

DECEMBER 30, 1916

O'Sullivan, the blue-eyed pet of the whole parish, was already on the high seas. Tom Farrelly had said that. The father grumbled at the lad's defiance, struck him with his clenched fist from off his chair—aye, that very self-same chair—and bade him never set foot in his father's house again. The young fellow had risen, eyes flashing and fingers twitching, and with a look of reproach, went out at the door for ever. Ah, but that look of reproach was still confronting old John Farrelly in his waking hours and dreaming, and was yet searing and scorching his troubled soul after the lapse of twenty anguished years!

From that hour the youth had never been seen or heard of. It was more or less taken for granted that he was dead. The six brothers, with rare unanimity, declared he must no longer be in the land of the living—ende the prospective heir to a splendid inheritance would be, in their opinion, have passed on to another way or the other. Old John believed him still alive, but grieved that his favorite's wounded pride had not been healed after twenty long and lengthening years.

At this point there was a knock at the kitchen door, and the owner of the house bade whoever was there to enter. The door opened, and two men entered. They were apparently of the farming class, one of a splendid physique, and the other a thin, nervous-looking person. They strolled up leisurely, each with his hands under his coat-tails, towards the hearth, as if perfectly accustomed to the place. The old man glanced at them when they came in, recognized them at once, turned his face inward again, and kept silent. The men, with a quick look at him and at the empty chair, stood before the fire.

"Well, father, how's the health?" queried the elder man gruffly. He was, by the way, the senior member of the whole family, and, owing to this circumstance, was regarded by the others as something of a genius. "Middlin'—I mane, no cause for complaint!" was the surly answer of the aged parent, who never once glanced in the speaker's direction. The other son stared sheepishly around the kitchen.

"Tis the square day you're sittin' all lone by the fire, without another soul in the house, but yerself, an' you a man that has six homes, along with yer own, to spend Christmas in!" went on the eldest in his uncouth but kindly tone. "Yer other sons and their families are all below in the village, waitin' to come up to see you. An' 'tis anxious all of us are that you be with ourselves, our wives an' our children at Christmas, an' not be wearin' yer heart out all alone there on the hearth!"

"That's proper talk!" broke in his brother, whose part in the proceedings seemed to be solely to corroborate a little touched at this, but his manner of speaking showed no change nor did his head move in the slightest. If anything, the withered face was firmer and the voice more brusque.

"Where I spend my Christmas is my own business, not makin' any man a short answer!" he replied determinedly. "This is my own home, an' a man's own home is the proper place for him in the holy season. An' here in this corner I intend to remain—the law o' the land itself isn't strong enough to put me out of it!"

A noisy clattering of horses' hoofs, shouting and laughter of men and eager cries of children, were heard from the gate outside, while old John Farrelly was speaking. Four heavily-laden sidcars stopped on the road, and then the patter of young feet was audible.

"Here's all yer relations comin' to see you!" observed the oldest son, going forward to the door and throwing it wide open.

In a few minutes the big kitchen was filled with his relatives, and it took nearly every seat in the house to accommodate them. The four sons who had just arrived were the same stolid, dull-faced fellows as the former ones. Their wives were of good nature and motherly appearance. The children were lusty, rosy, happy youngsters—every one. A sturdy little chap was about to climb the chair opposite his venerable grandfather, but the mother checked him in the nick of time.

As the male population of the assembly were not naturally garrulous, the females did most of the talking. The children soon got to see that their grandfather was not in a playing humor, so they got to frolic among themselves. The women in a body did their best to convince the old man that he should spend his Christmas with some one of them; but when any one house was about to be particularly honored, each eloquently forwarded her own claim for the honor of according him hospitality. The sons in their own rough way besought him to leave the old spot for just a day or two. But their combined arguments no more affected old John's decision to remain where he was than the addition of a pail of water affects the vastness of all the seas.

The eldest son lifted up his hand, and all became silent at the injunction. Then the man spoke out in his own blunt manner: "There's no use in our talkin' as we are," said he, with a shrug of his shoulders. "My father is struck on havin' his own way, an' it's the best thing to let him have it. We are all thyrin' to do the proper thing by him, an' he won't have us do it. Let him spend his Christmas

according to his own fashion. He wants to be sittin' there all alone, waitin' for somebody that's most likely in his grave, or else—"

"What proof have ye of that, Mike Farrelly?" interrupted the old man fiercely, rising from his seat and confronting the whole company. "Who says my dear boy is dead who says it again? The Lord has kept him in my heart this twenty year an' He does nothin' without a purpose." The passion of his utterance fatigued him, and he sank back into his chair with a deep sigh.

Five minutes later the kitchen was empty save for its aged owner, the others withdrawing with many adverse comments on the folly and stubbornness of old age.

It was eventide, and it was growing dark. Old John, with the customary prayer in honor of the little event, lit the Christmas candle. He piled turf on the fire and resumed his melancholy vigil.

Outside, the naked trees about the homestead were rustling drearily, and glinting ice bound up the amber-colored pools. The pale face of the young moon was shining on the singing river, and the heather-gowned hills were purpled in the soft, cold gloaming. The sea showed green and white through the curling billows, and glorious, even segments of advancing waters broke upon the shore to herald the changing tide. And a baby Christmas wind grew strong with the passing of the seconds and swept over wave and mount and valley with careering rushes, as if to sweep all nature's decks for action with the elements.

The wind, too, stirred up the dead leaves of the old man's memory and scattered them over the long years of his existence. And it seemed as if each dried leaf found its way again to the tree of its origin, on its natal branch, resumed his career emotionless, without event; and there were in it no trees, no hedges, no gaps to mar the wide monotony. His marriage had been a something new and uncommon, but withal a normal incident. The coming of his children one by one was a happy thing, but every other man had similar fortune. His wife's death was a dull, heavy blow, but it fell upon him at a time when he was best equipped to meet it. But the driving away, the casting out of his fresh-faced, rosy-featured son, his youngest son—was, after all, the one dread circumstance that rotted the sap, that made the oak wither and bow down, though proof against the whirlwind and the thunderbolt.

Only now he felt to the full what an enormous part one loved being may play in the drama of another's life. What were health—even radiant life abounding health—and the solid joys of prosperity when the throne of his heart was empty and its right-occupant cut off from his existence? He was glad to hear the wind trumpeting and fanfaring like that. Somehow or other, it bade him take courage and be strong. Ho, what noble a blast it gave just now along the mountain road! Yes, he would go out, this sacred Christmas night, and hearken to the grand, multitudinous music of the wind.

Each step of the way was familiar to him, and he soon found a sheltered spot, where it was not cold, and where he could listen to the roaring of the gale. The village was in a hollow, but, in any case, the village was too insignificant for the wind tonight. It tore over the sea, and the startled waters fumed and foamed under the attack, and sought their revenge from the battered shore-line. Yonder were the hills. Then alone the wind had never conquered nor subdued. So for hours it sent thunderous volleys and howling shells upon their suffering, and through their echoing defiles, and all night long kept up its vain bombardment of the mountains. It was becoming cold, and he shivered as he passed through the gate. The wind forced him to keep down his head as he went up the gravelled path. Suddenly an unexpected light shone on the ground before him. The kitchen door, which he had carefully shut after him when going out, was wide open.

He reached the threshold and entered cautiously. The fire was blazing brightly, but the remainder of the kitchen was in deep shadow. Nobody was visible. He hobbled to his seat and sat down. Then he—

Great God, what was that? The old man, staring in front of him with burning eyes, uttered a loud cry from the very pit of his mourning soul. It was not a cry of fear—by heaven, no! He stared again—and yet again, no! There was no doubt of it! The graceful figure, the roguish eyes, the merry smile, the roguish eyes, proved beyond year or may that the vacant chair at last had found its rightful occupant!

Then the blessed, soothing tears coursed down the withered cheeks furrowed by sorrow, channelled by age. Old John Farrelly bent towards the smiling, boyish face opposite him, and dared place his hand upon the knees. God, they were warm knees, pulsing with hot blood!

"Am I dead—or dreamin'?" he queried softly, breathlessly. "Neither of the two, grandfather!" was the answer from the chair in a pleasant voice, all music. The occupant of the once vacant chair put two strong young arms round the venerable man and drew him within the circle of the light.

O merciful Child of Bethlehem, that boy's voice, face, smile and form were Tom Farrelly's. The youth placed him gently back on his seat, and the aged man now knew all!

"Dad and mother are in the village, and will be up here very shortly," said the boy. "We landed from Queenstown only an hour ago, and dad sent me up to break the news. Yes my mother's name is Kathleen O'Sullivan, or Mrs. Tom Farrelly, if you like! And now, grandfather, I had better light the lamp. It's Christmas night, you know!"

Then old Tom Farrelly took his young hand in his own, and, with a prayer that mounted instantly to the Great White Throne, thanked his God for this truly happy Christmas!

By Rev. Thomas F. Burke, C. S. P., in Extension Magazine

"BEHOLD, I STAND AT THE GATE AND KNOCK"

By Rev. Thomas F. Burke, C. S. P., in Extension Magazine

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Dom Bede Camm, O. S. B. Although the world greets the passing away of time with indifferent lightness, there is salutation which it gives on New Year's day is a good one. With all my heart I wish you a "Happy New Year!"

Let us take each year in order. It is a happy New Year I wish you. We Catholics know that our true happiness consists in knowing God and loving Him. And yet we do not fully realize it.

How strangely do the Beatitudes of our dear Lord's first sermon sound in our ears: "Blessed, that is, happy, are the poor and the meek and the lowly, and the clean of heart, yes, even they who are persecuted for justice sake."

What? Is it possible that true happiness is to be found there—in seeking to "make my pile" I am in truth turning my back on the very good I am looking for, that in throwing myself into worldly pleasures I am losing the joys of eternity?

"Well Jesus tells you that, not I, and He can neither deceive nor be deceived. Do you remember the exquisite story of the seraphic St. Francis, which we read in the Fioretti? How one day when he was on a journey with his beloved companion, Brother Leo, he asked him in what consisted perfect happiness? And after making various suggestions and rejecting them, the saint at last cried out:

"Supposing, Brother, that we arrive at St. Mary of the Angels and drenched with rain and trembling with cold all covered with mud and exhausted with hunger, and if, when we knock at the convent gate, the porter should come angrily and ask us who we are; if, after we tell him we are two of his brothers, he should answer angrily, 'What you say is not the truth, you are but two impostors going about to deceive the world, and take away the alms of the poor; if he refuses to open the door, and leaves us outside exposed to the snow and bitter night air, and if we accept such injustice, such cruelty and contempt without murmuring, believing with humility and charity that it is God Who makes the porter speak against us, O Brother Leo, write that down as a cause of perfect joy."

Both Our Lord and His saints show that the right way to happiness is a spiritual road, and not the physical route that you would naturally choose. And the year is to be new as well as happy.

A new year? It can not help but be new, but I wish you a new year in the fullest sense of the term. The Christian life is made up of continual fresh beginnings. Every new day brings its new graces. Old days have fled with their wasted opportunities, and which of us does not have to sign over much that has passed with them?

But the new year is our own. Its golden opportunities are our own to use. It offers us graces to transform our lives if we will but use them. Now I begin to be a disciple," said that aged servant of Christ, Ignatius of Antioch as he approached his martyrdom. Let us echo his words to day. We will begin again, with all our hearts will we not?

"If every year," says the author of the Imitation of Christ, "we would root out one vice, we should become perfect men." We should get about a great work with method and precision, lest we be "as one that beateth the air." It will be well for each one of us then to look into his heart and see what is the chief obstacle to his spiritual progress, what sacrifice God asks of him first and foremost, what grace is most necessary to the welfare of his soul. It may be that some of us will find that before we can do anything else we have to clear our souls from the defilement of mortal sin; and for those from the first duty will be a humble and penitent confession. To most of us the task will be bewildering and the difficulty will be to know where to begin. In that case also let us lay our consciences open before some enlightened minister of Christ, and humbly seek his help and counsel.

And the last word of the salutation has a meaning, too, for thoughtful hearts. I wish you a happy new year—a year—but how indeed do we know that we shall see a year completed?

How many of those who receive these wishes have few months or weeks, even a few days, before them? Indeed the time is short. We are standing on the brink of eternity. To-day is the acceptable time, the day of salvation. It may well be that this new year with its call to grace may be the last call for some of you. "To-day if you hear His voice, harden not your hearts." I repeat that this is morally certain, that before the sands of the new year

have run out, one or the other of us at least will have passed into eternity. It may be you. It may be I. It may be only one or two, but some there will certainly be. May God in His mercy grant that when He cometh He may find us watching!

And so once more I wish you "A Happy New Year!"

In recent years the word "proselytize" has acquired an untoward significance, and is used to bring out an important distinction—that not merely an effort, but an unworthy effort, is made to bring about a change of religious profession. Using the word in this distorted sense, I would say that the Catholic Church is a convert-maker, but not a proselytizer. These two stand for two different processes. The one works internally, the other externally. The one is a process of conviction; the other a process of compulsion. One results in the willing acknowledgment of truth hitherto unaccepted; the other demands only outward conformity to conditions and does not insist on a mental acceptance of the truths professed. One implies internal—the other, merely external—submission. One takes place in the heart and mind; the other is but an adaptation to circumstances, without any real change within the soul.

To seek converts to her teaching is essentially a part of the Catholic Church's very life: to seek to bring about a merely external change and submission is absolutely foreign to her nature. For she realizes that conversion without conviction is really no conversion at all. The more or less artificial distinction between "to convert" and "to proselytize" serves to bring out the fact that conversion is an interior not an exterior thing.

Because of this, while the Church stands at the knock at the door of every heart, she, nevertheless, refuses to accept within her fold one who, as far as she can judge, is not convinced of her truth. She constantly teaches her own children that the reception of the Sacraments externally only—that is without the fulfillment of the interior conditions—is an enormous sin, the abuse of a sacred privilege, a sacrilege. She tells them that they would sin against God and conscience were they outwardly to submit to her teachings without first being inwardly convinced that so they should act. She can not accept life service without heart service; she can not accept outward conformity without inward belief.

The Catholic Church must seek conversions. Otherwise she would belie herself. She has within her the consciousness of certain things that imply the necessity of conversion. She realizes that she is a Church and commands that all who belong to that Church should be inwardly convinced of her truth, and consequently believes that it is God's wish that every one should enter her fold. She can not be wrong, therefore, when, according to the rules of Christian belief and of common sense as well, she maintains that any man who knows and agrees that she is the true Church and, puts his soul in danger, she understands, as a thought understands, that, in such a case, a man believes that God commands him to do a certain thing and yet he refuses to obey.

How entirely untrue to herself would the Catholic Church be did she not seek conversions. How false to her divine trust, did she not strive to reach into the souls of men, to convince the mind, to move the heart, for the purpose of bringing about the acceptance of what she knows to be of vital and eternal value.

Truth must extend itself; and the failure of any society to seek to convert others is an evidence of its own weak hold upon any truth at all. The Catholic Church makes her appeal to all. What is her attitude toward those who can not see with her eyes, who can not believe as she believes?

Concerning those who are not convinced of her claims, the Church again speaks in the voice of justice and truth. She teaches that, as long as such honestly believe that the Catholic Church is not the true Church of God, then they can be reasonably or honestly join her. No one can be compelled to believe, except by the intrinsic force of conviction. Words of one of the chief executives of the Church, Pope Pius IX., in regard to some placed in such a position, are of value as indicating the true position of the Church in regard to converting mankind. Writing to the bishops of Italy he said: "We and you know that those who lie under invincible ignorance as regards our most holy religion, and who, diligently observing the natural law and its precepts which are engraved by God on the hearts of all, and prepared to obey God, lead a good and upright life, are able, by the operation of the power of divine light and grace, to obtain eternal life."

Much as the Church is impelled by the very nature of her being to seek an increase in her membership, she does not wish that increase to be accompanied by the sacrifice of individual conviction or conscience. A dishonest convert is not a convert. How false the charge, then, that is frequently made, that Catholics believe that all outside the fold of the Church are lost; how dishonest to attribute to the Church anything but an attitude of justice and conscientiousness toward all those who are not of her visible fold, yet who at the same time believe themselves to be right.

Nor does this just and charitable attitude of the Church lessen the obligation of those who come face to face with her. She is as for all the world to see, for all the world to study, for all the world to know. Making the claims that she does—that she is the true Church of Christ; that in her is contained the deposit of Christian faith; that all, in accordance with the will of Christ, are called to belong to her—she asks that her claims be investigated. For she is convinced that, upon investigation, these claims will stand forth freed from difficulties, and with power to convince the mind, to move the will and heart to their acceptance.

As preliminaries to the complete act of faith, which is ultimately a work of divine grace, she invites a study of her history, her dogmas and her traditions; she asks those without to read and study the numerous books written in explanation of her doctrines, books such as "The Faith of our Fathers," by Cardinal Gibbons, or "The Question Box," by Father Conway, or the more personal volumes proposing Catholic claims, such as "The Apologia," by Cardinal Newman, "Back to Holy Church," by Fr. Schuchman, "The Faith of the Fathers," by Fr. Schuchman, "The Confessions of a Convert," by Fr. Benson, "The Price of Unity," by Fr. Maturing. She further invites all to familiarize themselves with her wealth of spiritual literature, based upon her doctrines, but revealing in the progress of the soul toward union with God the fruitage of those doctrines. "The Following of Christ," by Thomas a Kempis, "The Confessions of St. Augustine," the various works of modern days, such books as "Self-knowledge and Self-discipline," by Fr. Maturing, or "The Sacrament of Duty," by Fr. McSorley, are but a few of the great abundance of such works that are comparatively unknown to the outer world. She asks those that would know her to become acquainted with her best fruits—the soul of those who are true to her teachings, faithful to her behests, giving acknowledgment of her authority—confident that those who gaze will see, shining through such souls, the truth that is divine.

It is, therefore, altogether in the spirit of charity that the Church is a convert-maker. She has something to give the soul of man. That something is the divine bequest of Christ Himself. His truth, His grace, His sacraments, are the living things that she transmits to human souls. She stands calling unto men as Christ called, that they may answer and be united to their Divine Resplendent; clothed in her beauty, resplendent in faith and hope and charity, her features glow and her heart burns for love of human souls. She stands, the spirit and bride of prophecy, and, with extended arms, welcomes all and calls to all with a divine accent: "And the spirit and the bride say: Come. And he that thirsteth, let him come: and he that will, let him take the water of life, freely."

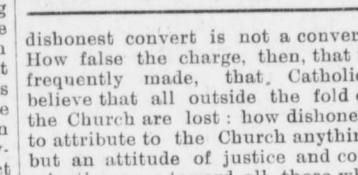
The difference between a learned man and an ignorant man is that the former knows he does not know much, there is so much to be known; the latter is not knowing enough to know that his knowledge amounts to nothing.



Health Triumphs over disease every time you use Lifebuoy Soap. For its mild healing and cleansing oils are charged with cleansing properties that make it simply invaluable.

LIFEBUOY HEALTH SOAP

Mild and pure enough for Baby's skin—therefore eminently suitable for yours. The mild, antiseptic odor vanishes quickly after use.



Lever Brothers Limited TORONTO At all Grocers

A wise man is always ready to learn; an ignorant man imagines he is already well informed.

Liquor and Tobacco Habits

Dr. McTaggart's Vegetable Remedies for these habits are safe, inexpensive home treatments. No hypodermic injections, no loss of time from business, and positive cure. Recommended by physicians and clergy. Enquiries treated confidentially. Literature and medicine sent in plain sealed packages. Address or consult—

Dr. McTaggart's Remedies 309 Stair Building Toronto, Canada



Advertisement for ThermoGene Curative Wadding, featuring an illustration of a woman and child, and text describing its benefits for colds and aches.

Advertisement for The Walker House, featuring an illustration of two men and text describing it as Toronto's famous hotel.

An Ideal Xmas Gift for a Boy or Girl Record Juvenile Library

By the Best Authors—Each Volume with Illustrated Jacket Copyright Books Neat Cloth Bindings Free by mail, 35 cents per volume LIBERAL DISCOUNT TO THE REV. CLEVER AND RELIGIOUS The Best Series of Catholic Story-Books Published

- List of books in the Record Juvenile Library, including titles like 'The Ups and Downs of Marjorie', 'Nan Nobody', 'The Quest of Adventure', etc.

The Catholic Record, London, Ont.