



THE COMRADES

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For the Sentinel



My eyes were bright blue, that old soldier, his manner simple and unaffected, as a child. He had been in that great engagement of the Civil war, in the United States, and had seen the Chaplain stand up upon a high knoll, right in the firing line, to give a general Absolution to all the combatants. Oh, Yes, that was fine ; and the men, they all bent their heads ; even the Protestants bowed down with some dim understanding of what it meant. The Chaplain was a hero. There were many heroes amongst the priests and nuns, as well as amongst the fighters. And many a religious soul, too, amongst those who wore the blue or the gray, and fought for the banner with its thirteen Stars and Stripes, or that other with a solitary Star.

The old man loved to describe this fight and many others. He was a veteran now, and his fighting days were done. He kept a little shop which contained a variety of little trinkets, devotional objects, holy pictures, beads and medals which he dispensed, a part from the money, with a real satisfaction.

One day, there strolled into the place a man, no less old, but more infirm, having lost an eye and injured his left leg. The shop man looked at him intently. The newcomer's was a morose and surly countenance.

"Well," said he, at last, "what can I do for you to day ? Would you be wanting a statue of the Blessed Mother of us all, or mebbe, a prayer or Rosary beads ?"