Stoddart's Resurrection

(By Jean Tracy Jones.)

The red light on the driftwood fell full on Marston's face quickly. I thought, a strange, weird expression Gary lay with his head on a log looking out to where, in the darkness the waves could be seen falling in long, luminous phosphorescent lines on the beach. Erkhart was lying with his face hidden on his folded arms. I was watching Marston trying to read his thoughts.

Not a word had been spoken for quite twenty minutes. I think we all had a touch of "blues." It was our last night in the glorious time campaigning in the woods and on the beach. The thought of going back to San Francisco and civilization was unpleasant.

For ten minutes I had been wishing Marston to speak, and at last he opened his mouth to say as though uttering his thought aloud: "The worst thing about death is the loneliness and the silence. If one could come back and see one's friends occasionally, it wouldn't be so bad."

"I don't agree with you," said Erkhart, looking up. "The most awful thing in the world is to come back from the grave."

"You speak as though it had happened," said Marston.

"It has—in a way. I know a man who came back after his friends had mourned him as dead for two years."

"Tell us the yarn," said Gary, turning his eyes for a moment from their dreamy contemplation of the Pacific.

"I met him two years ago on an Australian gold field, about the last place one would have expected to find such a man. He was one of those scribbling fellows, never happy without paper and pencil or pen. He told me he had come to the gold fields in hopes of making enough money to enable him to devote all his time to writing, instead of being obliged to gain a livelihood at some occupation for which he was not fitted.

"He had no luck gold digging. He was lazy, the other men said. The truth was he couldn't keep from his scribbling. I liked him. We took a claim together. He used to work fiercely for an hour or two, then fling down his tools, and then rush away to the book he was writing. I didn't mind, I was willing to work for both. At last he finished the book and read it to me. I'm no judge of such things, but I thought it was grand.

"Just at that time a rich American, who had been Stoddard's intimate friend at college, came to the field in search of investments. Our claim had worked out, and we were about to start under the guidance of some blacks, for a place in the interior no white man knew of, where the blacks assured us there was plenty of gold.

"Before leaving, Stoddard gave the manuscript of 'Chiquita' into the charge of his friend, asking him, in case of the author's death, to publish the book and give the proceeds, all very, to his young sister and only relative, who lived in Detroit. Hilton undertook the trust, and Stoddard started off in high spirits, hoping the return with a fortune, and feeling certain that, whatever might happen to him, his book's and his sister's futures were secure.

"Carcara, the place to which the blacks took Stoddard and myself, was much further inland than we had supposed, and we suffered untold hardships from heat and thirst before we got there.

"We were rewarded by finding plenty of gold. When we had collected sufficient we wished to go back, but the blacks would not allow us to leave. It was a good hunting ground there was abundance of water, and they had no wish to be driven away, as they would be if more whites came.

"Back against our will, we were obliged to stay. It was worse for Stoddard than for me, for his scribbling fits used to come over him, and he would go nearly mad for want of paper. At last he fashioned a sort of notebook from the bark of gum trees, and on the leaves of this he used to dot down his [illegible]

"When we had been at Carcara about two years, the field was discovered by some prospectors. They were more surprised to find us than the gold; we had been away so long that all those who knew us thought us dead. Two skeletons, supposed to be ours, had been found in the bush a year before.

"Then there was a rush to Carcara. Stoddard and I disposed of our claims, made our way to Sydney, sold our gold and took passage on the Alameda, which was just starting for San Francisco.

"Never have I seen one so happy as Stoddard was on that voyage. He was full of hopes and plans for the future. With the interest of his sixty thousand dollars he would be able to make a comfortable home for the little sister, and devote his time to writing, free from all care.

"On the way, Stoddard bought a copy of 'Chiquita.' He was not surprised to find that Hilton had published the book. Of course he had trusted and believed the word of our friend, and hastened to fulfill his promise. 'Chiquita' was published anonymously, but that had been Stoddard's wish. He wanted the merit of the work to be straightened, but for personal fame he had no desire, and the [illegible] pleased him greatly. All should work for art alone, he used to say.

"Stoddard did not write or telegraph. He looked forward to enjoying his sister's and friend's surprise and pleasure when they should find him living.

"We stopped over in Chicago to enable Stoddard to see and thank his friend, Hilton.

"When he came back from his visit he looked ten years older, all his brightness was gone. I asked no questions, and after awhile he spoke.

"'Hilton is the author of "Chiquita,"' he said.

"'Hilton!' I cried. 'Why I saw you write the book myself.'

"'You must forget that. It is his book.'

"'You don't mean—'

"'It's this way,' he interrupted. 'I may as well speak plainly. The book was a great success. It got about that Hilton had written it, he denied the authorship repeatedly. No one believed him, and gradually he let it be thought—'

"'That it was his.' I completed the sentence. 'Already rich, he wished to be thought clever. It's not always safe to defraud the dead.'

"'Don't be hard on him. What he did was not premeditated.'"

Here Erkhart paused a moment. Telling the story of his friend's resurrection seemed to have affected him strangely.

"I wouldn't have been so lenient," Gray remarked. "I'd have shown Hilton to the world in his true colors."

"Stoddard wasn't that sort of man. He felt no resentment against Hilton. The thing that hurt him was not that he had lost his book, but that his friend, whom he had admired and trusted, had acted so basely. To comfort him was impossible, but still I tried."

"'Never mind, old man, you'll write a better book some day,' was what I said, 'and there's always the little sister.'"

"'The "little sister,"' he said, with a forced laugh, 'thinks Hilton wrote "Chiquita."'"

"Then you have seen Miss Stoddard?" I exclaimed. "She is in Chicago? Anyway, to undeceive her will be a simple matter."

"'I shall never undeceive her,' he answered, 'she is Hilton's wife.'"

* * * * * * *

Before any of us had time to comment on his story, Erkhart sprang up and strode away in the darkness toward the sea.

After a while Marston said: "Did Erkhart ever write anything?"

"I can't say. I know very little about him; he is a stranger in the city."

His unspoken thought was as clear to me as though it had been uttered, and his thoughts was also mine.

"Anyway it was awfully hard lines," Gary said.

Then there was silence.—Rosary Magazine.

Chats With Young Men

WHERE TEMPERANCE IS ENFORCED.

A writer in Harper's Weekly says that the railroad force of our country has become stronger in its example and power for good than all the temperance organizations.

"The discipline of the railroad employes of the country is probably stricter and better enforced than in any other line of work. A number of years ago temperance was not strictly enforced on trainmen, but the engineers were compelled to report for business in a perfectly sober condition. There were some lax rules in regard to the trainmen, and it was not uncommon to see many of them drinking at the public houses along the route when their train was waiting for orders. But to-day not only temperance, but almost teetotalism, is enforced on our leading railroads, especially among engineers, firemen, switchmen and train-dispatchers and conductors. The managers of the railroads found that many of the accidents were due to drink among the employes, and, after considering the problem for a few years, the man who could not get along without drinking was gradually forced from the ranks of the railroad employes. To-day these workmen represent the largest and strongest army of upright, sober, industrious men in the world."

This writer says that dismissal for drinking is the worst possible thing that could happen to a railroad man in any position. "If he applies to another road he must furnish reference or tell where he was last employed. His record is then looked up, and each road furnishes another with the correct data required. If the dismissal has been for drinking, the applicant is very naturally turned down. Yet allowances are made for human weakness, and if an otherwise good employe falls once, unless he is an engineer or train-dispatcher, he may receive a reprimand and warning. He is then placed on trial, and if he does not repeat his offense he may be retained indefinitely. Indeed, many men have been reformed from drink in this very way. Realizing that their positions depended upon their sobriety, they have steadily refused to touch liquor at all. In this effort to reform they are mightily helped by their associates. These are all railroad men who are placed in the same position; they must live a sober life. Consequently the weak man in the number is encouraged rather than tempted, and his battle is rendered much easier."

THE REPRESENTATIVE CATHOLIC

(Chicago New World.)

Lent has come round again, and the business men and others who eat down town, who do not want people to notice that they are observing Lent, and yet who wish to observe it, are having a hard time. It is curious the extent to which this false shame is carried. The boy of fifteen or sixteen tries to hide his prayer book when he meets other boys on his way to church, and even the man feels queer, as he passes some old friends, if he is carrying anything which shows that he, too, is going to church. He may be a good enough man in his way, but he is hardly a representative Catholic man. The representative Catholic man is not the man with a great deal of money, not the man with fine clothes and a fine house. He may indeed happen to have these things, but to be a representative Catholic he must have more. Above all, he must not be ashamed of the fact that he is a Catholic, and he must not be afraid to do what his Church tells him to do. In other words, he must do what his instructed conscience tells him is the right thing to do. That is what is needed—the consciousness of doing what is right, and the man who is never ashamed to do that may be considered in every way as a good and representative Catholic.

AFRAID TO WORK

Too many young men of our faith need to be reminded of the necessity and the dignity of honest labor. There is not a Catholic parish in the country, we dare say, which does not contain some young men who are afraid to work, and who bring odium upon their parents and upon the Church by their lazy, shiftless mode of living. That it may meet the eyes of some of these shirkers we take pleasure in quoting from Success.

"One thing that keeps young men down is their fear of work. They aim to find genteel occupations, so they can dress well and not soil their clothes, and handle things with the tips of their fingers. They do not like to get their shoulders under the wheel and they prefer to give orders to others or figure as masters and let some one else do the drudgery. There is no doubt that indolence and laziness are the chief obstacles to success.

"When we see a boy, who has just secured a position, take hold of everything with both hands and 'jump right into his work' as if he meant to succeed, we have confidence that he will prosper. But if he stands around and asks questions when told to do anything; if he tells you that this or that belongs to some other boy to do, for it is not his work; if he does not try to carry out his orders in the correct way; if he wants a thousand explanation when asked to run an errand and makes his employer think that he could have done the whole thing himself — one feels like discharging such a boy on the spot, for he is convinced that he was not cut out for success. The boy will be cursed with mediocrity or will be a failure. There is no place in this country for the lazy man. He will be pushed to the wall."

SECRETS OF RIGHT LIVING.

One of the secrets of right living is letting that go which absorbs our energies and retards our progress. We should let out unfortunate past experience drop into the world of oblivion. We should never recall a disagreeable memory or mistake, unless it be to arm ourselves against falling into further errors. If the past torments and haunts you, cut it off sharply as if with a knife. Do not allow its shadow to darken your present or rob your future of its possibilities, but do not morbidly brood over them.

Why should you suffer your mind to be clouded with fear or anxiety? Why let doubt or worry destroy all your happiness? Why allow them, like ghosts, to glide through your mind unbidden, day after day, year after year, when you have the power to expel them, to expurge them as if they had never existed? In fact they do not exist. They are not realities; they are but the delusions of an unhealthy imagination. Only the good is true; only that which is healthy and helpful exists in ultimate reality.

Those things which mock our success, which fill our lives with terror, pain and mortification, which chill our blood with fear and crush our happiness, have no tangible existence. Analyze the causes of your unhappiness for a single day and you will find that they were anxiety, doubt, fear that something might happen, expectation of disaster that never came. These are not realities, but are merely the ghosts conjured up by a morbid mental condition. If we hold ourselves receptive to the influences of the All-Creative Mind that guides the universe, if we open our minds to the eternal verity that all things are ordained for good and that evil has no place in the universal plan, we can learn to rise above our paralyzing fear and doubts as a child rises into the consciousness of the unreality of ghosts which once seemed so real to him. New Year resolutions have been easily made and easily broken ever since the dawn of civilization. Every new year seems brighter and more hopeful than the last, and we are ever ready to give our lives a new trial and shake off bad habits. The trouble lies in not being able to keep the new, good resolutions which we make. We need to be more persistent in doing right, living right and working right.—O. S. Marden in January Success.

IRISH LANDLORDISM THROUGH AMERICAN EYES

William J. Balfe, of New York, writes to The Sun, of that city, telling what Irish landlordism really is. "I was much surprised," he wrote, "to see in your issue of Sunday last an incidental reference to Irish landlordism as 'a civilizing force.' The expression is doubtless Mr. T. W. Russell's, but your use of it without comment will be understood as at least a tacit admission of its truth, which I cannot believe was intended by The Sun.

"The most superficial student of Irish history could not accept the statement as truth. The landlord system imposed upon Ireland by England and the garrison planted there to maintain that iniquitous institution have brought Ireland to the verge of ruin, as Mr. Russell will admit, and it would be strange if civilization progressed where men decay.

"But it is not on that phase of the question I desire to speak. I ask any student of Irish history to point out when, how, and where the landlords of Ireland as a class, or any appreciable number of them, contributed to the educational, intellectual or moral interests of the Irish people? I am not speaking of the Normans, the majority of whom were assimilated by the Irish mass, and became Irish in speech and mind, but of the Wentworth and Cromwellian freebooters, with whom modern landlordism really began. The Irish chieftains were notoriously patrons of education and culture, not only when Ireland was the university of Western Europe, but down to the close of the Williamite wars, as were the Irishized Norman nobles, and were themselves cultured gentlemen, as we learn from the careers at European courts of Sarsfields's officers and other refugees of later periods. Irish civilization broken from the long wars was then crushed and English landlord civilization began in earnest. From that time to a comparatively short time ago the intellect of Ireland, as well as her political rights, was trodden down. Not only was no effort made by the new "aristocracy" on behalf of the education, literature, art or music, but these things, previously fostered in the country, were ruthlessly repressed. The landlord garrison made the laws and brutally carried them out. The people were Catholics, but no Catholic child might learn, no Catholic teacher might teach. Catholic students might not even go to the Continent to study under pain of death. I am well aware of the Royal Free Schools, the Parish Schools, the Erasmus Smith Schools, etc., founded at different times, the conditions of entry to which were grossly insulting to the religion and nationality of the people and which were consequently avoided. Every one knows the story of the 'hedge schools' clandestinely conducted by the people with scarecrows on watch lest the crime of education should be detected and punished by the 'civilising force.' These schools were not legalised until 1826, and even then under the ironical name of 'National Schools' the English curricula introduced sought to undermine the religion and nationality of the pupils. At the present day these schools contain much that is objectionable to self-respecting Irishmen.

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