nothing, bore you over The Chasm of Neglected Duties, where your hardest lot was to be found. You did not even see another Chasm, which almost all meet, The Chasm of Forgotten Things, for the prayers gathered in a little chapel which you builded in a wilderness, a charity you forgot the day after you did it, filled up the Chasm before you came to it. Here on The Plain of Sinful Things we would naturally separate, for I had never wilfully sinned against God. But you needed me, and He let me stay. Master, your burden has fallen from you."

It was true. Orville was standing erect, with his eyes looking straight at The Flaming Cross, which did not blind him. His burden had vanished, and his face had almost the radiance of Michael's.

"The Cross is near you now, master. Look, It comes toward you. Your pilgrimage is ending."

Orville could see It coming, gently and slowly. The Plain was now all behind him, and yet it seemed as if he had scarcely gone over more than a few yards of it. The harping of a thousand harps was not sweet enough for the music that filled the air. Like the falling of many waters in the distance came the promise of coolness to Orville's parched throat and his burning lips. His breast heaved and he felt his heart, full of Love, break in his bosom; but with it broke the bond of Sin, and he knew that he was dead, indeed, to earth, as out from the stained cover came his purified soul.

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The Cross was close to him now. With his new spiritual vision he saw that in form it was One like himself, but One with eyes that were soft and mild and full of tenderness, with arms outstretched and nail-prints like glittering gems upon them, with a wounded side and out from it a flood pouring which cooled the parched sands, so that from them the flowers sprang up, full panoplied in color, form and beauty, and sweetly smelling. Around The Flaming Cross fluttered countless wings, and childish voices made melody, soft and harmonious beyond all compare. All else that Orville ever knew vanished before the glance of the Beloved; faces and forms dearest and nearest, old haunts and older affections, all were melted into this One Great Love that is Eternal. The outstretched arms were wrapped around them. The blood from the wounded side washed all their pains from them. On their foreheads fell the Kiss of Peace, and Orville and Michael had come home.

THE VICAR-GENERAL

The Vicar-General was dead. With his long, white hair smoothed back, he lay upon a silk pillow, his hands clasped over a chalice upon his breast. He was clad in priestly vestments; and he looked, as he lay in his coffin before the great altar with the candles burning on it, as if he were just ready to arise and begin a new *"Introibo"* in Heaven. The bells of the church wherein the Vicar-General lay asleep had called his people all the morning in a sad and solemn tolling. The people had come, as sad and solemn as the bells. They were gathered about the bier of their pastor. Priests from far and near had chanted the Office of the Dead; the Requiem Mass was over, and the venerable chief of the diocese, the Bishop himself, stood in cope and mitre, to give the last Absolution.

[Illustration: "The Bishop himself stood in cope and mitre to give the last absolution."]

The Bishop had loved the Vicar-General—had loved him as a brother. For was it not the Vicar-General who had bidden His Lordship welcome, when he came from his distant parish to take up the cares of a diocese. With all the timidity of a stranger, the Bishop had feared; but the Vicar-General guided his steps safely and well. Now the Bishop, gazing at the white, venerable face, remembered—and wept. In the midst of the Absolution, his voice broke. Priests bit their lips, as their eyes filled with hot tears; but the Sisters who taught in the parochial school and their little charges, did not attempt to keep back their sobs. For others than the Bishop loved the Vicar-General.

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There was one standing by the coffin, whom neither the Bishop, priests nor people saw. It was the Vicar-General, himself. He still wore his priestly vestments. Was he not a priest forever? His arms were folded and his face was troubled. He knew every one present; but none of them knew that he was so near. He scanned the lines of the Bishop's face and seemed to wonder at his tears. He was quite unmoved by the sorrow around him, did not seem to care at all. Yet in life the Vicar-General had cared much about the feelings of others toward him. His eyes wandered over the great congregation and rested on the children, but without tenderness in them. This, too, was very unlike the Vicar-General. Then the eyes came back and rested on the priestly form in the coffin, and the trouble of them increased.

The Absolution was over and the coffin was closed when the Vicar-General looked up again, and knew that Another Unseen besides himself was present. The Other was looking over the coffin at the Vicar-General; looking steadily, with eyes that searched down deep and with lashes that were very, very still. He wore a long robe of some texture the Vicar-General had never seen in life. It shimmered like silk, shone like gold, and sparkled as if dusted with tiny diamonds. The hair of the Other was long, and fell, bright and beautiful, over his shoulders. His face seemed to shine out of it, like a jewel in a gold setting. His limbs seemed strong and manly in spite of his beardless face. The Vicar-General noticed what seemed like wings behind him; but they were not wings, only something which gave the impression of them. The Vicar-General could not remove his eyes from the Other. Gradually he knew that he was gazing at an Angel, and an Angel who had intimate relation to himself.

The body was borne out of the church. The Angel moved to follow, and the Vicar-General knew that he also had to go. The day was perfect, for it was in the full glory of the summer; but the Vicar-General noticed little of either the day or the gathering. The Angel did not speak, but his eyes said "come": and so the Vicar-General followed—whither, he did not know.

The Vicar-General was not sure that it was even a place to which the Angel led him; but he felt with increasing trouble that he was to be the center of some momentous event. There were people arriving, most of whom the Vicar-General knew—men and women of his flock, to whom he had ministered and many of whom he had seen die. They all smiled at the Vicar-General as they passed, and ranged themselves on one side. The Silent Angel stood very close to the Vicar-General. As the people came near, the priest felt his vestments grow light upon him, as if they were lifting him in the air. They shone very brightly, too, and took on a new beauty. The Vicar-General felt glad that he was wearing them.

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The Silent Angel looked at him, but spoke not a word; yet the Vicar-General understood at once, knew that he was to answer at a stern trial, and that these were his witnesses—the souls of the people to whom he ministered, to whom he had broken the Bread of Life. How many there were! They gladdened the Vicar-General's heart. There were his converts, the children he had baptized, his penitents, the pure virgins whose vows he had consecrated to God, the youths whom his example had won to the altar. They were all there. The Vicar-General counted them, and he could not think of a single one missing.

On the other side, witnesses began to arrive and the Vicar-General's look of trouble returned. He felt his priestly vestments becoming heavy. Especially did he feel the weight of the amice, which was like a heavy iron helmet crushed down over his shoulders. The cincture was binding him very tightly. He felt that he could scarcely move for it. The maniple rendered his left arm almost powerless. The stole was pulling at him, and the weight of the chasuble made him very faint.

He knew some of the witnesses, but only a few. He had seen these few before. They were his neglected spiritual children. He remembered each and every case. One was a missed sick-call: his had been the fault. Another was a man driven from the church by a harsh word spoken in anger. The Vicar-General remembered the day when he referred to this man in his sermon and saw him arise in his pew and leave. He did not return. Another was a priest—his own assistant. The Vicar-General had no patience with his weaknesses. From disgust at them his feelings had turned to rancor against the man—and the assistant was lost. The Vicar-General trembled; for these things he had passed by as either justified by reason of the severity necessary to his office, or as wiped out by his virtues—and he had many virtues.

The Vicar-General's eyes sought those of the Silent Angel, and he lost some of his fear, while the weight of his vestments became a little lighter. But the Silent Angel's gaze caused the Vicar-General again to look at the witnesses. Those against him were increasing. The faces of the new-comers he did not know. The Vicar-General felt like protesting that there must be some mistake, for the new-comers were red men, brown men, yellow men and black men, besides white men whose faces were altogether strange. He was sure none of these had ever been in his parish. The new-comers were dressed in the garbs of every nation under the sun. They all alike looked very sternly at the Vicar-General, so that he could not bear their glances. Still he could not understand how he had ever offended against them, nor could he surmise why they should be witnesses to his hurt.

The Silent Angel still stood beside the Vicar-General; but the troubled soul of the priest could find no enlightenment in his eyes. All the while witnesses kept arriving and the multitude of them filled him with a great terror.

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At last he saw a face amongst the strangers which he thought familiar, and he began to understand. It was the face of a priest he had known, who had been in the same diocese, somewhat under the Vicar-General's authority. On earth this priest had been one of the quiet kind, without ambition except to serve in a very humble way. He had always been in a parish so poor and small, that the priest himself had in his manner, his bearing, even his clothes, reflected its humility and its poverty. The Vicar-General remembered that the priest had once come to him as a matter of conscience to say that, while he was not complaining, nevertheless he really needed help and counsel. He said that his scattered flock was being lost for the want of things which could not be supplied out of its poverty. He told the Vicar-General what was needed. The Vicar-General remembered that he had agreed with him; but had informed him very gently that it was the policy of the diocese to let each parish maintain and support itself. The Vicar-General had felt justified in refusing his aid, especially since, at that time, he was collecting for a new organ for his own church, one with three banks of keys—the old one had but two. The Vicar-General now knew that his slight feeling of worry at the time was not groundless; but while then he had felt vaguely that he was wrong in his position, now he was certain of error. His eyes sought all through his own witnesses, but they found no likelihood of a testimony in his favor based on the purchase of that grand organ. Then it all came to the Vicar-General, from the eyes of the Silent Angel, that he had received on earth all the reward that was due to him for it.

The presence of the men of all colors and of strange garbs was still a mystery to the Vicar-General; but at last he saw among them a bent old priest with a long beard and a crucifix in his girdle. At once the Vicar-General recognized him and his heart sank. Too well he remembered the poor missionary who had begged for assistance: money, a letter, a recommendation—anything; and had faced the inflexible official for half an hour during his pleading. The Vicar-General had felt at that time, as he felt when his poor diocesan brother had come to him, that there was so much to be done at home, absolutely nothing could be sent out. There was the Orphanage which the Bishop was building and they were just beginning to gather funds for a new Cathedral. The Bishop had acquiesced in the Vicar-General's ruling. The diocese had flourished and had grown strong. The Vicar-General had always been its pride. He was humbled now under the gaze of the Silent Angel, whose eyes told him wherein he had been at fault. He knew that the fault was not in the building of the great and beautiful things, which of themselves were good because they were for God's glory; but rather was it in this: that he had shut out of his heart, for their sakes, the cry of affliction and the call of pleading voices from the near and far begging but for the crumbs which meant to them Faith here and Life hereafter.

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Now, O God! there were the red men, the brown men, the yellow men and the black men; not to speak of these white men whose faces were so strange; and they were going to say something—something against him. He could guess—could well guess what it was they would say. The Vicar-General knew that he had been wrong, and that his wrong had come into Eternity. He doubted if it ever could be made right, for he knew now the value of a soul even in a black body. He knew it, but was it too late? His vestments were as heavy as lead.

Trembling in every limb, the Vicar-General looked for his Judge; but he could not see Him. He only felt His Presence. The Silent Angel had a book in his hand. The Vicar-General could read its title. There was a chalice on the cover, as if it spoke of priests, and under it he read:

The law by which they shall be judged.

The Silent Angel opened the book and the Vicar-General saw that it had but one page. Shining out from the page he read:

“Thou art A priest forever.”

And under it:

“Go ye, therefore, and teach all Nations.”

Sorrow was over the soul of the priest. Only the hope in the eyes of the Silent Angel gave him hope, as he bowed his head before the judgment.

THE RESURRECTION OF ALTA

Father Broidy rushed down the stone steps and ran toward the Bishop's carriage which had just stopped at the curb. He flung open the door before the driver could alight, kissed the ring on the hand extended him, helped its owner out and with a beaming face led the Bishop to the pretty and comfortable rectory.

“Welcome! welcome to Alta, Bishop,” he said as they entered the house, “and sure the whole Deanery is here to back it up.”

The Bishop smiled as the clergy trooped down the stairs echoing the greeting. The Bishop knew them all, and he was happy, for well was he aware that every man meant what he said. No one really ever admired the Bishop, but all loved him, and each had a private reason of his own for it that he never confided to anyone save his nearest crony. They were all here now to witness the resurrection of Alta—the poorest parish in a not too rich Diocese, hopeless three years ago, but now—well, there it is across the lot, that symphony in stone, every line of its chaste gothic a “Te Deum” that even an agnostic

could understand and appreciate; every bit of carving the paragraph of a sermon that passers-by, perforce, must hear. To-day it is to be consecrated, the cap-stone is to be set on Father Broidy's Arch of Triumph and the real life of Alta parish to begin.

"I thought you had but sixteen families here," said the Bishop as he watched the crowd stream into the church.

"There were but eighteen, Bishop," the young priest answered, with a happy smile that had considerable self-satisfaction in it. "There are seventy-five now."

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"And how did it come about, my lad?" questioned the Bishop.

"Mostly through my mission bringing back some of the 'ought-to-be's,' but I suppose principally because my friend McDermott opened his factory to Catholics. You know, Bishop, that though he was born one of us he had somehow acquired a bitter hatred of the Church, and he never employed Catholics until I brought him around."

There was a shadow of a smile that had meaning to it on the Bishop's face, as he patted the ardent young pastor on the arm, and said:

"Well, God bless him! God bless him! but I suppose we must begin to vest now. Is it not near ten o'clock?"

Father Broidy turned with a little shade of disappointment on his face to the work of preparation, and soon had the procession started toward the church.

Shall I describe the beauty of it all?—the lights and flowers, the swinging censers, with the glory of the chant and the wealth of mystic symbolism which followed the passing of that solemn procession into the sanctuary? That could best be imagined, like the feeling in the heart of the young pastor who adored every line of the building. He had watched the laying of each stone, and could almost count the chips that had jumped from every chisel. There had never been so beautiful a day to him, and never such a ceremony but one—three years ago in the Seminary chapel. He almost forgot it in the glory of the present. Dear me, how well Kaiser did preach! He always knew it, did Father Broidy, that young Kaiser had it in him. He did not envy him a bit of the congratulations. They were a part of Father Broidy's triumph, too. It was small wonder that the Dean whispered to the Bishop on the way back to the rectory:

"You will have to put Broidy at the top of the list now. He has surely won his spurs to-day."

But again the shadow of the meaning smile was on the Bishop's face, and he said nothing; so the Dean looked wise and mysterious as he slapped the young pastor on the back and said:

"Proficiat, God bless you! You have done well, and I am proud of you, but wait and listen." Then his voice dropped to a whisper. "I was talking to the Bishop about you."

The dinner? Well, Anne excelled herself. Is not that enough to say? But perhaps you have never tasted Anne's cooking? Then you surely have heard of it, for all the Diocese knows about it, and everyone said that Broidy was in his usual good luck when Anne left the Dean's and went to keep house for the priest at Alta.

Story followed story, as dish followed dish, and a chance to rub up the wit that had been growing rusty in the country missions for months never passed by unnoticed.

The Dean was toastmaster.

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“Right Reverend Bishop and Reverend Fathers,” he began, when he had enforced silence with the handle of his fork, “it is my pleasure and pride to be here to-day. Three years ago a young priest was sent to one of the most miserably poor places in the Diocese. What he found you all know. The sorrowful history of the decline of Alta was never a secret record. Eighteen careless families left. Bigotry rampant. Factories closed to Catholics. Church dilapidated. Only the vestry for a dwelling place. That was three years ago, and look around you to-day. See the church, house and school, and built out of what? That is Father Broidy’s work and Father Broidy’s triumph, but we are glad of it. No man has made such a record in our Diocese before. What have we others done by the side of his extraordinary effort? Yet we are not jealous. We know well the good qualities of soul and body in our young friend, and God bless him. We are pleased to be with him, though completely outclassed. We rejoice in the resurrection of Alta. Let me now call upon our beloved Bishop, whose presence among us is always a joy.”

When the applause subsided the Bishop arose, and for an instant stood again with that meaning smile just lighting his face. For that instant he did not utter a word. When he did speak there was a quiver in his voice that age had never planted and in spite of the jokes which had preceded and the laughter which he had led, it sounded like a forerunner of tears. He had never been called eloquent, this kindly-faced and snow-crowned old man, but when he spoke it was always with a gentle dignity, and a depth of sympathy and feeling that compelled attention.

“It is a great satisfaction, my dear Fathers,” he began, “to find so many of you here to rejoice with our young friend and his devoted people, and to thus encourage the growth of a priestly life which he has so well begun in Alta. No one glories in his success more than I. No one more warmly than I, his Bishop, tenders congratulations. This is truly a day the Lord has made—this day in Alta. It is a day of joy and gladness for priest and people. Will you pardon an old man if he stems the tide of mirth for an instant? He could not hope to stem it for long. On such an occasion as this it would burst the barriers, leaving what he would show you once more submerged beneath rippling waters and silver-tipped waves of laughter. It seems wrong even to think of the depths where lie the bodies of the dead and the hulks of the wrecked. But the bottom always has its treasure as well as its tragedy. There are both a tragedy and a treasure in the story I will tell you to-day.”

“You remember Father Belmond, the first pastor of Alta? Yes! Then let me tell you a story that your generous priestly souls will treasure as it deserves.”

The table was strangely silent. Not one of the guests had ever before known the depth of sympathy in the old Bishop till now. Every chord in the nature of each man vibrated to the touch of his words.

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[Illustration: "I asked him how he lived on the pittance he had received."]

"It was ten years ago," went on the Bishop—"ah, how years fly fast to the old!—a friend of college days, a bishop in an Eastern State, wrote me a long letter concerning a young convert he had just ordained. He was a lad of great talents, brilliant and handsome, the son of wealthy parents, who, however, now cast him off, giving him to understand that he would receive nothing from them. The young man was filled with zeal, and he begged the bishop to give him to some missionary diocese wherein he could work in obscurity for the greater glory of God. He was so useful and so brilliant a man that the bishop desired to attach him to his own household and was loath to lose him, but the priest begged hard and was persistent; so the bishop asked me to take him for a few years and give him actual contact with the hardships of life in a pioneer state. Soon, he thought, the young man would be willing to return to his larger field. The bishop, in other words, wanted to test him. I sadly needed priests, so when he came with the oil still wet on his hands, I gave him a place—the worst I had—I gave him Alta. Some of you older men know what it was then. The story of Alta is full of sorrow. I told it to him, but he thanked me and went to his charge. I expected to see him within a week, but I did not see him for a year. Then I sent for him, and with his annual report in my hand I asked him how he lived on the pittance which he had received. He said that it took very little when one was careful and that he lived well enough—but his coat was threadbare and his shoes were sadly patched. There was a brightness in his eyes too, and a flush on his cheek that I did not quite like. I asked him of his work and he told me that he was hopeful—told me of the little repairs he had made, of a soul won back, but in the conversation I actually stole the sad tale of his poverty from him. Yet he made no complaint and went back cheerfully to Alta.

"The next month he came again, but this time he told me of the dire need of aid, not for himself, but for his church. The people, he said, were poor pioneers, and in the comfortless and ugly old church they were losing their grip on religion. The young people were falling away very fast. All around were well ordered and beautiful sectarian churches. He could see the effect, not visible to less interested eyes but very plain to his. He feared that another generation would be lost and he asked me if there was any possibility of securing temporary aid such as the sects had for their building work. I had to tell him that nothing could be done. I told him of the poverty of my own Diocese, and that, while his was a poor place, there were others approaching it. In my heart I knew there was something sadly lacking in our national work for the Church, but I could do nothing myself. He wrote to his own State for help, but the letters were unanswered.

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Except for the few stipends I could give him and which he devoted to his work, it was impossible to do anything. He was brave and never faltered though the eyes in him shone brighter and in places his coat was worn through. A few days later I received a letter from his bishop asking how he did and saying that he would appoint him to an excellent parish if he would return home willingly. I sent the letter to Alta with a little note of my own, congratulating him on his changed condition. He returned the letter to me with a few lines saying: 'I can not go. If I desert my people here it would be a sin. There are plenty at home for the rich places but you have no one to send here. Please ask the bishop to let me stay. I think it is God's will.' The day I received that letter I heard one of my priests at the Cathedral say: 'How seedy that young Belmond looks! for an Eastern man he is positively sloppy in his dress. He ought to brace up and think of the dignity of his calling. Surely such a man is not calculated to impress himself upon our separated brethren.' And another chimed in: 'I wonder why he left his own diocese?'"

"I heard no more for two years except for the annual report, and now and then a request for a dispensation. I did hear that he was teaching the few children of the parish himself, and every little while I saw an article in some of the papers, unsigned but suspiciously like his style, and I suspected that he was earning a little money with his pen.

"One winter night, returning alone from a visitation of Vinta, the fast train was stalled by a blizzard at the Alta station. I went out on the platform to secure a breath of fresh air, but I had scarcely closed the door when a boy rushed up to me and asked if I were a Catholic priest. When I nodded he said: 'We have been trying to get a priest all day, but the wires are down in the storm. Father Belmond is sick and the doctor says he will die. He told me to look through every train that came in. He was sure I would find some one.' Reaching at once for my grip and coat I rushed to the home of the Pastor. The home was the lean-to vestry of the old log church. In one corner Father Belmond lived; another was given over to the vestments and linens. Everything was spotlessly clean. On a poor bed the priest was tossing, moaning and delirious. Only the boy had attended him in his sickness until the noon of that day when two good old women heard of his condition and came. One of them was at his bedside when I entered. When she saw my collar she lifted her hands in that peculiarly Hibernian gesture that means so much, and said:

"'Sure, God sent you here this night. He has been waiting since noon to die.'

"The sick priest opened his eyes that now had the brightness of death in them and appeared to look through me. He seemed to be very far away. But slowly the eyes told me that he was coming back—back from the shadows; then at last he spoke:

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“You, Bishop? Thank God!”

“He made his simple confession. I anointed him and brought him Viaticum from the tabernacle in the church. Then the eyes went wild again, and I saw when they opened and looked at me that he had already turned around, and was again walking through the shadows of the Great Valley that ends the Long Road.

[Illustration: “Then I learned—old priest and bishop as I was—I learned my lesson.”]

“Through the night we three, the old woman, the boy and myself, watched him and listened to his wanderings. Then I learned—old priest and bishop as I was—I learned my lesson. The lips that never spoke a complaint were moved, but not by his will, to go over the story of two terrible years. It was a sad story. It began with his great zeal. He wanted to do so much, but the black discouragement of everything slowly killed his hopes. He saw the Faith going from his people. He saw that they were ceasing to care. The town was then, as it is to-day, McDermott’s town, but McDermott had fallen away when his riches came, and some terrible event, a quarrel with a former priest who had attended Alta from a distant point, had left McDermott bitter. He practically drove the pastor from his door. He closed his factory to the priest’s people and one by one they left. Only eighteen families stayed. The dying priest counted them over in his dreams, and sobbed as he told of the others who had gone. Then the bigotry that McDermott’s faith had kept concealed broke out under the encouragement of McDermott’s infidelity. The boys of the town flung insults at the priest as he passed. The people gave little, and that grudgingly. I could almost feel his pain as he told in his delirium how, day after day, he had dragged his frail body to church and on the round of duty. But every now and then, as if the words came naturally to bear him up, he would say:

“It’s for God’s sake. I am nothing. It will all come in His own good time.’

“Then I knew the spirit that kept him to his work. He went over his visit to me. How he had hoped, and then how his hopes were dashed to the ground. Oh, dear Lord, had I known what it all meant to that sensitive, saintly nature, I would have sold my ring and cross to give him what he needed. But my words seemed to have broken him and he came home to die. The night of his return he spent before the altar in his log church, and, Saints of Heaven, how he prayed! When I heard his poor, dry lips whisper over the prayer once more I bowed my head on the coverlet and cried as only a child can cry—and I was only a child at that minute in spite of my white hair and wrinkles. He had offered a supreme sacrifice—his life. I gleaned from his prayers that his parents had done him the one favor of keeping up his insurance and that he had made it over to his church. So he wanted to die at his post and piteously begged God to take him. For his death he knew would

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give Alta a church. He seemed penetrated with the idea that alive he was useless, but that his death meant the resurrection of Alta. When I heard that same expression used so often to-day I lived over again the whole story of that night in the little vestry. All this time he had been picking the coverlet, and his hands seemed, during the pauses, to be holding the paten as if he were gathering up the minute particles from the corporal. At last his hand found mine. He clung to it, and just an instant his eyes looked at me with reason in them. He smiled, and murmured, 'It is all right, now, Bishop.' I heard a sob back of me where the boy stood, and the old woman was praying. He was trying to speak again, and I caught the words, 'God's sake—I am nothing—His good time.' Then he was still, just as the morning sun broke through the windows.

"That minute, Reverend Fathers, began the resurrection of Alta. The old woman told me how it happened. He was twenty-five miles away attending one of his missions when the blizzard was at its height. McDermott fell sick and a telegram was sent for the priest—the last message before the wires came down. Father Belmond started to drive through the storm back to Alta. He succeeded in reaching McDermott's bedside and gave him the last Sacraments. He did not break down himself until he returned to the vestry, but for twenty-four hours he tossed in fever before they found him.

"McDermott grew better. He sent for me when he heard I was in town. The first question he asked was: 'Is he dead?' I told McDermott the story just as I am telling you. 'God forgive me,' said the sick man, 'that priest died for me. When he came here I ordered him out of my office, yet when they told him I was sick he drove through the storm for my sake. He believed in the worth of a soul, and he himself was the noblest soul that Alta ever had.'

"I said nothing. Somebody better than a mere bishop was talking to McDermott, and I, His minister, was silent in His presence. 'Bishop,' said McDermott, after long thought, 'I never really believed until now; I'm sorry that it took a man's life to bring back the Faith of my fathers. Send us a priest to Alta—one who can do things: one after the stamp of the saint in the vestry. I'll be his friend and together we will carry on the work he began. I'll see him through if God spares me.'

"Dear Fathers, it is needless to say what I did.

"Father Broidy, on this happy day I have not re-echoed the praises that have been showered upon you as much as perhaps I might have done, because I reserved for you a praise that is higher than all of them. I believed when I sent you here that you were of his stamp. You have done your duty and you have done it well. I am not ungrateful and I shall not forget. But your best praise from me is, that I firmly believe that you, under like circumstances, would also have willingly given your life for the resurrection of Alta."

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THE MAN WITH A DEAD SOUL

Years ago there lived a man whose soul had died; and died as only a soul may die, by the man's own deed. His body lived still for debauchery, his mind lived still to ponder on evil, but his soul was stifled in a flood of sin. So the man lived his life with a dead soul.

When the soul died the man's dreams changed. The fairy children of his youth came no more to play with him and his visions were of lands bare and desolate, with great rocks instead of green trees; and sandy, dry and arid plains instead of bright grass and flowers. But out of the rocks shone fiery veins of virgin gold and the pitiless sun that dried the plain reflected countless smaller suns of untouched diamonds. Hither in dreams came often the man with the dead soul.

The years passed and the man realized with his mortal eyes the full of his dreams and touched mortal foot to the desert that now was all his own. Greedily he picked and dug till his weary body cried "enough." Then only he left, when his strength could dig no more. So he began to live more evilly because of his new power of wealth; and his soul was farther than ever from resurrection.

Now it happened that the man with the dead soul soon found that he had become a leper because of his sins, and so with all his gains was driven from among men. He went back to the desert and watched the gold veins in the rocks and the shining of the diamonds, all the time hoping for more strength to dig. But while waiting, his musings turned to hateful thoughts of all his kindred, and abhorrence of all good. So he said: "I have been driven from among men because they love virtue, henceforth I will hate it; because they loved God, henceforth I will love only evil; because they use their belongings to work mercy, henceforth I will use mine to inflict revenge. I may not go to men, so I will go to those who do men harm."

So the man with the dead soul went to live among the beasts. He dwelt for a long time in the forests and the most savage of the brutes were his friends. One day he saw a hermit at the door of his cave. "How livest thou here?" he asked.

"From the offerings of the raven who brings me bread and the wild bees who give it sweetness and the great beasts who clothe me," answered the hermit. Then the man with the dead soul left the beasts because they did good and were merciful.

Out of the forest the North Wind met the man and tossed him upon its wings and buffeted him and chilled him to the marrow. In vain he asked for mercy, the North Wind would give none. Half frozen and sore with blows the man gasped—

"'Tis well! I will dwell with thee for thou givest nothing but evil." So he went to dwell in the cave of the North Wind and the chill of the pitiless cold was good to him on account of his dead soul.

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One day he saw the clouds coming, headed for his own desert, and the North Wind went to meet them and a mighty battle took place in the air; but the North Wind was the victor. White on the ground where the chill had flung them lay the clouds in snow crystals; and the man laughed his joy at the sight of the ruin—for he knew that the rain-clouds would have greened his desert and made it beautiful. But he heard the men who cultivated the land on which the snow had fallen bless the North Wind that it had given their crops protection and promised plenty to the fields of wheat. Then the man with the dead soul cursed the North Wind and went to dwell in the ocean.

The waters bade him stay and daily he saw their work of evil. Down in the depths dead men's bones whitened beside the wealth of treasure the ocean had claimed. He walked along the bottom for years exulting in destruction before he came to the surface to watch the storms and laugh at the big waves eating the great ships. But there was only a gentle breeze blowing that day, and he saw great vessels laden with treasure and wealth passing from nation to nation. He saw the dolphins play over the bosom of the waters and the sea-gulls happy to ride the waves. Then afar off he saw the bright columns where all day long the sun kept working, drawing moisture to the sky from the waters to spread it, even over the man's barren desert, to make it bloom.

Cursing again, the man with the dead soul left the waters and buried himself beneath the earth, to hide in dark caves where neither light nor sound could go. But a glowworm that lived in the cave made it all too bright. By its lantern he saw the hidden mysterious forces working. Through tiny paths warmth and nourishment ran to be near the surface that baby seeds might germinate, live and flourish for man's benefit. He saw great forests draw their strength from the very Earth into which he had burrowed, to fall again in death into its kindly arms and so to change into carbon and remain stored away for man's future comfort. Then the man with the dead soul could live in earth no longer, and neither could he go to the beasts, to the air, or to the waters.

"I will return to my desert," he said, "for there is more of evil in the gold and diamonds than anywhere else."

So he went back where the gold still shone from the veins in the cliffs and the diamonds twinkled in the pitiless sun rays. But a throne had been raised on a hillock and a king sat thereon with a crown on his head and a trident in his hand.

"Who art thou who invadest my desert?" asked the man.

"Thy master," answered the king.

"And who is my master?" asked the man.

"The spirit of evil."

“Then would I dwell with thee,” said the man.

“Thou hast served me well and thou art welcome,” said the king. “Behold!”

He stretched forth the trident and demons peopled the desert.

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"These are thy companions. Thou shalt dwell with them, and without torture, unless thy evil deeds be turned to good to torture me. Know that thou hast passed from mortal life, and thy deeds of evil have brought thee my favor. If thou hast been successful in reaping the evil thou has sown, thou shalt be my friend. But know that for every good thing that comes from it, thou shalt be tortured with whips of scorpions."

So the man with the dead soul walked through rows of demons with whips in their hands; but no arm was raised to strike, for he had sown his evil well and the king did not frown on him.

Then one day a single whip of scorpions fell upon his shoulders. Pain-racked he looked at the king and saw that his face was twisted with agony: then he knew that somewhere an evil deed of his own had been turned to good. And even while he looked the whips began to fall mercilessly from all sides and the king, frantic with agony, cried out:

"Tear aside the veil. Let him see."

In an instant the whips ceased to fall and the man with the dead soul saw all the Earth before him—and understood. A generation had passed since he had gone, but his keen eye sought and found his wealth. The finger of God had touched it and behold good had sprung from it everywhere. It was building temples to the mighty God where the poor could worship; and the hated Cross met his eye wherever he looked, dazzling his vision and blinding him with its light. Wherever the Finger of God glided the good came forth; the hungry were nourished, the naked clothed, the frozen warmed and the truth preached. Before him was the good growing from his impotent evil every moment and multiplying as it grew; and behind him he heard the howls of the tortured demons and the impatient hisses of the whips that hungered for his back.

Shuddering he closed his eyes, but a voice ringing on the air made him open them again. The voice was strangely like his own, yet purified and sweet with sincerity and goodness. It was singing the "Miserere," and the words beat him backward to the demons as they arose.

He caught a glimpse of the singer, a young man clad in a brown habit of penance with the cord of purity girt about him. His eyes looked once into the eyes of the man with the dead soul. They were the eyes of the one to whom he had left his legacy of hate and wealth and evil—his own and his only son.

Shuddering, the man with the dead soul awoke from his dream, and behold, he was lying in the desert where the gold tempted him from out of the great rocks and the diamonds shone in the sunlight. He looked at them not at all, but straightway he went to where good men sang the "Miserere" and were clad in brown robes. And as he went it came to pass that his dead soul leaped in the joy of a new resurrection.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A DOLLAR

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I was born in a beautiful city on the banks of a charming river, the capital of a great nation. Unlike humans, I can remember no childhood, though it is said that I had a formative period in the care of artists whose brains conceived the beauty of my face and whose hands realized the glory of their dreams. But to them I was only a pretty thing of paper with line and color upon it. They gave me nothing else, and I really began to live only when some one representing the Great Nation stamped a seal upon me. Though a bloodless thing, yet I felt a throb of being. I lived, and the joy of it went rioting through me.

I remember that at first I was confined in a prison, bound with others by an elastic band which I longed to break that I might escape to the welcoming hands of men who looked longingly at me through the bars. But soon one secured me and I went out into a great, wide and very beautiful world.

Of the first months of my life I can remember but very little, only that I was feverishly happy in seeing, and particularly in doing. I was petted and admired and sought after. I went everywhere and did everything. So great was my popularity that some even bartered their peace of mind to obtain me, and others, forced to see me go, shed tears at the parting. Some, unable to have me go to them otherwise, actually stole me. But all the time I cared nothing, for I was living and doing—making men smile and laugh when I was with them and weep when I went away. It was all the same to me whether they laughed or cried. I only loved the power that was in me to make them do it and I believed that the power was without limit.

I was not yet a year old when I began to lose my beauty. I noticed it first when I fell into the hands of a man with long hair and pointed beard, who frowned at me and said: "You poor, faded, dirty thing, to think that I made you!" But I did not care. He had not made me. It was the Great Nation. Anyhow I could still do things and make even him long for me. So I was happy.

I was one year and a half old when I formed my first great partnership with others of my kind, and it came about like this: I had been in the possession of a poor woman who had guarded me for a week in a most unpleasant smelling old purse, when I heard a sharp voice ask for me—nay, demand me, and couple the demand with a threat that my guardian should lose her home were the demand refused. I was given over, I hoped, to better quarters, but in this I was sadly disappointed, for my new owner confined me in a strong but ill-favored box where thousands like myself were growing mouldy and wrinkled, away from the light of day. Sometimes we were released at night to be carefully counted by candle-light, but that was all. Thus we who were imprisoned together formed a partnership, but even then we were not strong enough to free ourselves. One night the box was opened with a snap and I saw the thin, pale face of my master looking down at us. He selected me and ninety-nine of my companions and placed us outside the box.

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"There's the money," he said, "as I told you. It's all yours. Are you satisfied now?" I looked across the table at a young girl with a white, set face that was very, very beautiful. She did not answer.

"If you want it why don't you take it?" he snarled at her. "I can tell you again that there is nothing else for you."

The girl had something in her hand that I saw. I see more than most men. The thing she had made a sharp noise and spit a flame at him. He fell across the table and something red and warm went all over me. I began to be unhappy, for I thought I saw that there was something in the world that could not be bought. For him I cared nothing.

It was strange that after my transfers I was at last used to pay the judge who tried the girl. I was in the judge's pocket when he sentenced her to death. He said: "May the Lord have mercy on your soul." But I knew, for I told you I could see more than most men, that he didn't believe in the Lord or in souls. He left the court to spend me at a —, but I think that I will not mention that shameful change. There was nothing strange about my falling into the hangman as part of his pay. I had been in worse hands in the interim.

I saw her die. Not a word did she say about the man she killed, though it might have saved her to tell of the mock marriage and the other things I knew she could reveal. She thought it better to die, I suppose, than be shamed. So she died—unbought. It made me still more unhappy to think of it at all. The dark stain never left me, but I cared nothing for that. What troubled was that I knew she wanted me, was starving for what I could buy, but spurned me and died rather than take me. There was something that had more power than I possessed.

I made up my mind to forget, so my next effort was the greatest I had yet made—my partnership with millions of others. I traveled long distances over and over again. I dug gold from the earth and so produced others like myself. I built railroads, skyscrapers, steamships and great public works. I disguised myself, in order to enhance my power, under new forms of paper and metal, coin, drafts, checks, orders and notes. Indeed I scarcely knew myself when I returned to the bill with the red stain upon it. My partners were nearly all with us one day when the master came in with a man and pointed us out to him. The man shook his head. It was a great, massive head, good to look at. My master talked a long time with him but he never changed. Then he placed a great roll of us in his hand. He threw us down, kicked us, and went out without a look back. I was more unhappy than ever. He had spurned me, though I knew by his look that he wanted me. I felt cursed. I had not much power at all. There was another thing I could not buy.

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But a curse came in good earnest two days later. The terror of that has never left me. I saw a man die who loved me better than his honor or his God. He refused, dying, to give me back to the man from whom he had stolen me. The priest who stood by his bed implored him. He refused and the priest turned from him without saying the words of absolution. When the chill came on him he hissed and spit at us, and croaked his curses, but the death rattle kept choking them back into him, only to have him vomit them into our faces again and again till he died. The priest came back and looked at him.

"Poor fool!" he said to him, but to me and my companions he said: "*You* sent him to Hell."

Ah! What a power that was, but while I rejoiced in it I was not glad enough. He could have conquered had he only willed it. I knew he was my master long before I mastered him.

His dissipated and drunken children fought for us beside his very bed. I was wrenched from one hand to the other, falling upon the dirty floor to be trampled on again and again. When the fight ended I was torn and filthy, so that, patched and ugly, my next master sent me back to the great capital to be changed; to have the artists work again on me and restore my beauty. They did it well, but no artist could give me new life.

Again I went forth and fell into the hands of a good man. I knew he was good when I heard him speak to me and to those who were with me. "God has blessed me," he said, "with riches and knowledge and strength, but I am only His steward. This money like all the rest shall be spent in His service." Then we were sent out, thousands of us, returning again and again, splitting into great and small parties, but all coming and going hither and thither on errands of mercy.

Now I felt my love of doing return. Never did I now see a tear that I did not dry. Never did I hear a sigh that I did not change to a laugh; never a wound that I did not heal; never a pain that I did not soothe; nor a care I did not lighten. Where the sick were found, I visited them; where the poor were, I bought them bread. Out on the plains and in the desert I lifted the Cross of Hope and the Chalice of Salvation. To the dying I sped the Minister of Pardon. Into the darkness and the shadow of death I sent the Light of love and hope and truth, till, rich in the deeds of mercy I did in my master's name, I felt the call to another deathbed—his own. I saw my companions flying from the bounds of the great earth to answer the call. They knew he needed them now with the rich interest of good deeds they had won for him. Fast they came and the multitude of them filled him with wonder. The enemy who hated him pointed to them in derision. "Gold buys hell, not heaven," he laughed, but we stood around the bed and the enemy could not pass us. Then we, and deeds we did for him at his command, began to pray and the prayer was like sweetest music echoing against the very vault of heaven;

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and other sounds, like the gentle tones of harps, were wafted over us, swelling louder and louder till all seemed changed to a thousand organs, with every stop attuned to the praying. They were the voices of the children from parts and regions where we had lifted the Cross. One by one they joined the mighty music till on the wings of the melody the master was borne aloft, higher and higher as new voices coming added of their strength. I watched till he was far above and still rising to heights beyond the ken of dreams.

An Angel touched me.

“Be thou clean,” he said, “and go, I charge thee, to thy work. Thy master is not dead, but only begins his joy. While time is, thou shalt work for him and thy deeds of good shall be his own. Wherever thou shalt go let the Cross arise that, under its shadow, the children may gather and the song find new strength and new volume to lift him nearer and nearer the Throne.”

So I am happy that I have learned my real power; that I can do what alone is worth doing—for His sake.

LE BRAILLARD DE LA MAGDELEINE[1]

This is the story that the old sailor from Tadousac told me when the waves were leaping, snapping, and frothing at us from the St. Lawrence, and over the moan of the wind and the anger of the waters rose the wail of the Brailard de la Magdeleine.

“You hear him? Every storm he calls so loud. I think of my own baby when I hear him, always the same, always so sorrowful. Poor baby!

“Yes, it is a baby. Across there you might see, but the storm darkens everything, yonder toward Gaspé, where the little mother lived—*pauvre mere*. She was only a child, innocent and good and happy, when he came—the great lord, the *Grand Seigneur*, from France—came with the Commandant to Quebec and then to Tadousac.

“She loved him, loved him and forgot—forgot her father and mother—forgot the good name they gave her—forgot the innocence that made her beautiful—forgot the pure Mother and the good God, for him and his love. She went to Quebec with him, but the Cure had not blessed them in the church.

“Then the baby came. That is the baby who cries out there in the storm. The *Grand Seigneur* killed the little baby, killed it to save her from disgrace, killed it without baptism, and it cries and wails out there, *pauvre enfant*.

“The mother? She is here, too, in the storm. She has been here for more than two hundred years listening to her baby cry. Poor mother. The baby calls her and she wanders through the storm to find him. But she never sees, only hears him cry for her—and God. Till the great Day of Judgment will the baby cry, and she—*pauvre mere*—will pay the price of her sin, pay it out of her empty mother heart and hungry mother arms, that will not be filled. You hear the soft wind from the shore battle with the great wind from the Gulf? Perhaps it is she, *pauvre mere*—perhaps.

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“The *Grand Seigneur*? He never comes, for he died unrepentant and unpardoned. The lost do not return to Earth and Hope. He never comes. Only the mother comes—the mother who weeps and seeks, and hears the baby cry.”

FOOTNOTES:

[1] Near the mouth of the St. Lawrence can be heard a sound like wailing whenever there is a great storm. The people call it Le Braillard de la Magdeleine and countless tales are told concerning it.

THE LEGEND OF DESCHAMPS

From Tadousac to the far-off Lake of Saint John the rock-bound Saguenay rolls through a mystic country, sublime in natural beauty, and alive with traditions, legends and folklore tales. Ghosts of the past people its shores, phantom canoes float down the river of mystery; and disembodied spirits troop back to earth at the dreamer's call; traders, trappers, soldiers, women strong in love and valor, heroes in the long ago, and saintly missionaries offering up mortal life that savages may know the Christian's God.

Beauty, mysticism and music—music in all things, from the silver flow of the river to the soft notes of the native's tongue, and dominating all, simple faith and deep-rooted, God-implanted patriotism.

Such was French Canada, the adopted country of Deschamps the trapper, a native of old France, who made his home in Tadousac while Quebec was yet a growing city; and, caring nothing for toil or hardship, gradually grew to be a *grand monsieur* in the estimation of the people about him. He loved his country well and, when war came, sent forth three sturdy sons to help repel the British foe. Many were the tears the patriot shed, because age forbade the privilege of shouldering musket and marching himself.

Weary months dragged by before tidings came. Quebec had fallen. The gallant Montcalm had passed through the Gate of Saint John to a hero's rest, and two of the trapper's sons lay dead on the Plains of Abraham. They had died bravely, as Deschamps hoped they would, with their faces to the foe, and with a whispered message of love to the old father at Tadousac.

And Pascal, the best beloved?

Pascal was—a traitor!

The blood of Deschamps in the veins of a traitor! Wife, daughter and gallant sons had been riven from him by death and the Christian's hope lightened the; mourner's desolation. But disgrace! Neither earth nor heaven held consolation for such wrong as

his. Deschamps brooded on his woe; alone he endured his agony, giving utterance to his despair in the words: "France! Pascal! Traitor!"

Years passed and the trapper lived on, a senile wreck, ever brooding on defeat, then breaking into fierce invective. Misery had isolated him from his kind; the *grand monsieur* was the recluse of Tadousac. One day he disappeared from his lonely cabin and no one knew whither he had gone.

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Treason had purchased prosperity for the recreant son. Wealth and honors were his and an English wife, a haughty woman of half-noble family, who completed the work of alienation. Traitorous deed, kindred and race were all forgotten, and when the joy-bells rang for the birth of an heir there was revel in the magnificent mansion of Pascal Deschamps.

"Summon our friends," said the happy father. "A son to the house of Deschamps! Let his baptism be celebrated as becomes the heir of wealth, power and position."

So heralds went forth from town to town, making known the tidings, but bore no message to the lonely grandsire in Tadousac.

"The curse is lifted!" said the pious peasants, mindful of Pascal's treason. "A child at last! The good God has forgiven him."

From Quebec to Malbaie came so-called friends, English who despised his treachery, French who hated his name, but courtiers all; and with them came an unbidden guest, an aged trapper, unshorn and roughly clad, who lurked in the shadows of the great hall, and whispered ever: "France! Pascal! Traitor!"

Beautiful as an angel was the baby heir, fair with the patrician beauty of his English mother, strong of limb as befitted the trapper's descendant. Unconscious of the homage paid him, he slept in his nurse's arms, his baptismal robes sweeping the floor.

"A sturdy fellow, my friends," said his laughing sponsor. "An English Deschamps."

"An English Deschamps!" cried the English guests, pleased with the conceit. "Long may his line endure."

"A traitor Deschamps!" said a voice instinct with wrath. "Unhappy man, your taint is in him!"

The revelers shrank back appalled, as from the shadows came the unbidden guest and stood among them, his mien majestic with the dignity of sorrow. Pascal alone recognized him and forced his ashen lips to speak the word: "Father."

"Yes, your father, unhappy boy; unlettered, old and broken with the burden of your disgrace, but loyal still to God and country. I have guarded those great virtues well, for God gave them to me, and I would have transmitted them to my posterity, and linked the name of Deschamps forever with patriotism and Faith. But your treachery has destroyed my hope and smirched the memory of your brothers, whose names are written on the roll of martyrs to their Faith and country. Ah, Pascal, how I loved you! And your son? An English Deschamps you say! A son born to perpetuate his father's degradation! No, Pascal, I shall save my honor! Your traitor blood shall never taint posterity. You may live your life of misery, but you shall live it alone."



And snatching the child from its nurse's arms the old trapper passed from the house and had reached his canoe before the stupefied revelers were roused into pursuit. But they had no boats. The old trapper had driven holes through the sides of every one but his own.

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With swift strokes Deschamps paddled down the St. Lawrence, through the rocky entrance to the Saguenay, and over its dark waters till a harbor was reached in a cleft of the coast. Here the madman landed, climbed to the summit of the rock, and laying down the boy, kindled a fire of driftwood. "I may see his face," he muttered. "The last of my line! The English cross shows! The strain shows! I must wash it out! Hush, my little one, thy grandfather guards thee; soon shalt thou sleep in my arms—arms that cradled thy father, and shall hold thee forever. I, who was ever gentle, who spared the birds and beasts, and sorrowed with the trapped beaver, will spare thee, too, my baby—will save thee from thy father. Here where the wind speaks of freedom; here where the river even in its anger, as to-night, whispers peace; here where Deschamps worked and hoped; here where Deschamps sorrowed and mourned; here, little one, shall we rest together. Child, for you and me life means disgrace; the better part is death and freedom."

A leap from the rock! The baptismal robes, fluttering white like angels' wings, dipped to the surface and disappeared. The race of Deschamps was ended. The black water of Saguenay was its pall, the storm its requiem.

THE THOUSAND DOLLAR NOTE

The three men who sat together around the little library table of the Rectory felt the unpleasant tension of a half-minute of dead silence. The big burly one, with his feet planted straight on the carpet, passed his tongue over his lips and nervously folded and opened the paper in his hands. The tall young chap with creased trousers kept crossing and re-crossing his legs. Neither of them looked at the young priest, who ten minutes before had welcomed them with a merry laugh and had placed them in the most comfortable chairs of his little bookish den, as cordially as if they were the best friends he had in the world. Now the young priest looked old and the half-minute had done it. He was just an enthusiastic boy when the contractor and architect arrived; but he was a care-filled man now, as he sat and nervously passed a handkerchief over his forehead, to find it wet, though the room was none too warm. He seemed to be surmounting an actual physical barrier when he spoke to the big man.

"I do not quite see, Mr. McMurray" (it had been "John" ten minutes before), "I do not quite see," he repeated anxiously, "how I can owe you so much. You know our contract was plain, and the bid that I accepted from you was six thousand eight hundred dollars."

"Yes, sur; yes, sur; it was, sur," answered McMurray with shifting embarrassment, "but you know these other things were extras, sur."

"But I did not order any extras, Mr. McMurray," urged the priest.

“Yes, sur; yes, sur, you did, sur. I told you the foundations was sandy, sur, and that we had to go down deeper than the specifications called fur. It cost in labor, sur,”—McMurray did not seem to be enjoying his explanation—“fur diggin’ and layin’ the stone. Then you know, sur, it takes more material to do it, sur. You said, yes—to go ahead, sur.”

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"But you did not tell me it would cost more," urged the priest.

"No, sur; no, sur; I didn't, sur; but a child would know that. Now look here at the plans."

"Just a minute, Mr. McMurray," broke in the architect, suavely. "Let me explain. You see, Father, I was your representative both as architect and superintendent of the building. I know that McMurray's bill of extras is right. I passed on them and everything he did was necessary. There are extras, you know, on every building."

"But," said the priest, "I told you I had only eight thousand dollars, and that the furnishings would take all over the amount called for by the contract. You can not expect to get blood out of a stone. Here now you say I must pay a thousand dollars more; but where can I get the money?"

"Well, Father," said the architect, "I don't think you will have to worry much about that. You priests always manage somehow, and you got off cheap enough. That church is worth ten thousand dollars, if it's worth a cent; and McMurray did you a clean, nice job. Now one thousand dollars won't hurt you; the Bishop will be reasonable and you will get the money in a year or so."

"It looks as if I had to get it, somehow. I don't see how I can do anything else," answered the priest. "This thing has sort of stunned me. Give me one month and let me do my best. I wish I had never started that building at all."

"Yes, sur; yes, sur," said McMurray quickly. "You can have a month, sur. I am not a hard man, sur; but I've got to pay off me workers, you know. But take the month, sur, take it—take it."

McMurray looked longingly at the door.

All three had arisen; but the priest's step had lost its spring as he escorted his visitors out.

Both of them were silent for the distance of a block away from the Rectory, and then McMurray said:

"Yes, sur; yes, sur; I feel like ——."

"I do too," broke in the architect. "I know what you were going to say. He took it pretty hard."

Not another word was spoken by either of them until the hotel was reached, and they had drowned the recollection of the young face, with the look of age upon it, in four drinks at the bar.

When the priest, with a slight look of relief, closed the door upon his visitors and bolted it after them, he had perhaps seen a little humor in the situation; but the bolting of the door was the only sign of it. His face was still grave when he stood, silent and stunned, staring at the bill on the table.

“The good Lord help me,” he prayed. “One thousand dollars and the Bishop coming in two weeks! What can I say to him? What can I do?”

He pulled out a well thumbed letter from his pocket and read it to himself, though he knew every word by heart.

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"DEAR FATHER RYAN,—I am pleased at your success, especially that you built the church, as I told you to, without debt. The congregation is too poor for any such burden. I will be there for the dedication on the 26th." And by the way. You may get ready for that change I spoke of. I am as good as my word, and will not delay about promoting you. The parish of Lansville is vacant. In a month you may consider yourself its pastor. In the meantime, I will look around to select one of the young men to take your place and begin the work of building a house. God bless you.

"Sincerely yours in Christ,

THOMAS, *Bishop of Tolma.*

"All these years," whispered the young priest, "all these years, I have waited for that place. I meant to have a home and mother with me, and at least enough to live on after my ten years of sacrifice; but one thousand dollars spoils it all. How can I raise it? I can not do it before the 26th and the Bishop will ask for my report. How can I tell him after that letter?"

He dropped the letter over the contractor's bill and sat down, with discouragement written on every line of his face. He was trying to think out the hardest problem of his life.

The town wherein Father Ryan had built his church had been for years on the downgrade, so far as religion was concerned. There were in it forty indifferent, because neglected, Catholic families. They had just enough religion left in them to desire a little more, and they had a certain pride left, too, in their Faith.

Father Ryan builded on that pride. It was a long and arduous work he had faced. But after ten years he succeeded in erecting the little church. His warnings to the architect had gone without heed; and he found himself plunged into what was for him an enormous debt, just at the time when promotion was assured.

All night long his problem was before him, and in the morning it was prompt to rise up and confront him.

After breakfast the door-bell rang. He answered it himself, to find two visitors on the steps. One was a very venerable looking old priest, who had a kindly way about him and who laid his grip very tenderly on the floor before he shook hands with Father Ryan. His companion looked vastly different as he flung a little satchel into the corner, and with a voice as big and hearty as his body informed his host that both had come to stay over Sunday.

“Barry and I have been off for two weeks and we got tired of it,” said Father Fanning, the big man. “First vacation in ten years for both of us, but there is nothing to it. Barry got worrying over his school, and I got worrying over Barry, so there you are.”

“But why didn’t both of you go home?” asked Father Ryan.

“Home! confound it, that’s the trouble. I would give anything to go on the other ten miles and get off the train at my little burg, and so would Barry, for that matter; but we were both warned to stay away until Wednesday—reception and all that sort of thing. So now we are going to stay here.”

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"That's all right," said Father Ryan. "I am glad to have you, but this is Saturday and tomorrow is Sunday, and—"

"Now, now, go easy, young man, go easy. I simply won't preach. It is no use asking me. I am on a vacation, I tell you. So is Barry. He won't talk, so I have to defend him. You wouldn't want a man to work on his vacation, would you?"

"Well, if you won't, you won't," replied Father Ryan, "but you will say the late Mass, anyhow? You'll have to do something for your board."

"All right, I will, then. Barry can say his Mass in private, and you say the first, yourself. Then you can preach as short and as well as you can, which is not saying much for you."

"Well, seeing that it is Seminary Collection Sunday," interrupted Father Ryan, "I won't lack for a subject."

Father Ryan had a great weakness for the Seminary, which was entitled to an annual collection in the entire Diocese. He had studied there for six years and, since his ordination, not one of his old professors had been changed. Then he knew his obligations to the Seminary; he was one of those who took obligations seriously. So Father Fanning was obliged, after hearing the sermon next day, to change his mind regarding his friend's ability to preach well. Father Ryan's discourse was an appeal, simple and heartfelt, for his Alma Mater.

He closed it very effectively: "I owe the Seminary, my dear friends," he said, "about all that I have of priestly equipment. Nothing that I may ever say or do can repay even a mite of the obligation that is upon me. As for you, and the other Catholics of this Diocese, you owe the Seminary for nine-tenths of the priests who have been successfully carrying on God's work in your midst. The collection to-day is for that Seminary. In other words, it is for the purpose of helping to train priests who shall take our places when we are gone. On the Seminary depends the future of the Church amongst you: therefore, the future of religion in your families. Looking at this thing in a selfish way, for the present alone, there is perhaps no need of giving your little offering to this collection; but if you are thinking of your children and your children's children, and the future of religion, not only in this community but all over our State, and even in the Nation, you will be generous—even lavish, in your gifts. This is a poor little parish. We have struggled hard, God knows, to build our church, and we need every dollar we can scrape together; but I would rather be in need myself than refuse this appeal. I am entitled by the laws of the Diocese to take out of the collection the average amount of the Sunday collection. I would be ungrateful if I took a cent, so I don't intend to. Every dollar, every penny that you put into this collection shall be sent to the Bishop for the Seminary; to help him educate worthy priests for our Diocese."

After Mass, Father Fanning shook hands with the preacher.

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"I feel ashamed of myself, Ryan," he said, "that I never looked at things in such a light before. That was a great appeal you made. My collection is probably postponed until next Sunday, when I get home to take it up; and I tell you I am going to use every bit of that sermon that I can remember."

Father Ryan had had little time to think over his troubles since his two friends arrived; but, somehow, they seemed to worry him now that the sermon was off his mind. The one thousand dollar debt was weighing upon him even when he went to the door of the church to meet some of the people.

A stranger brushed past him—a big, bluff, hearty looking man, all bone and muscle, roughly dressed and covered with mud. There was a two-horse rig from the livery, at the curb. The stranger started for it; but turned back on seeing the priest.

"I am a stranger here, Father," he said. "I have just come down from the mountains, where I have been prospecting. I have to drive over to Caanan to get the fast train. I find that you have no trains here on Sunday. I hadn't been to Mass for three months, for we have no place to go out there where I was; so it was a great consolation for me to drop in and hear a good sermon. And I tell you it was a good sermon. That was a great appeal you made."

Father Ryan could only murmur, "Thank you. You are not staying very long with us?"

"No, I can't stay, Father. I have to get to New York and report on what I found. I have about fourteen miles of mud before me now, and have driven twenty miles this morning. I don't belong around here at all. I live in New York; but I may be here a good deal later, and you are the nearest priest to me. Take this and put it in the collection."

The rough man shoved a note into Father Ryan's hand. By this time they both had reached the livery rig. A quick "Good-bye" from the visitor, and a "God bless you" from Father Ryan, ended the conversation.

The priest thrust the note into his pocket and returned to the house. When he entered the dining-room, Father Fanning was taking breakfast at the table. Father Barry was occupying himself with a book, which he found difficulty in reading, on account of the enthusiastic comments of his friend on Father Ryan's sermon.

"We were talking about you, Ryan," he said. "And there is no need of telling you what we had to say about you; but there is one thing I would like to ask. What's wrong with you since we came?"

"Why, nothing," said Father Ryan. "Haven't I treated you better than you deserve?"

"That is all right, that is all right," interrupted his big neighbor, "but there *is* something wrong. You were worried at first. Then you dropped it, but you started to worry again

just as soon as you came out of the sanctuary. You were at it when we came in and you are at it now. Come, Ryan, let us know what it is. If it is money, well—”

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Father Barry looked up quickly from his book and said: "Surely, it is not the new church, is it?"

The young pastor sat down in a chair at the table and looked at his friends, before he spoke. "Well, I never could keep a secret," he said. "Therefore, I suppose I never will be a trusted counselor of anybody, and must always be seeking a counselor for myself."

"I always hate a man who can keep a secret," said Father Fanning. "I always believe that the fellow who can keep a secret is the fellow you have to watch. You never know what he is thinking about, so nobody ever is sure of him. Don't be ashamed now of not being able to keep a secret, and don't worry yourself by keeping this one. Out with it."

"Well, it is about the church," said Father Ryan.

And he told his story.

"Well, of all the strange characters I ever met," said Father Fanning, "you certainly are the worst, Ryan. Here you are in a box about that thousand dollars and yet this morning you gave away your own share of the collection, besides booming the Seminary. Why man, the Seminary ought not ask anything from you, in your present condition. But there is no use trying to pound sense into you. What are you going to do about this? It is too much money for Barry and myself to take care of. Bless your heart, I don't think he has fifty dollars to his name and I wouldn't like to tell you the state of my finances. We have to think out some way. Maybe Barry can see the Bishop."

"Well, we'll have to stop thinking about it," said Father Ryan. "I might just as well settle down where I am. I certainly will not get very much of a promotion now. By the way, did you notice the big man, covered with mud, in the church?"

"No," said Father Fanning, "I did not notice him. Who was he? What about him?"

"He was a stranger," said Father Ryan, "and was very pleasant. He is a prospector from New York. He has been up in the mountains and away from church for the last three months. He must have found something up there, because he is going on to New York to meet his backers; at least, that is what I judged from his talk. He is driving over to Caanan to-day to catch the fast train."

"I wonder if he put anything in the collection?" said Father Fanning.

"No, he did not," answered the pastor, "but he gave it to me afterward and told me to put it in. By the way, here it is."

He pulled the note out of his pocket and laid it flat on the table. The three men gasped for breath. It was a thousand dollars.

Father Fanning was the first to find words. “Great Scott, Ryan,” he said, “you ought to go out and thank God on your knees before the altar. Here is the end of your trouble. Why the man must be a millionaire.”

Father Ryan’s face was all smiles. “Yes,” he said, “it is the end of my trouble. I never dreamed it would come to an end so easily. Thanks be to God for it.”

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The little old priest with the book in front of him seemed to have no comment to make. He let his two friends ramble on, both overjoyed at the good fortune that had extricated Father Ryan from his dilemma. But he was not reading. He was thinking. By and by he spoke.

"What did you say you preached on to-day, Father Ryan?"

"Why," broke in Fanning, "he preached on the Seminary. Didn't I tell you! And a good sermon—"

"Yes, I preached on the Seminary," said Father Ryan.

"But did I not hear Father Fanning say that you pledged every dollar that came into the collection to the Seminary?"

"Why, surely," said Father Ryan, "but this did not come in through the collection."

"Yes," persisted Father Barry, "but did you not say that the strange man told you to put it into the collection?"

"Why—yes—yes, he did say something like that."

"Well, then," urged Father Barry, "is it not a question to be debated as to whether or not you can do anything else with the money?"

"Oh, confound it all, Barry," cried Father Fanning. "You are a rigorist. You don't understand this case. Now there's no use bringing your old syllogisms into this business. This man is in a hole. He has got to get out of it. What difference is it if I put my money in one pocket or in the other pocket. This all belongs to God anyhow. The thousand dollar note was given to the Church, and the most necessary thing now is to pay the debt on that part of it that's here. Why the Seminary doesn't need it. The old Procurator would drop dead if he got a thousand dollars from this parish."

"Well, so far as I can see," said Father Barry, "what you say does not change matters any. Father Ryan promised every dollar—and every cent for that matter—in that collection to the Seminary. This money forms part of the collection. I know perfectly well that most men would argue as you do, but this is a case of conscience. The money was given for a specific purpose, and in my judgment, if Father Ryan uses it for any other purpose than the one for which it was given, he simply will have to make restitution later on to the Seminary."

"That's an awful way of looking at things," said Father Fanning. "Confound it, I am glad I don't have to go to you for direction. Why, its getting worse instead of better, you are. The giver of this money would be only too glad to have it go to pay off the debt. What does he know about the Seminary? He was attending the little church out here, and

whatever good he got from his visit came through Father Ryan and his people. He is under obligation to them first. Can't you see that it does not make any difference, after all. It is the same thing."

"No, it is not the same thing," said Father Barry. "Perhaps we are too much tempted to believe that gifts of this kind might be interchangeable. We are full of zeal for the glory of God at home, and that means that sometimes we unconsciously are full of zeal for our own glory. Look it up. I may be wrong, and I do not want to be a killjoy; but we would not wish our friend here to act first and do a lot of sorrowful thinking afterward."

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It was Wednesday morning when the two visitors left, and the discussions only ended when the door closed upon them. There was not a theological book in Father Ryan's library left unconsulted.

When Father Fanning was at the door, grip in hand, he said: "Well, I guess we have come to no conclusion, Ryan. You will have to finish it, yourself, and decide for yourself. But there is one thing I can testify to, besides the stubbornness of my venerable friend here, and that is that I have learned more theology out of this three-day discussion than I learned in three years previously. There is nothing like a fight to keep a fellow in training."

His friends gone, Father Ryan went straight to his desk and wrote this letter to his Bishop:

YOUR LORDSHIP—I am sending herewith enclosed my Seminary collection. It amounts to \$1,063.10. You may be surprised at the first figure; but there was a thousand dollar note handed to me for that particular collection. I congratulate the Seminary on getting it.

"The church is ready for dedication as your Lordship arranged.

"Kindly wire me and I will meet you at the train."

Then Father Ryan went to bed. He did not expect to sleep very much that night; but in spite of his worry, and to his own great surprise, he had the most peaceful sleep of all the years of his priesthood.

The church was dedicated. The Bishop, severe of face, abrupt in manner, but if the truth were known, kindly at heart, finished his work before he asked to see the books of the parish.

Father Ryan was alone with his Lordship when the time for that ordeal came. He handed the books to the Bishop and laid a financial statement before him. The Bishop glanced at it, frowned and then read it through. The frown was still on his face as he looked up at the young priest before him.

"This looks as if you had been practicing a little deceit upon me, Father Ryan," he said. "You wrote me that the church was finished without debt."

"I thought so, my Lord, when I wrote you the letter. I had the money on hand to pay the exact amount of the contract. The architect and the builder came to me later and informed me that there had been extras, of which I knew nothing, amounting to one thousand dollars. I am one thousand dollars behind. I assure your Lordship that it was not my fault, except that perhaps I should have known more about the tactics of the

men I was dealing with. I will have to raise the money some way; and, of course, I do not expect your Lordship to send me to Lansville. I am sorry, but I have done the best I could. I will know more about building next time."

The Bishop had no word to say. Though the frown appeared pretty well fixed upon his face, it did not seem quite natural. There was a twinkle in his eye that only an expert on bishops could perceive.

"But you sent me one thousand dollars more than I could have expected only this week, for the Seminary," he said. That surely indicates that you have some people here who might help you out of your dilemma."

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"I am sorry, your Lordship," said Father Ryan, "but it does not indicate that at all. I have no rich people. All of my people have done the best they could for the new church. I will have to give them a rest for a year and stay here and face the debt. The man who gave the thousand dollar bill was a stranger—a miner. I do not know him at all. He did not even give his name, but said the money was for the collection. I could not find any authority for keeping it for the church here, though, to be candid, I wanted to do it. That is all."

The Bishop still kept his eye on him. "Of course you know that your appointment to Lansville was conditional."

"I understand that, your Lordship," said Father Etan. "You have no obligation to me at all in that regard."

"Will you kindly step to the door and ask my Chancellor to come in?"

When the Chancellor entered, the Bishop said to him: "Have you the letter I received from Mr. Wilcox?"

The Chancellor handed the Bishop the letter, who unfolded it and, taking another glance at the dejected young pastor, read it to him. It was very much to the point.

"DEAR BISHOP,—You may or may not know me, but I knew you when you were pastor of St. Alexis in my native town. The fact is, you baptized me. I would not even have known where you were, had it not been for a mistake I made this morning. I came down from the mountains and went to Mass at Ashford. When I was going away I gave the young priest a thousand dollar note. If you recognize my name, you will understand that it was not too much for me to give, for though I am a stingy sort of fellow, the Lord has blessed me with considerable wealth. I remember saying to the young priest that I wanted him to put it in the collection, which as I remember now, was for the Seminary. I figured it out that he would be sending the collection to you. "Now, I don't like to disappoint you, dear Bishop, but I did not intend that money to go to the Seminary, but to the pastor for the little parish. Later on, when developments start in the mountains, and they will start when I get back to New York, I may need that young priest to come up and take care of my men; so I want the money to go to his church, which, from what my driver told me coming over, needs it. I may take care of the Seminary later on, for I expect to be around your section of the country a great deal in the future.

"Respectfully yours,

"PAUL WILCOX."

Through tear-dimmed eyes Father Ryan saw all the sternness go out of the Bishop's face.



“Mr. Wilcox,” said his Lordship, “is a millionaire many times over. He is one of the largest mine operators in the world. He likes to do things of this kind. You may go to Lansville, Father Ryan; but I think, if I were you, I would stay here. When Wilcox says things are going to move, they usually do. Think it over and take your choice. Here is your thousand dollars. I do not find it a good thing, Father, to praise people; especially those I have to govern, so I am not going to praise you for what you have done. It was right, and it was your duty. I appreciate it.”

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THE OCCASION

Mr. O'Brien of No. 32 Chestnut street had his entire family with him, as he hurried to the eight o'clock Mass. Mrs. O'Brien was already tired, though she had gone only a block from the house; for Elenora, who always was tardy, had to be dressed in a hurry. Then Tom had come down stairs with an elegant part to that portion of his hair which was right above his forehead, but the back section, which the mirror did not show, was tousled and unkempt. It took an effort on Mrs. O'Brien's part to make the children presentable; and hurry plus effort was not good for—well, for folks who do not weigh as little as they did when they were younger.

Dr. Reilly met the O'Briens at the corner.

"Hello," he called, "it's the whole family, bedad. What brings ye all to the 'eight o'clock'?"

Mr. O'Brien answered his family doctor only when the children were left behind where they could not hear: "It's Father Collins' turn to preach at the High Mass, Doc," he explained.

"Sure, it is," said the Doctor. "Faith, I forgot that. I was going to High Mass meself, but I ran over to see ye. Yes, it's his turn. Sure, the poor man puts me to sleep, and sleepin' in the House of God is neither respectful nor decorous. But what is a man to do?"

"He is the finest priest in the city," said Mr. O'Brien, looking back to see if his regiment was following, "and the worst preacher. I can't sit still and listen to him. He loses his voice the minute he gets before the people, and some day I think he'll pull the pulpit down, trying to get his words out. Faith, Doc, he makes me want to get up and say it for him."

"Well, O'Brien, I believe you could say it, judging from the way you lecture us at the council meetings. And that brings me to the business I had when I ran off to see you. Couldn't you let the Missis take care of the children at this Mass? McGarvey wants to talk over something with us. He's sick and can't get out. We'd both go to the 'nine o'clock' and that will miss the sermon, too."

Mr. O'Brien nodded his head complacently. They had reached the front of the church, and whom should they meet but Father Collins hurrying out from the vestry on his way to the rectory across the street.

"Good morning, Father," cried the children in chorus, just as they did when one of the priests visited their room in the parochial school. The two men touched their hats in greeting. Father Collins returned the salute. He crossed the street quickly and ran up stairs to his own room in the rectory, but did not notice that O'Brien and the doctor went past the church.

Be it known that Father Collins was the third assistant. He had been ordained one year. The first assistant, who was still fasting, with the obligation of singing High Mass upon him, was installed in Father Collins' favorite chair, when the owner of it entered.

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"Come in, come in, Collins, come in to your own house," the first assistant called.
"Come in, man, and be at home. I couldn't sleep, so I had to get up and wait around, hungry enough; but," he had caught the expression on his friend's face, "what is the matter?"

"Oh, nothing much, nothing much," replied Father Collins, "only I see the whole parish is turning out to-day for the eight o'clock Mass. The O'Briens and Doctor Reilly have just gone in. You know, they always go to High Mass."

"Which," remarked Father Grady, "is no compliment either to my singing, or your Eminence's preaching, or to both."

"Oh, your singing is all right," assured Father Collins.

"Well," said Father Grady, "I accept the correction. I am a modest man, but I must acknowledge that I can sing—at least, relatively speaking, for I haven't very much to compete against. However, if it is not my singing, then it must be your preaching."

"It is, it is," answered his friend, with just a touch of shakiness in his voice. "Look here Grady, you know I made a good course in the Seminary. You know I am not an ignoramus and you know that I work hard. I prepare every sermon and write it out; when the manuscript is finished I know it by heart. Now, here is the sermon for to-day. Look at it and if you love me, read it. Tell me what is wrong with it."

Father Grady took the papers and began to look them over, while Father Collins picked up a book and pretended to be interested in it. In truth, he was glancing at his companion very anxiously over the top, until the manuscript had been laid down.

"My dear Collins, you are right," said Father Grady. "It is a good sermon. I wish I could write one half as good. There is absolutely nothing wrong with it."

"But," urged Father Collins, "I shall spoil it."

"Well," said his friend, "candor compels me to acknowledge that you probably shall. I don't know why. Can't you raise your voice? Can't you have courage? The people won't bite you. You can talk well enough to the school children. You can talk well enough to me. Why can't you stand up and be natural? Just be yourself and talk to them as you talk to us. That is the whole secret."

"It is my nervousness, Grady," said Father Collins. "I am afraid the minute I enter the church to preach. When I open my mouth, I lose my voice out of fear. That is what it is—fear. I am simply an arrant coward. I tell you, Grady, I hate myself for it."

"Now, look here," said his companion earnestly, "you are not a coward. You can preach. It is in you, and it will come out, yet. I call this sermon nothing short of a

masterpiece. If you can not brace up now, the occasion will come to loosen your tongue. It surely will."

"This is the worst day I have had," groaned poor Father Collins. "I am shaking like a leaf, already. Look here, Grady, do me a favor just this once. You preach so easily. You can get up a sermon in half an hour. You have nothing to do until half past ten. Now, let me go out and make the announcements and read the Gospel at the nine o'clock Mass. Most of the children will be there and I can say a few words to them. You preach at High Mass."

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"Well, I ought not to do it," said Father Grady, thoughtfully, "for if I do such things, it may spoil you. You ought not to give way, but—you are white as a sheet, man. Well, I am going to do it this time, so I had better look over something."

Father Collins was overjoyed. He could not help it. He went to the church to prepare for the Mass and prompt to the minute he was in the sanctuary.

The Mass had proceeded as far as the end of the first Gospel, when the Sacristan came to the priest's side and whispered a message. He was plainly excited, and trying hard to conceal it from the congregation. Father Collins leaned over to hear what he had to say.

"Keep your head, Father. There is a fire in the church basement now, right under your feet. The firemen are working on it, but can't put it out. We have stopped people from coming in to stampede the others. The galleries are filled with the children, and we have to get them out, first. If there is a rush the children will be killed at the bottom of the gallery stairs, where they meet the people from the body of the church out in that vestibule. The chief sent me to you to tell you to go on preaching and hold the grown folks down stairs for ten minutes. The firemen will get the little ones out without noise or fuss, if you can keep the attention of the people. I'll whisper 'all right' to you when they are gone. Then you tell the rest to file out quietly. It is the only chance you have to save those children in this ramshackle old building, so you preach for all you are worth and don't let the people look up at the galleries. There will be hundreds of little ones owe their lives to you, Father, if you can hold the fort."

The Sacristan left and, with a gasp of horror, the priest thought of the galleries emptying into the little vestibule and meeting a rush of the people from the church.

Father Collins took off his chasuble and maniple and placed them upon the altar. He wondered at his own coolness. He advanced to the front of the altar platform, opening his book; but he closed it again coolly. Then, in a clear voice, that reached every corner of the building, which he could not believe was his own, he began.

"On second thought, my friends," he said, "I will not read the Epistle or the Gospel to-day. I have a few words to say to you, though a sermon is not expected at this Mass."

In a front pew Doctor Reilly and Mr. O'Brien groaned softly. They had been caught by the dreaded sermon.

Father Collins announced his text. The congregation was surprised that it was to have a sermon instead of the usual reading, but it was more surprised at the change in Father Collins; so much, indeed, that it was almost breathless. The priest glanced up at the gallery, quickly, and saw that the children had begun to leave the rear pews. He had

ten minutes to fill in. The people below could see only the front rows of the gallery, which in this

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church, built in the old style, ran on three sides. So Father Collins preached. It was the sermon he had prepared for the High Mass, but which he could not deliver. The beauty of it had been plain to Father Grady when he read it; but it was plainer to the enraptured congregation which sat listening to every syllable. Neither the Doctor nor Mr. O'Brien attempted to sleep. In fact there were no sleepers at all, for upright in the pews sat every man and woman, hanging on the preacher's words.

In the midst of his discourse Father Collins detected the smell of smoke and thought that all was lost. But he made another effort. His voice rose higher and his words thundered over the heads of the astonished people, who were so rapt that they could not even ask themselves what had wrought the miracle. If they smelled the smoke, they gave no sign, for a born orator, who had found himself, held them in the grip of his eloquence. Father Collins took another glance at the gallery. The front row would go in a moment. Above all, the people must not be distracted now. Something must be done to hold their attention when the noise of the moving of that front row would fall upon their ears. In two minutes all would be well. That two minutes were the greatest of the priest's life. Into them centered every bit of intensity, earnestness and enthusiasm he possessed. He rapidly skipped part of his sermon and came to the burst of appeal, with which he was to close. The people could see him tremble in every limb. His face was as white as his surplice. His eyes were wide open and shining as if he were deeply moved by his own pleadings. He quickly descended the steps of the altar and advanced to the railing. The congregation did not dare to take its eyes away from him. The noise of the departing children fell upon unheeding ears. The intensity of the man had been transferred to his listeners. A whispered 'all right' reached the priest from the lips of the Sacristan behind, and Father Collins stopped. His voice dropped back to the tone with which he began his discourse. It was a soft, musical voice, that people till now did not know he possessed.

"My friends," he said, "keep your seats for a moment. Those in the front pews will go out quietly now. Let one pew empty at a time. Do not crowd. There is no danger, at present, but a fire has broken out below, and we want to take every precaution for safety."

"Stop," he thundered, and his voice went up again. "You, who are leaving from the center of the church, remain in your seats. Do not start a rush. Do not worry about the children, they are all out. Look at the galleries. They are empty. The children were cool. Do not let the little ones shame you. Now, give the old and feeble a chance."

With voice and gesture, he directed the movement of the people, and then, the church emptied, he looked toward the vestry door. The Sacristan was there.

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"Hurry, Father," he called, tearing off his cassock. "The floor here may give way any moment. Father Grady has the Blessed Sacrament. Hurry!"

They were out before the floor fell and the flames burst into the big church, which, poor old relic of the days of wood, went down into the ashes of destruction.

Mr. O'Brien of 32 Chestnut street walked home with Dr. Reilly, but neither of them had much to say. Both paused at the corner where their ways parted.

Then Mr. O'Brien spoke: "What did you think of the sermon, Doc?"

"I think," said the doctor, deliberately, "that though it cost us the price of a new church, 'twas well worth it."

THE YANKEE TRAMP

They were old cronies, M. le Cure de St. Eustace and M. le Cure de *Ste. Agatha*, though the priestly calling seemed all they had in common. The first was small of stature, thin of face, looking like a mediaeval, though he was a modern, saint; the other tall, well filled out like an epicure, yet not even Bonhomme Careau, the nearest approach to a scoffer in the two parishes, ever went so far as to call the Cure of *Ste. Agatha* by such an undeserved name, since the good, fat priest had the glaring fault of stinginess which all the country knew but never mentioned. They loved him too much to mention his faults. He was good to the sick and faithful to their interests, though—"// *etait fort tendu, lui, mais bien gentil, tout de meme.*" Besides, the Cure of St. Eustace was *too* generous. Every beggar got a meal from him and some of them money, till he spoiled the whole tribe of them and they became so bold—well there was serious talk of protesting to the Cure of St. Eustace about his charities.

The garden of St. Eustace was the pleasantest place on earth for both the cronies after Vespers had been sung in their parishes on Sunday afternoons, and the three miles covered from the Presbytery of *Ste. Agatha* to the Presbytery of St. Eustace. On a fine day it was delightful to sit under the great trees and see the flowers and chat and smoke, with just the faint smell of the evening meal stealing out of Margot's kingdom. It was a standing rule that this meal was to be taken together on Sunday and the visit prolonged far into the night—until old Pierre came with the worn-looking buggy and carried his master off about half-past ten. "*Grand Dieu. Quelle dissipation!*" Only on this night did either one stay up after nine.

What experiences were told these Sunday nights! Big and authoritative were the words of M. le Cure de *Ste. Agatha*. Stern and unbending were his comments and the accounts of his week's doings. And his friend's? *Bien*, they were not much, but "they made him a little pleasure to narrate"—what he would tell of them.

This night they were talking of beggars, a new phase of the old question. They had only beggars in Quebec, mild old fellows mostly. A few pennies would suffice for them, and when they got old there were always the good Sisters of the Poor to care for them. There were no tramps.

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"This fellow was different, *mon ami*," the Cure de St. Eustace was saying, "he would almost bother you yourself with all your experience. He came from over the line—from the States, and he had a remarkable story."

"*Bien oui*, they all have," broke in his friend, "but I send them to Marie and she feeds them—nothing more. They can not trap me with any of their foolish tales. It is not charity to give to them. I am hard of heart about such things, and very sensible."

"Well, I will tell you about him. It will pass the time till dinner. I found the man seated on the gallery in front. He spoke only English. When I came up he arose and took off his cap, very politely for a Yankee too. But, God forgive me, I had no right to say that, for the Yankees are as the *bon Dieu* made them and they are too busy to be polite.

"'You are the priest?' he asked me.

"'Yes, Monsieur, I am.'

"'You speak English?'

"'Enough to understand. What is it?'

"'I am not a tramp, Father,'—he looked very weary and sad—'and it is not money; though I am very hungry. You will give me something? Thanks, but I want you to hear my story first. Yes, you can help—very much.'

"I gave him a seat and he dropped into it.

"'Father, do not be shocked if I tell you that I am just out of prison. I was discharged yesterday in New York and I lost no time in coming here. This is not my first visit. I was here ten years ago with my chum. We were burglars and we were running away after a big operation in New York. We had stolen \$8,000 in money and valuables, and we had it all with us. We wanted to rest here in this quiet village till the storm would blow over. Among the valuables was a strange ring. I had never seen anything like it and my chum wanted it for himself, but we were afraid and took it to one of your jewelers—right down the street to the left—Nadeau was his name—to have it altered a little and made safe to wear. That little jeweler suspected us. I saw it at once and we were alarmed. He informed the constable of the ring matter. We were watched and then we saw that it would be better to go. We feared that the New York police would learn of us, so we took the stuff out three miles in the country one dark night and buried it. I know the spot, for it is near the old school where the road turns for Sherbrooke. Then we went West, to Michigan. We broke into a store there and we were arrested, but New York heard of the capture and the Michigan authorities gave us up. We were tried and a lawyer defended us by the Judge's order. He got us off with ten years in Sing Sing. I have been there till yesterday, as I told you. My chum? Well, that brings me to it. Pardon me. I did not

intend to break down. He is dead. He died well. A priest converted him, and my chum repented of his life and begged me to change mine when I got out. I am going to do it, Father. I am, so help me God. I'll never forget his death. He called me and said: 'Bunky, that loot is worrying me. The priest says that it must be returned if the owner or his heirs can be found. If they can not it must be spent in works of charity. Promise me that you will go to St. Eustace and get it, Bunky, and give it back. Promise!'

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“Then he broke down, *mon ami*, and I fear that I cried just a little too. It was sad, for he was a great strong man.

“When he could, he looked up and continued: ‘Well, Father, I am here to do it. I want your help. May I have it?’

“I told him I would do what I could. He wanted me to take the money and give it to the owner. He would tell me his name. I was glad to aid the poor man who was so repentant.

“‘All I want is a pick and shovel and a reliable man to go with me to-night. I can find the place,’ he said.

“I offered to send the sexton with him and let him have the pick and shovel from the cemetery. I gave him food and thanked God as I watched him eat, that grace was working in his heart again.

“‘I will wait for the man at seven to-night, Father,’ he said when he was leaving. ‘Let him meet me with the horse and buggy just outside of the town. If there is danger I will not see him, and he can return. I will take the pick and shovel now, and bring the stuff to you in a valise by 10 o’clock. Wait up for me.’

“He left and the sexton went to the road at seven, but did not see him. At 10 o’clock I heard him coming. It was very dark and he knocked sharply and quickly, as if afraid. I opened the door and he thrust a valise into my hand. It was heavy.

“‘Here it is, Father. Keep it till morning when I will bring the key. The valise is locked. Give me something that I may buy a night’s lodging and I will come back at seven.’

“I gave him the first note in my purse and he hurried away.

“Now I fear, *mon ami*, that I never quite overcame my childish curiosity, for I felt a burning desire to see all that treasure, especially the strange ring. I must root out that fault before I die or my purgatory will be long. I went to the kitchen where I had a good chisel, and I am sorry to confess that I opened the valise just a very little to see the heap of precious things. There was an old cigar-box and something heavy rolled in cotton. I thrust the chisel down till I opened the box. There was no treasure in it at all, but just a lot of iron-shavings. I felt that I had been fooled and I broke the valise open. The heavy stuff rolled in the cotton was only a lot of old coupling-pins from the railroad. I was disgusted with this sinner, this thief. But it was droll—it was droll—and I could scarcely sleep with laughing at the whole farce. I know that was sinful. I should have cried. But he was clever, that Yankee tramp.”

[Illustration: “Mon Dieu! It was mine.”]

“And the valise? What did you do with it?” asked the hard-hearted Cure of *Ste. Agatha*, who must have felt sorry that the friend could be so easily duped. “What did you do with the valise?”

“I let it go. I knew that he had left it with me and I couldn’t understand why. It was so good—almost new. I felt that the sight of it would make me hard to the poor who really were deserving. I wanted to forget how foolish I was, so I gave it to the good Sisters at the Hospital, to use when they must travel to Sherbrooke.”

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The Cure of *Ste. Agatha* was agitated. He plainly wanted to speak but choked back twice. Then he rose and looked at his friend with a face as red as fire, and started toward the gate. He took two steps, came back, and spoke rapidly. "Do you think the Sisters will bring it back, the valise? *Mon Dieu!* It was mine."

Ten miles from St. Eustace and thirteen miles from *Ste. Agatha* a Yankee tramp was hurrying toward the parish of *Ste. Catherine*. He had the money for one pick and one shovel in his pocket keeping company with one note from the purse of the generous Cure of St. Eustace and one of a much larger denomination, from the wise but hard-hearted Cure of *Ste. Agatha*, who never gave to tramps.

And this is the lesson of the story as the Cure of St. Eustace saw it: that some gloomy and worried millionaires are lost to the States, to make a few irresponsible but happy rascals who live by their wits, and whose sins even are amusing. One must not blame them overmuch.

As to the Cure of *Ste. Agatha*. He has no opinions on the matter at all, for the Sisters gave him back his new valise.

HOW FATHER TOM CONNOLLY BEGAN TO BE A SAINT

If you knew Father Tom Connolly, you would like him, because—well, just because Father Tom Connolly was one of the kind whom everybody liked. He had curly black hair, over an open and smiling face; he was big, but not too big, and he looked the priest, the *soggarth aroon* kind, you know, so that you just felt that if you ever did get into difficulties, Father Tom Connolly would be the first man for you to talk it all over with. But Father Tom had a large parish, in a good-sized country town, to look after; and so, while you thought that you might monopolize all of his sympathy in your bit of possible trouble, he had hundreds whose troubles had already materialized, and was waiting for yours with a wealth of experience which would only make his smile deeper and his grasp heartier when the task of consoling you came to his door and heart.

Now, there lived in the same town as Father Tom another priest of quite a different make. He, too, had a Christian name. It was Peter; but no one ever called him Father *Peter*. Every one addressed him as Father *Ilwin*. Somehow this designation alone fitted him. It was not that this other priest was unkind—not at all—but it was just that in Father Tom's town he did not quite fit.

Father Ilwin had been sent by the Bishop to build a new church, and that on a slice of Father Tom's territory, which the Bishop lopped off to form a new parish. Father Ilwin was young. He had no rich brogue on his tongue to charm you into looking at his coat

in expectation of seeing his big heart burst out to welcome you. He was thoughtful-looking and shy, so he did not get on well and his new church building grew very slowly.

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I have given you the characters of my little story, but, for the life of me, I can not tell you which one is to be the hero and which the villain—but, let that go, for I am sure of one thing at least: this story has no villain. But it followed just as naturally as day follows night—for which figure of speech, my thanks to Mr. Shakespeare—that when Father Ilwin failed to do well, he grew gloomy and sad; and just as naturally—God help us—there was enough of human nature in Father Tom to say, “I told you so” to himself, and to have him pity Father Ilwin to others in that superior sort of way that cuts and stings more than a whip of scorpions. Then, when Father Tom spoke to some of his people of Father Ilwin’s poor success and said, “He meant well, good lad,” they all praised the soft, kind heart of Father Tom; but when Father Ilwin heard of this great kindness he just shut his lips tightly, and all the blood was chased from his set face to grip his heart in a spell of resentment. Why? Oh, human nature, you know! and human nature explains a lot of things which even story-writers have to give up. Of course, people *did* say that Father Ilwin was ungracious and unappreciative; yet, as I write, much as I like Father Tom, I have a tear in my eye for the lonely man who knew well that the only obstacle to his success was the *one* that people never *could* see, and that the *obstacle himself* was never *likely* to see.

But let us go on. Of all the things in this world that Father Tom believed in, it was that his “parish rights” were first and foremost. So he never touched foot in his neighbor’s parish, except to pay him a friendly visit, or to go to his righteous confession. He visited no homes out of his territory, though he had baptized pretty nearly every little curly-headed fairy in each. They were his no longer and that was enough. He wanted no visitor in his limits either, except on the same terms. So no one in Father Tom’s parish had helped much in building the church across the river. The people understood.

It had never occurred to Father Tom that his own purse—not *too* large, but large enough—might stand a neighborly assessment. No, he had “built his church by hard scraping, and that is how churches should be built.” Now, do not get a bad opinion of Father Tom on this account. He thought he was right, and perhaps he was. It is not for me to criticize Father Tom, whom every poor person in the town loved as a father; only I did feel sorry that poor Father Ilwin grew so thin and worn, and that his building work was stopped, and people did not seem to sympathize with him, at all, at all. Over in his parish there were open murmurs that “the people had built one church and should not be asked now to build another”; or “what was good enough for Father Tom was good enough for anyone”; or “the Bishop should have consulted *us* before he sent this young priest into Father Tom’s

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parish.” In the other part of the town, however, everything was quiet enough, and none would think of offending his pastor by showing any interest in Father Ilwin, financially or otherwise. Father Ilwin said nothing; but do you wonder that one day when a generous gift was announced from “the Rev. Thomas Connolly, our respected fellow citizen,” to help in the erection of a Soldier’s Monument for the town, Father Ilwin read it and went back into his room, where, on the table, were laid out the plans of his poor little church, and cried like a baby?

[Illustration: “Father Ilwin read it and went back into his room, where on the table were laid out the plans of his poor little church, and cried like a baby.”]

It happened that Father Tom rarely ever left his parish, which was again much to his credit with the people. “Sure, *he* never takes a vacation at all,” they said. But at last a call came that he could not refuse, and, having carefully made his plans to secure a monk from a monastery quite far away to take his place over Sunday, he left to see a sick brother from whom he had seldom heard, and who lived far in the Southwest. Perhaps it was significant, perhaps not—I do not know, and I do not judge—that Father Tom was particular to say in his letter to the monastery that, “as the weather is warm, the father who comes to take my place need only say a Low Mass and may omit the usual sermon.” It was known that Father Tom did not care for preachers from outside. He could preach a little himself, and he knew it.

It was a long and tiresome journey to the bedside of Father Tom’s dying brother, so when the big, good-natured priest stepped off the train at Charton station in Texas, he was worn out and weary. But he soon had to forget both. A dapper young man was waiting for him in a buggy. The young lad had a white necktie and wore a long coat of clerical cut. Father Tom passed the buggy, but was called back by its occupant.

“Are you not the Reverend Thomas Connolly?”

“I am,” said the priest in surprise.

“Then father is waiting for you. I am your nephew. Get in with me.”

Father Tom forgot his weariness in his stupefaction.

“You—you are a clergyman?” he stammered.

“Oh, yes! Baptist pastor over in the next village. Father was always a Romanist, but the rest of us, but one, are Christians.”

If you could only have seen Father Tom's face. No more was said; no more was needed. In a few minutes the buggy stopped before the Connolly farm home and Father Tom was with his brother. He lost no time.

"Patrick," said he, "is that young Baptist minister your son?"

"Yes, Tom, he is."

"Good Lord! Thank Him that mother died before she knew. 'Twill be no warm welcome she'll be giving ye on the other side."

"Perhaps not, Tom. I've thought little of these things, except as to how I might forget them, till now. Somehow, it doesn't seem quite right. But I did the best I could. I have one of the children to show her."

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"How did *one* stay?"

"She didn't *stay*. She came back to the Faith. She was converted by a priest who was down here for his health and who was stationed in this town for about a year. He went back North when he got better. I would not have sent even for you, Tom, only *she* made me."

Father Tom felt something grip his heart and he did not speak for a long minute. Then he took his brother's hand and said in his old boy language: "Paddy, lad, tell me all about it—how you fell away. Maybe there was something of an excuse for it."

"I thought there was," said the dying man, "but now all seems different. When I came here first, I was one of the few Catholic settlers, and I was true to my religion. I saw the other churches built, but never went into them, though they tried hard enough to get me, God knows. But I was fool enough to let a pretty face catch me. It was a priest from Houston who married us. She never interfered; and later a few more Catholics came. The children were all baptized and we got together to build a church. I gave the ground and all I had in the bank—one hundred and fifty dollars. We were only a few, but we got a thousand dollars in all. We could get no more, and money was bringing twelve per cent, so we couldn't borrow. We had to give it all back and wait. Without church or priest, the children went to the Sunday-schools and—I lost them. Then, I, somehow, seemed to drift until this priest came for his health. He got us few Catholics together and converted my best—my baby girl—Kathleen. She was named after mother, Tom. We could only raise eight hundred dollars this time, but the priest said: 'I'll go to my neighbors and ask help.' So he went over to Father Pastor and Father Lyons, but they refused to help at all. They have rich parishes, whose people would be glad to give something; but the priests said, 'No.' They thought helping was a mistake. It hurt our priest, for he could do nothing on eight hundred dollars. We needed only another five hundred. But that ended the struggle. I say my beads and wait alone. Murphy and Sullivan went away. Keane died. His family are all 'fallen away.' My boy went to a college his mother liked—and you saw him. The others—except Kathleen—are all Baptists. I suppose I have a heavy load to bear before the judgment seat, but Tom—Tom, you don't know the struggle it cost, and the pain of losing was greater than the pain of the fight."

A beautiful girl came into the room. The sick man reached out his hand which she took as she sat beside him.

"This is Kathleen, Tom. He's your uncle and a priest, my darling. She sits by me this way, Tom, and we say our beads together. I know it won't be long now, dearie, 'till you can go with your uncle where there is a church and a chance to profit by it."

Father Tom closed his brother's eyes two days later.

He left with Kathleen when the funeral was over. His nephew accompanied them to the train and said with unction:

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"Good-bye, brother, I shall pray for you," and Father Tom groaned down to his heart of hearts.

Father Ilwin was at the train when Father Tom and his niece arrived home, though quite by accident. Kathleen's eyes danced when she saw him and she rushed to shake hands. Father Tom said:

"Sure, I had no idea that you knew one another."

"Yes, indeed, we do," cried the child. "Why, uncle, it was Father *Peter* who converted me."

Father Tom heard, but did not say a word.

It was only three days later when Father Tom stood in the miserable little room that Father Ilwin called his library. On the table still reposed the plans of the new church, but no sound of hammer was heard outside. Father Tom had little to say, but it was to the point. He had profited by his three days at home to think things out. He had arrived at his conclusions, and they were remarkably practical ones.

"Ilwin, me lad, I don't think I've treated ye just as a priest and Christian should—but I thought I was right. I know now that I wasn't. Ilwin, we can build that church and we *will*. Here are a thousand dollars as a start to show that I mean it. There'll be a collection for you in St. Patrick's next Sunday. After that I intind going about with ye. I think I know where we can get some more."

Then and there Father Tom Connolly began to be a Saint.

THE UNBROKEN SEAL

The priest ran right into a mob of strikers as he turned the corner of the road leading from the bridge over the shallow, refuse-filled Mud Run, and touched foot to the one filthy, slimy street of the town. He was coming from the camp of the militia, where he had been called to administer the last Sacraments to a lieutenant, whom the strikers had shot down the night before.

Slevski was haranguing the mob and his eye caught that of the priest while he was in the midst of an impassioned period, but a look of hate alone showed that he had seen him. Only a few of the people in the rear of the crowd noticed the priest's presence at all. He was glad enough of that, for suspicion was in the air and he knew it. Right in his way was Calvalho, who had been one of his trustees and his very best friend when he first came to the parish. It looked now as if he had no longer a friend in all the mud-spattered, bare and coal-grimed town. Calvalho returned his salute with a curt nod. The priest caught a few words of Slevski's burning appeal to hatred and walked faster,

with that peculiar nervous feeling of danger behind him. He quickened his steps even more for it.

“Company—oppressors of the poor—traitors”; even these few words, which followed him, gave the priest the gist of the whole tirade.

The women were in the crowd or hanging about the edges of it. A crash of glass behind him made the priest turn for an instant, and he saw that Maria Allish had flung a stone through the bank window. She had a shawl quite filled with large stones. With the crash came a cheer from the crowd around Slevski, who could see the bank from their position in front of the livery stable.

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A soldier almost bumped into the priest, as he came running down the street, gun in hand, followed by half a dozen others. One of them saluted. "Bad business, Father," he said. "Will the lieutenant live?"

"I am afraid he will not," answered the priest.

"They will surely burn down the company's buildings," said the soldier. "God! There they go now." And the soldier hurried on.

Later the priest watched the red glow from his window. It reminded him of blood, and he shuddered.

His old housekeeper called him to his frugal supper.

"I can not go out much now," he said to her. "I am a Pole. What could a Pole do with these Huns who have no sympathy with him, or the Italians whose language he can not speak?"

He wondered if he were a coward. Why should he discuss this with his servant?

"Slevski," she said, "makes the people do what he wants. He cursed me on the street this morning."

"Yes," said the priest, "he speaks in curses. He has never tried to speak to God, so he has never learned any other language; and these men are his property now."

"There will be no one at Mass next Sunday," said the old housekeeper. "Even the women won't come. They think you are in league with the soldiers."

"Never mind, Judith," said the priest, "at heart they are good people, and this will pass away. The women fear God."

"They fear God sometimes," said Judith, "but now they fear Slevski always."

The priest said nothing in reply. He was here the patient Church which could wait and does not grow old.

After his meal, he again stood at the window to watch the red glow of the burning buildings. He heard shots, but he knew that it would be useless to interfere. He waited for some one to come and call him to the dying; for he feared people had been hurt, else why the shots?

A knock sounded on the door. He opened it, and a woman entered. The priest knew her well, by sight, and wondered, for she was Slevski's wife. She was not of these people by race, nor of his own. She was English-speaking and did not come to church.

Slevski had married her three years before in Pittsburgh. She looked frightened as he waited for her to speak.

"Tell me," she began very rapidly, is it true that no single word of a confession may ever be revealed by the priest?"

"It is true," he answered.

"Even if he were to die for it?" she urged.

"Even if he were to die."

The priest's eyes wore a puzzled expression, but she went on:

"May he even not betray it by an action?"

"Not even by an action."

"Even if he died for it?" Her voice was full of anxiety.

"Even then."

"I wish to confess," she said. "May I do it, here? I will kneel afterward, if necessary, but I can tell it better here—and I must do it quickly."

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"It will take only a minute if we go to the church," he answered. "It is irregular to hear your confession outside of the proper place, unless in case of illness."

"Then let us go," she said, "and hurry."

They entered the church, and she knelt on the penitent's side of the confessional. Later she told all that had happened.

"What troubles you?" asked the priest. "Have you been to confession of late?"

"Three years ago," and she shuddered, "I was to confession. It was before I married him, never since. Yes, yes, I ought to be known to you. Listen now, for there isn't very much time." He bent his head and said: "I am listening."

She went on without taking breath. "They are going to murder you. I heard it, for I was in the secret. I consented to summon you, but I could not. They charged that you were in the company's pay and working against the men. One of them will come to-night and ask you to go on a sick-call. They intend to shoot you at the bridge over Mud Run. I had to warn you to prepare. I could not see you killed without—without a prayer. It is too cruel. Do what you can for yourself. That's all I can say."

"It is very simple," said the priest. "I need not go."

"Then they will know that I told you," she answered breathlessly. Her eyes showed her fright.

"You are right," said the priest. "I fear that it would violate the Seal if I refused to go."

"Yes," she said, "and he would know at once that I had told, and he—he suspects me already. He may have followed me, for I refused to call you. If he knows I am here he will be sure I confessed to you. I am not ready to die—and he would kill me."

"Then do not trouble your mind about it any more. God will take care of me," said the priest. "Finish your confession."

In ten minutes she had left. The priest was alone with himself, and his duty. Through the open door of the church he saw Slevski—and he knew that the woman had been followed.

He sat for a long time where he was, staring straight ahead with wide open eyes, the lashes of which never once stirred. Then he went back to the house and mechanically, almost, picked up his breviary and finished his daily office. He laid the book down on the arm of his chair, went to his desk and wrote a few lines, sealed them in an envelope and left it addressed on the blotter. He was outwardly calm, but his face was gray as ashes. His eyes fell upon the crucifix above his desk and he gave way in an instant,

dropping on his knees before it. The prayer that came out of his white lips was hoarse and whispering:

“Oh, Crucified Lord, I can not, I can not do it. I am young. Have pity on me. I am not strong enough to be so like You.”

Then he began to doubt if the Seal would really be broken if he did not go. Perhaps Slevski had not suspected his wife at all—but had the priest not seen him outside the church?

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The sweat was over his face, and he walked to the door to get a breath of air. The priest knew there was no longer even a lingering doubt as to what he should do. He went back to the church, and, before the altar, awaited his call.

It was not long in coming. The old housekeeper appeared in half an hour to summon him.

“Kendis is in the house. He lives on the other side of the Run. It is for his wife, who is sick, that he comes. She is dying.”

The priest bowed and followed the old servant into the house, but Kendis had left.

The priest looked at his few books and lovingly touched some of his favorites. His reading chair was near. His eyes filled as he looked at it, with the familiar breviary on its wide arm. The crucified Christ gazed down from His cross at him and seemed to smile; but the priest’s eyes swam with tears, and a great sob burst from him. He opened the door, but lingered on the threshold. When he passed out on the street his walk was slow, his lips moving, as he went along with the step of a man very weary and bending beneath the weight of a Great Something.

The people did not know then that their one dark and muddy street was that night a Via Dolorosa; that along it a man who loved them dragged a heavy Cross for their sake; that it ended for him, as had another sorrowful way ended for his Master, in a cruel Calvary.

Slevski told the whole story before the trap of the gallows was sprung.

MAC OF THE ISLAND

When the “Boston Boat” drew near Charlottetown I could see Mac waving me a welcome to the “Island” from the very last inch of standing space upon the dock. When I grasped his hard and muscular hand fifteen minutes later, I knew that my old college chum had changed, only outwardly. True, the stamp of Prince Edward Island, which the natives call “the Island,” as if there were no other, was upon him; but that stamp really made Mac the man he was. The bright red clay was over his rough boots. Could any clay be redder? It, with his homespun clothes, made the Greek scholar look like a typical farmer.

We had dinner somewhere in the town before we left for the farm. It was a plain, honest dinner. I enjoyed it. Of course, there was meat; but the mealy potatoes and the fresh cod—oh, such potatoes and cod—were the best part of it. I then and there began to like the Island for more reasons than because it had produced Mac.

We drove out of town, across the beautiful river and away into the country, along red clay roads which were often lined with spruce, and always with grass cropped down to a lawnlike shortness by the sheep and kept bright green by the moisture.

“You must enjoy this immensely, you old hermit,” I said to Mac, as the buggy reached the top of a charming hill, overlooking a picture in which the bright green fields, the dark green spruce, the blue sky and the bluer waters were blended.

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"Yes, I do," replied Mac. "This is Tea Hill. You know I think if I were in Africa but wanted to write something about home, I could close my eyes, think of red and green slopes and blue waters and the smell of haymaking, and have the atmosphere in an instant. Just look at that," he pointed toward the water. "We call it Pownal Bay. Do you see how it winds in and out everywhere among the spruce and the fields. Then look off in the distance. That is Hillsboro Bay. You passed through it this morning. Do you see the little islands out there? One is called St. Peter's and the other is called Governor's. It is a funny thing, but every man, woman and child on the Island knows them by name, yet I could wager a farm that not one in a thousand has ever set foot upon them. But it is a grand scene, isn't it, Bruce?"

"Yes, yes," I replied. "It is a grand scene, Mac, and—" But Mac turned to salute a gentleman wearing a silk hat who was passing in a buggy.

"Good morning, Doctor," he called. The doctor bowed with what looked like gracious condescension.

Mac turned to me again. "What were you saying, Bruce? Oh, yes, that I must love it. Why, of course I do. Wasn't I born here? By the way, that chap who passed us is Franklin, Doctor Franklin. He is head of a college in Charlottetown. Prince of Wales they call it. It is a very important part of Island life."

"But I do not think, Mac," I suggested, "that he was quite as fraternal in his greeting as I might have expected him to be."

"Oh, he does not know me, except as a farmer," said Mac quickly. "In fact, nobody around here does. You see, Bruce, I am just plain Alec McKinney, who went to Boston when a young fellow—you know that Boston, Bruce, is another name for the whole United States, on this Island—and who came back a fizzle and a failure to work his father's farm. But say, Bruce," and Mac turned to me very quickly, "what brought you here, anyhow? I wager there is a reason for the visit. Now, own up." He stopped the buggy right in the middle of the road and looked me in the face. "Surely," he went on, "you would not have thought of coming to the Island just to gossip about old times."

"Well, perhaps I would, Mac. In fact, I am glad I came," I answered, "but you guess well, for this time I was sent."

Mac interrupted me with a ring of joy in his voice: "You were sent? Good! I am glad. Now, out with it."

"Well, I am glad if it pleases you, Mac, for it looks as if I had a chance to get you."

"Get me?" Mac grew grave again.

“Yes, the old place wants you—for Greek, Mac. We need you badly. Old Chalmers is dead. His place is vacant. No one can fill it better than the best Greek scholar the college ever produced. Mac, you must come, and I must bring you home. You know the old college is home for you. You can’t fool me, Mac. You love it better even than this.” And I waved my hand toward the bay.

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Mac's face showed emotion. I expected it would. I had prepared for the interview, and I knew Mac. I thought I had won; but he changed the conversation abruptly.

"Look over there, Bruce," and he pointed with his whip toward the distance. "Away off on the other side of the Island is where Schurman of Cornell was born. There are lots of such men who come from around here. Down in that village is the birthplace of your Secretary of the Interior. These people, my people, worship God first and learning next. They are prouder of producing such men than they are of the Island itself, and to use student language, that is 'going some.'"

"Yes, I suppose you are right, Mac," I answered, not quite seeing why he had thrown me off, "but they do not seem to know *you*."

"No," he answered quickly. "they do not, and I do not want them to. It would frighten them off. It would require explanations. What difference if I have six letters after my name? To these people, worshipping what I know rather than what I am, I would not be Alec any more."

"But Mac, you will come back now, won't you! The college wants you; you mustn't refuse."

There was still more emotion in Mac's voice, when he answered: "Bruce, old man, don't tempt me. You can not know, and the faculty can not know. You say I ought to love all this and I do; but not with the love I have for the old college, though I was born here. Can you imagine that old Roman general, whom they took away from his plow to lead an army, refusing the offer but keeping the memory of it bright in his heart ever after? That is my case now, old man. There is nothing in this world I would rather have had than your message, but I must refuse the offer."

"Now Mac," I urged, "be reasonable. There is nothing here for you. Scenery won't make up."

"Don't I know it?" and Mac stopped the buggy again. "Don't I know it? But there is something bigger to me here than the love of the things God made me to do—and he surely made me for Greek, Bruce. Do not think I am foolish or headstrong, I long for my work. But Bruce, if you can not have two things that you love, all you can do is to give up one and go on loving the other, without having it. That's my fix, Bruce."

"Yes, Mac, but are you sure you realize what it means to you?" I began urging, because I knew that I would soon have to play my trump card. "Here you are, a grayhead at thirty-five, without a thing in life but that farm, and you—heavens, Mac, don't you know that you are one of the greatest Greek scholars in the world? Don't you think you owe the world something? What are you giving? Nothing! You have suppressed even the knowledge of what you are from the people around you. You get a curt nod from the

head of a little college. These people call you Alec, when the whole world wants to call you Master. You are doing work that any farm hand could do, when you ought to be doing work that no one can do as well as yourself. Is this a square deal for other people, Mac? Were you not given obligations as well as gifts?"

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"Yes, Bruce." Mac said it sadly. "There's the rub. I was given obligations as well as gifts, and I am taking you home with me now, instead of threshing this out in the hotel at Charlottetown, because I want you and you alone to realize that I am not just a stubborn Islander. And there is home."

He pointed to a cottage in the field. The cottage was back from the road nearly a quarter of a mile. Mac opened the gate, led the horse through it, closed it again and climbed back into the buggy beside me. There were tears in his brown eyes.

"Is every one well?" said Mac hesitatingly. "Is everybody well—I mean of the people I knew best back there?" he asked. I knew what he meant.

"Yes, Mac, *she* is well," I said, "and I know she is waiting."

I had played my "trump card," but Mac was silent.

The farm was typical of the Island. The kitchen door opened directly on the farmyard, and around it, at the moment, were gathered turkeys, ducks, geese and chickens. Mac brought me to a little gate in the flower-garden fence, and, passing through it, we walked along the pathway before the house, so that I could enter through the front door and be received in the "front room." Island opposition to affectation or "putting on," as the people say, forbade calling this "front room" a parlor. No one would think of doing such a thing, unless he was already well along the way to "aristocracy." One dare not violate the unwritten Island law to keep natural and plain.

I noticed that when Mac spoke to me he used the cultured accents of the old college; but before others he spoke as the Islanders spoke—good English, better English than that of the farmers I knew, but flat—the extremity of plainness. I could not analyze that Island brogue. It sounded like a mixture of Irish and Scotch, unpleasant only because unsoftened. But you could scarcely call it brogue. It struck me as a sort of protest against affectation; as the Islander's way of explaining, without putting it in the sense of the words, that he does not want to be taken at a false valuation. The Island brogue is a notice that the user of it meets you man to man. So it reflected Mac, and it reflected his people, unspoiled, unvarnished, true as steel, full of rigid honesty; but undemonstrative, with the wells of affection hidden, yet full to the top, of pure, bright, limpid water.

The "front room" had a hand-woven carpet on the floor, made of a material called "drugget." A few old prints, in glaring colors, were on the walls. There was a Sacred Heart and an odd-looking picture of the dead Christ resting in a tomb, with an altar above and candles all around it. It was a strange religious conceit. On another wall was a coffin plate, surrounded with waxed flowers and framed, with a little photograph of a young man in the center of the flowers. The chairs were plain enough, but covered with a coarse hand-made lace. It was not Mac's kind of a room, at all. It made me

shudder and wonder how the scholar who loved his old book-lined college den and knew the old masters, could even live near to it.

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Mac came in very soon, leading an old lady, who walked with a cane. She was bent and wrinkled with age. I could see that she was blind. She had a strange-looking old shawl, the like of which I had only a vague recollection of seeing as a boy, about her shoulders; and on her head was a black cap with white ruching around her face.

"My mother, Bruce," he said, very simply.

As I took the old lady's hand, he said to her: "This is my old friend, Professor Bruce, mother. He has come all the way from New York to see me. I'll leave you together while I go to see sister. Sister has been bedridden for years, Bruce."

The old lady was too much embarrassed to speak. Mac smiled at me as he led her to a chair and said: "Bruce does not look like a professor, mother. He just looks like me."

I could see all the Island respect for learning in the poor old lady's deference. Mac left us, and his mother asked if I would not have some tea. I refused the tea, giving as excuse that it was so close to the hour of the evening meal.

"So, you knew my son at college?" said the mother.

"I knew him well, Mrs. McKinney. He was my dearest friend."

The old lady began to cry softly.

"I am so sorry," she said, "that he failed in his examinations, and yet, I ought to be glad, I suppose, for it is a comfort to have him. Ellie is a cripple and without Alec what would we do? Of course, if he hadn't failed, I couldn't hope to keep him, so it is better, perhaps, as it is. But he was such a smart boy and so anxious to get on. It was a great disappointment to him; and then, of course, none of us liked to have the neighbors know that the boy was not cut out for something better than a farmer. But you must have liked him, when you came all the way from New York to see him."

I began to understand.

That night I thought it all out in my little room, with the flies buzzing around me and the four big posts standing guard over a feather bed, into which I sank and disappeared. I was prepared to face Mac in the morning.

He had already done a good day's work in the fields, before I was up for breakfast, so we went into the garden to thresh it out.

"Mac," I said severely, "did you tell your mother and sister and the people around here that you had failed in your examinations?"

"Well, Bruce," he said haltingly, "I did not exactly tell them that, but I let them think it."

“Good Lord!” I thought, “the man who easily led the whole college.” But aloud: “Did you tell them you had no career open to you in New York?”

“Well, Bruce, I had to let them think that, too.”

“And you did not tell them, Mac, of the traveling scholarship you won, or the offers that Yale made you?”

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“Oh, what was the use, Bruce?” said Mac desperately. “I know it was wrong, but it was the only way I saw. Look here. When I got back home, with all these letters after my name and that traveling scholarship to my credit, I found sister as I told you she was—you’ll see her yourself this morning, poor girl—and mother blind. Brother, the best brother that ever lived—it is his picture they have in that hideous frame in the front room—died two months before I graduated. Bruce, there was no one but me. If I had told the truth, they would not have let me stay. They would have starved first. Why, Bruce, sister never wore a decent dress or a decent hat, and mother never had that thing that every old lady on the Island prizes, a silk dress, just because she saved the money for me. I told you that these people worship learning after God.” He put his hand to his eyes. “Bruce, I am lonely. I have grown out of the ways of my people. But you wouldn’t ask me to grow out of a sense of my duty too?”

“No, I don’t want you to come with me, Mac,” I said. “I am going back alone. When you are free, the college is waiting. She can be as generous as her son, and, I hope, as patient.”

Mac drove me back over Tea Hill and looked with me again from its summit over the waters of Pownal Bay. I understood now its appeal to him. The waters, beautiful as they were, were barriers to his Promised Land. Would Tea Hill, plain little eminence, be to Mac a new Mount Nebo, from which he should gaze longingly, but never leave?

Plain Mac of the Island, farmer with hard hands, scholar with a great mind, son and brother with heart of purest gold! I could not see you through the mist of my tears as the boat carried me from this your Island of the good and true amongst God’s children, but I could think only of you as she passed the lighthouse, and the two tiny islands that every one knows but no one visits, and moved down the Strait of Northumberland toward the world that is yours by right of your genius, that wants you and is denied. And I did not ask God to bless you, Mac, though my heart was full of prayer, for I knew, oh, so well, that already had He given you treasures beyond a selfish world’s ken to value or to understand.