

PSALM XXXI.

BEATI QUORUM.

(Written for The Catholic Bulletin by Helen Haptes Hielocher.)

Blessed is the man to whom the Lord Hath mercy shown and cleansed from sin, And blessed is he whose guiltless heart Before God's eyes is pure within.

In secret sins my bones grew old, In written in anguish all the day, The thorn sunk deeper in my flesh, Thy hand upon me heavy lay.

But I have stripped my conscience bare, My wickedness have not concealed, I have confessed my secret sin, And now behold my soul is healed.

For this let each one seek His care I season, for when round His throne The floods are foaming, who comes nigh?

O, who can make his trouble known? Thou art my refuge from the tolls Of those who have encompassed me Give me to understand Thy will And ever fix my eyes on Thee.

Let me not answer to the rein As beasts that bit and bridle bind, Unto the sinner cometh stripes, The just shall grace and mercy find.

SHORT STORY

A Soldier's Sacrifice.

It was at the close of 1776, Washington, compelled to abandon Fort Lee was retreating through New Jersey, the Cornwallis hot pursuit, The god of battles seemed to have definitely sided with the biggest battalions. Disaster had succeeded disaster in rapid succession and despondency prevailed among the patriots everywhere.

The American commander in chief had been balked at every turn, his best-made plans had been frustrated. It was evident that the British were kept informed of the plans and movements of the little army. But how? By whom? The strictest investigation, the utmost vigilance had failed, to show. The fact was very inevitable, was gradually causing a demoralizing effect upon the force. Comrades began to regard each other with suspicion. Enthusiasm had been succeeded by uneasiness, which in turn was given place to vague terror.

Col. Edward Dayton, one of the chief's trusted and most zealous officers, had been specially charged to elucidate the mystery and had set about the task with the thoroughness that characterized all his actions. He had devised all manner of ingenious but futile schemes to entrap the traitor and had sworn to make a terrible example of him if he ever caught him.

Col. Dayton was a stern man, a martinet in all matters pertaining to military discipline, but of a kindly nature at heart. Of old Colonial stock, he had served with Washington against the Indians and was intensely patriotic. When the struggle for freedom began he had at once issued from the retirement in which he had been living in New York and hurried to the field accompanied by his son George, and Ernest Travers, a distant relative. Young Travers was about the same age as George, had been left an orphan and destitute when a little child, Mrs. Dayton suggested that they could do no less than take the boy and bring him up with their own children. Her husband had readily acquiesced and had never reason to regret his kindness. Ernest in fact was engaged to marry Priscilla Dayton, the colonel's only other child.

The retreating army, by a series of rapid marches, had finally succeeded in baffling their pursuers and found themselves at nightfall on the outskirts of a wood. The commander in chief decided to call a brief halt. As a precaution no fires were allowed; but despite the bitter cold, the exhausted soldiers, with the exception of those told off to guard the camp, threw themselves on the snow covered ground and soon forgot their troubles and hardships in sleep.

Ernest Travers was among the unfortunate men detailed for outpost duty. He found himself stationed at the edge of the woods, out of sight of the camp and of every other sentry. It was dreadfully lonely. The moon was at the full, but veiled by clouds and in the dim light the tall bare trees looked like spectres. He was as brave as any other man of his inexperienced age, but there was something awesome in the knowledge that the lives of his slumbering comrades, perhaps the success of his country's cause might depend upon his alertness and sagacity, and then the solitude and obscurity impressed him. Moreover, he was worn out by many hours of forced marching, and his nervous system was shaken by many weeks of fighting, excitement and fatigue.

His eyes and ears were strained to catch the slightest sight or sound of

Pains in the Back

Are symptoms of a weak, torpid or stagnant condition of the kidneys or liver, and are a warning that it is extremely hazardous to neglect, so important is a healthy action of those organs.

They are commonly attended by loss of energy, lack of courage, and sometimes by gloomy foreboding and despondency.

Hood's Sarsaparilla

Curse kidney and liver troubles, relieve the back, and build up the whole system.

nothing portending danger. He started at every rattle, ever moving shadow caused by the swaying of a branch in the wind, and could scarcely restrain himself from fringing off his musket and running back to camp, where confidence alone could be regained by mingling with his fellows.

Under the strain of physical exhaustion, supplemented by the freezing temperature, he at length became drowsy and numb. His legs began to give way. He felt that he was slowly but surely losing consciousness, notwithstanding his efforts to fight it off. He staggered against a tree and, sliding to the ground in the shadow of it, rolled over on his face. The snow that melted upon his lips and temples revived him after he had lain there a few minutes, and he gathered his wits together sufficiently to realize the danger in which the army stood of being surprised by the enemy and his own peril if found in his present position by the round. No explanation would be listened to. Accused of sleeping at his post, he would be summarily court-martialed and shot.

This thought galvanized him into activity again, and he bent his stiffened limbs in an effort to struggle to his feet. As he did so he thought he saw something moving among the trees, and his heart came into his mouth as he made that something out to be a man. His first impulse was to secure his musket, which was lying where he had dropped it a few yards away, and challenge the prowler. He checked himself, however, for he reflected that if he moved out of the shadow of the tree he would certainly be seen and the man would get clear away in the woods before he could fire at him. At the same time it occurred to him that he might be watching the spy whose identity his uncle, everybody, had vainly sought to discover. His surmise was strengthened by the fact that the man was coming from the direction of the camp, not going toward it.

However this might be, the man was plainly ignorant of the sentry's proximity. He advanced to the edge of the woods, peering rapidly in every direction and ranging along in the shadow, entered the woods again a few yards from where Travers was crouching. Leaping out upon him Ernest grabbed him with both hands. The man uttered a low startling yell and struggled desperately to free himself. Buck and forth they awayed, the sentry shouting for help until he was borne against a tree with such violence that he was nearly stunned.

Suddenly the man ceased struggling. "I am lost? Here comes the guard. Don't shoot. For God's sake have mercy on me and let me go," he supplicated, hoarsely.

Travers started as though he had been shot. Dragging the man into a clearing, where it was light enough for him to see his face, he pushed him away from him after a moment's hesitation and said: "Run!"

The man needed no second bidding. As he disappeared in the darkness, Travers trying to calm the violent agitation, hurried back toward his post, but ere he had taken many steps a stern voice ordered him to halt, and he found himself surrounded by the guard. One of the soldiers was carrying the musket he had dropped.

"What are you doing off post and without your musket?" demanded the sergeant.

"I— I— nothing," stammered Travers, confusedly.

"I saw something running into yonder thicket. Here, Putnam Van Zandt, Holloway, quick after him. Get him alive or dead. Shoot at anything you see moving. You others arrest this fellow and kill him full of snags if he attempts to break away."

The three men named darted away into the wood, while the other seized Travers, who offered no resistance. The sergeant struck a light with a tinder box and flint and explored the ground around about. "I thought I was not mistaken," he exclaimed. Another man has been here. The footmarks are different.

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A Severe Cold Settled On Her Lungs.

Oh, if it were only daylight so that we could follow his trail. Ah! what is this?

He picked up a slip of folded paper. It bore a number of figures and capital letters.

'A cipher message! Oh, ho! We're on a red hot clue this time, and no mistake.'

'Sergeant,' began Travers, 'I—'

'Silence, traitor! I commanded the sergeant. 'Keep your lips for Col. Dayton and the chief. You'll need to invent a mighty plausible explanation to escape facing a firing party at daybreak.'

The soldiers who had been sent in pursuit of the fugitive presently returned and reported that they had seen nothing of him. The guard then closed around Travers and he was marched back to the main command. The army was already astir and the other sentries had been called in, for Washington was very anxious to put the Dealware between him and the British. Travers' comrades looked wonderingly at him as he was brought in.

Col. Dayton listened to the sergeant's report without saying a word, and taking the cipher message examined it long and intently. His face waxed very pale and hard as he said shortly: 'Bring the prisoner here.'

Travers, heavily manacled, was brought forward.

The colonel motioned to the sergeant to draw off the man, and the guard, lining up and grounding arms at a respectful distance, left uncle and nephew facing each other.

For a moment neither spoke, Travers, with head erect, eyed the old soldier calmly and waited to be questioned.

'Ernest Travers,' said the colonel at last, and his voice was harsh, 'when you joined the army of liberty you for the time being severed all family ties and became the servant of your country, which you swore to serve faithfully and defend with your life. Remember that you are dealing not with your uncle, but your superior officer, and that claims of relationship cannot be evoked. You are accused of a terrible crime, the punishment of which is an ignominious death. Unless you can prove to me beyond the shadow of a doubt that you are innocent, the penalty will be inflicted and pitilessly.'

The charge against you is that you are a spy in the service of your country's enemies; that you have systematically kept them informed of the movements of the army of liberty; that while on outpost duty you were found holding intercourse with some person or persons unknown, emissary or emissaries of the enemy; that in the confidence of the guard you, or the person to whom you had given it, dropped a cipher message written by you, the meaning of which is not yet known to your superior officers, but which is thought to betray military secrets of which you by some means yet to be discovered have obtained possession. What have you to say?

'That I am innocent, sir.'

'That is no answer. Facts and details are what I want, not empty phrases. I warn you again not to trifle with me. It is a matter of life or death to you.'

'I was on outpost duty and saw a man advancing through the wood, I suspected that he might be a spy and tried to arrest him. He escaped as the guard came up.'

'Your duty was to challenge him and if necessary fire upon him. Did you do that?'

'No, sir. From some cause or other I had fainted a little while previously and dropped my musket some paces from where I fell. When I recovered I saw the man coming through the wood and feared that I moved to reach my musket he would see me and get away. I sprang out upon him as he passed me.'

'You fainted! A likely story, truly. At any rate, you must have seen the man's face if you struggled with him. Do you know him? Would you know him if you saw him again?'

'It was pitch dark in the wood.'

'Why did you say you did not know what you were doing off duty when the sergeant caught you?'

'I was probably lulled by a blow received in the struggle, which made my head bleed, as you see.'

'That proves nothing. You may have struck your head against a tree in your precipitation to return on the approach of the guard. What is the meaning of this cipher?'

Her Heart and Nerves

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Editor—Have her escorted into the composing room at once.

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W. H. Wilkinson, Stratford, Ont., says:—'It affords me much pleasure to say that I experienced great relief from Muscular Rheumatism by using two boxes of Milburn's Rheumatic Pills. Price a box 50c.'

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Ruff—'Hello, Fluff I hear you married a woman with an independent fortune.'

Fluff, (disconsolately)—'No; I married a fortune independent woman. Judge.'

Mary Ovington, Jasper, Ont writes:—'My mother had a badly sprained arm. Nothing we used did her any good. Then father got Hagyard's Yellow Oil and it cured mother's arm in a few days. Price 25 cents.'

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