

THE GREAT LESSON

Since early June the work along the Bering beach and up in Anvil Gulch had been going on actively. Rich pay-streaks had been stripped and the output of gold promised to run into the millions.

Meanwhile the lighters along the beach had begun to carry men and money across to the big black hulks at rest and waiting out in the Bering, and when in the closing days of October, the last steamer raised anchor and sailed away, laden with hundreds of miners destined for the "outside world," other hundreds stood on the beach and kept their eyes fixed on it as it veered slowly southward.

The departure of the last boat from Nome was an event in the early years of the camp; it made the miners vividly conscious of their isolation. They were nearly three thousand miles from Seattle, the Mecca of gold hunters, and the long Arctic winter was ahead of them.

And yet there was one of those men on whom isolation did not weigh heavily—Carl Swamberg, a Swede, who had struck it fairly rich on No. 1, below Discovery, in Anvil Gulch. With no desire for the society of men, he had at the close of the mining season built himself a cabin away from the main camp under a bluff overhanging the gulch, and there he began to live out alone the long, dreary months of an Alaskan winter.

Swamberg was a bit of a bigot, a fact that did not make him popular with the other miners. Without caring a fig for any form of religion, he had brought to Alaska his antipathy to Catholics, an aftermath of his activities in some A. P. A. movement or other in California. He revealed the yellow streak the day he refused to throw a couple of salmon to Father Dalton's famished team while the missionary was caught in a blizzard in Anvil Gulch.

"I haf no grub for dose dogs of yours," he growled. And then, as the occasion for venting his spleen was favorable, he continued: "It is not enough to haf you Catholic priests prowling oop here; I hear that you haf brought nuns to dis camp, too. Dot iss sure the latest news."

That was, in fact, the very latest news. A band of four Sisters had arrived to open a miners' hospital in Nome. It was welcome news to thousands of poor men of all creeds and to those who had so often need of the Sisters' services, but it was news that Carl Swamberg received with muttered curses.

"What had dose women oom to dis country vor?" he asked Jim Kellner, who had built his cabin under the same bluff in Anvil Gulch and had become the Swede's neighbor for the winter.

"What have they come here for?" exclaimed Kellner. The big Irish miner was taken by surprise less at the foolish question than at the tone with which it was asked. Suddenly gaging the mental twist in the man standing before him, he blurted out in a burst of indignation. "They have come to this country to care for blithering idiots like you, to be sure! Those Sisters would try to cure even you if they found ye half frozen on the trail, ye pie-faced Scandinavian break!"

his tongue, and he was now quite ready to complete the task with his fists. He even threatened there and then to turn the Swede's long and pointed nose into a corkscrew—an operation the latter did not seem to take kindly to, for he quietly slipped off to his cabin under the bluff.

The long Alaskan winter had already begun, and the whole camp had settled down for the period of hibernation. As the weeks went by the days grew shorter until only a few hours of twilight remained around midday. The winter solstice had arrived, and as Nome is only five degrees or so south of the Circle, the sun at Christmas barely showed its face above the horizon, and then disappeared again. An intense white silence brooded over the camp, a silence that was broken only by the dismal howling of the Eskimo "huskies" or the occasional jingle of bells as teams and sleds passed rapidly over the trails carrying supplies to the miners who were getting out their winter dumps.

Meanwhile the Sisters had not been idle, either. Owing to their somewhat unexpected arrival in Nome before the close of navigation, little had been done for their reception. There was no hospital ready to receive them; no lodging; but a mess-room belonging to one of the commercial companies. However, they rented a two-story house in the center of the camp and fitted it out as best they could. Later in the season they began to visit the claims in the outskirts and begged for alms to help them to complete their work. The Alaskan miners were generous; they opened their leather pokes and gladdened the hearts of the devoted nuns with many an ounce of gold-dust. Even on the creeks where the claims had not panned out well no one refused them the miner's mite—one not but Carl Swamberg.

It was a bitterly cold afternoon when Sister Rosalie and her companion, both wrapped in fur parkies and quite unprepared for the still colder reception that awaited them, knocked at the Swede's cabin under the bluff in Anvil Gulch. The master himself appeared.

"What do you vant?" he inquired, savagely.

"A little help to buy beds and things for our hospital," replied Sister Rosalie, meekly.

"Noddings vor you here. Go away," he retorted, and then closed the door.

Christmas in that far Northland came and went, leaving behind it a severe spell of blizzard and cold weather. Mercury went down below zero, and, excepting at rare intervals, remained below during the greater part of the two following months. But there were compensations. The northern lights danced nightly in the "infinite meadows of heaven" with a joyousness all their own, and helped the miners to wait in patience while the days began to lengthen.

When March came, the sun, now several hours longer above the horizon and growing daily stronger, began to melt the limitless fields of snow; the minute crystals, held intact during the long months by the constant low temperature, dissolved rapidly, giving the Alaskan miners meanwhile a spectacle they could never forget. Defying, as were, the low orb overhead, those countless millions of crystals, stealing its rays, glowed and scintillated like a vast field of diamonds, and then went out. Nature wrought havoc with the snow while the sun shone, but the cold nights froze the surface hard again, and the miners, profiting by the season of strong snow crusts, hatched up their dog-teams and carried provisions to their claims for miles around the camp, in preparation for the approaching summer's work.

No one was busier than Swamberg. His claim lay in the gulch just beyond the Snook range, and his success had been so encouraging during the previous season that he intended in the coming one to turn over more pay dirt than ever. He had made several safe journeys to No. 1 below Discovery, but as happened too often to others in Northwestern Alaska, the glare of the brilliant March sun proved too much for his eyes. Snow-blindness, the bane of the miners in the springtime on the Bering coast, came upon him in its most intense form and left him helpless one day with his team midway between Nome and Snook. To make matters worse, a slight fall of snow, followed by a heavy wind, had blotted out the trail, and the Swede, not yet a fulfilled "sour dough," instead of trusting to the instinct of his dogs, as he should have done, to see him safely over the road to Anvil Gulch, urged them slightly to the left. Unable any longer to discern his way, owing to his swollen eyelids, in an unlucky moment he fell over the side of a steep hill. His fall was broken by a projecting ledge, but, while this obstruction probably saved his life, it did not prevent him from rolling to the bottom of the ravine, where he lay unconscious and bleeding profusely.

covered. With their usual charity, a couple of them rushed to his assistance, laid him on a sled and drove him as quickly as possible to the Sisters' hospital at Nome. The doctor pronounced it a case of brain concussion; he was as yet unable to determine the extent of the interior injuries or whether they were serious or not.

It was Sister Rosalie who was named to take care of the patient. She passed that anxious first night at his pillow waiting for a sign of returning consciousness. In the early morning there was a convulsive movement of the whole body; the injured man opened his bloodshot eyes, and, seeing a Sister near him, sprang from his bed in a fit of delirium. He grasped the terrified nun by the shoulder and raised his hand to strike her. By a superhuman effort she succeeded in eluding the hold of the wild Swede and called for help.

It was all the work of an instant, but these sudden movements had a singular effect on Swamberg; he fell to the floor unconscious, breathing heavily and pale as death. The unhappy man was forced back to bed again, where he lay for days only vaguely aware of what was going on around him. Intermittent spells of rage and calm came and went, and it was only after ten days of devoted watchfulness on the part of Sister Rosalie that she had the satisfaction of seeing her patient resuming a normal life.

Swamberg improved gradually as the days ran on, but it took the unhappy man a much longer time to realize how narrowly he had escaped from death. At first, more preoccupied with his own ill fortune than with the circumstances in which he now found himself, his selfish nature continually asserted itself; he bewailed his ill luck and the loss of the precious time that was slipping by. But every one remarked that the big Swede was thawing out. The unremitting care of his gentle nurse and her ready response to every whim of his had a marked effect on his attitude toward her and the other nuns. His eyes were gradually opening to the real situation. Sister Rosalie's charity and vigilant care had softened his stony heart. Many times a day he thanked her for all she had done for him, and he promised that he would reward her generously when the first "clean up" was made on No. 1 below Discovery on Anvil Gulch.

"You vas the Seester dot I sent away last Christmas from my cabin, wasn't it?" he asked her one day.

"Here's your medicine and then you just go to sleep, sir!" was the only reply he got.

The climax in the Swede's mental evolution arrived the afternoon that Sister Rosalie came to his bedside, with pen and paper in hand, and told him that the last winter mail was leaving for the "outside" early the following day. Perhaps he would like to send a word to the friends in the States; or to write to his wife who was getting along. She would write the letter if he would only tell her what to say.

Swamberg reflected a moment.

"Yes, Seester," he replied, meekly, "you will write for me, will you? Write to the chief of my lodge in San Francisco—I vill gif you his address. Tell him dot I vell down a mountainside and vas nearly killed, while going to my claim in Snook range. Tell him dot I am still under the care of the good Catholic Seesters in Nome, and dot they haf been kind moders to me. Tell them dot my heart iss changed, and that I can never again haf dose root women who haf nursed me back to life. Tell him dot I vas a fool. Dot's all."

The evident sincerity of these words showed that the prejudices which had warped the mind of Swamberg had disappeared; his mental evolution was quite complete, while his physical condition went on apace. The Swede continued to improve; he was soon in a condition to leave the hospital, and in the early days of May, when the sun was pouring down its rays and sending torrents of melted snow into the Bering Sea, the big miner returned to his cabin, under the bluff in Anvil Gulch, to learn that during his absence Jim Kellner, his Irish neighbor, had kept a watchful eye on his property, and had even fed his dogs daily, leaving them in the pink of condition. This kindness and evidence of human brotherhood is common in Alaska, but the practical illustration in his own case overpowered the poor Swede. He had hardly returned to his cabin and learned how things stood when he called on Kellner.

"I haf to thank you vor that you haf done for my togs during my stay at the hospital."

"That's nothin', me buck!" replied the Irish miner, holding out his hand. "I'm glad to see you well again."

"Yes, I am vell again, and I haf coom to speak to you about the Seesters, and especially about dot Seester Rosalie, in the hospital."

The mention of the Sisters by the Swede suddenly roused the anger of Kellner, who was not yet aware of Swamberg's change of heart.

"See here, me man," broke in the irreconcilable Celt, "do ye remember the lickin' I promised ye a couple of months ago if ye ever insulted those Sisters again? It's still waitin' for ye. D'ye hear, ye con-sarned!"

HENRY EMBARRASSES THEM

The writer of the pageant that is being produced as a part of the entertainment for the triennial convocation of the Episcopalians in St. Louis is having a hard time answering embarrassing questions about Henry VIII. No Anglican or Episcopalian is proud of Henry and they are using every effort in an endeavor to prove that the old rascal had nothing to do with the foundation of the Anglican Church.

The pageant author solemnly and seriously informs us that the separation of England from Rome was not brought about by the infatuation of Henry VIII. with Anne Boleyn. He says that it was due to the forces which were making for the use of the English tongue instead of Latin and that were producing a strong national feeling which naturally brought about ecclesiastical nationalism. It would be interesting to learn from the gentleman what national feeling brought about the continuation of the marital escapades of King Henry and the other domestic infelicities of His Majesty. One of his various consorts did not speak English. If the separation from Rome was due to the forces which were making for the use of the English tongue, it is singularly strange that Henry did not put a stop to the use of Latin as an ecclesiastical language. It is equally strange that he ordered Masses said for the repose of his miserable soul. Above all, it would be interesting to learn why Henry ever appealed to the Pope to have his marriage with Catherine annulled.

We sympathize with the awkward position of our Anglican and Episcopalian brothers. It is to their credit that they are trying to repudiate any association with the bloodiest tyrant that ever sat on a throne since the days of Nero. Unfortunately they cannot change facts or destroy his torial evidence. —Intermountain Catholic.

A PROTESTANT SECT

High Church Episcopalians will encounter an insurmountable difficulty in trying to convince the great body of Anglicans that they alone are genuine Catholics, while Rome is the usurper.

It is rather embarrassing for them to be called upon to render an intelligent answer to the many objections against their Catholicity. They consider that the mere assertion of their position should be adequate and convincing. They contend for the genuineness of their hierarchy in spite of the declarations of the Holy See to the contrary.

Their contention cannot but provoke ridicule and laughter. Their discoveries following the blighting days of the Reformation can hardly be said to rest on solid grounds. Surely England under Edward, Elizabeth or James was most hostile to Catholicity. It is very easy to trace the origin of Anglicanism.

Long centuries after Luther's revolt against constituted authority and established religion a light flashes out of the darkness. We are informed that Catholicity and Roman Catholicity are quite different in kind. We are asked to believe that Catholicity came to England from the Orient, and that Rome was usurper of that proud title.

The nineteenth century discovery of "Anglican Catholicity" is quite in keeping with the sweeping claims made by modern sects. Yet history tells us (and Anglicans must believe history) that Catholicity was the child of the Cenacle of Jerusalem; that Peter, Prince of the Apostles, came to Rome and founded his see, while the other Apostles went forth to preach the Gospel and convert the world.

But Anglicans tell us that England received her Catholicity from the East. They do not explain why England remained faithful for many centuries. Nor do they attempt to relieve public curiosity by exposing the reasons for the abrupt breach that occurred in the days of Henry VIII.

The facts of history are open to any who will take the trouble to examine them. The shatter the claims of modern discoverers and prove beyond question the futility of making distinctions between "Roman Catholics" and "Catholics."

There is but one Catholic Church, and that is the one founded by Christ Himself. It is the Church that has come down through ages from the beginning pure and undefiled as it left the lips of its Author. It is the Church that proves its claim to unity, sanctity, catholicity, and apostolicity. Surely Anglicanism will not be fool-hardy enough to believe that any of these essential qualities are to be found in any or all branches of Protestantism.

Division, dissension, heresy and schism have racked the very foundations of Protestantism since Martin Luther broke with Rome. Essentials have been thrown to the winds. Dogmas are ridiculed. No infallible teacher interprets, no authentic guide directs. Each one is sufficient unto himself.

A dilemma faces the Anglicans of to-day. They must admit either that they did or did not break with Rome. If the former, they are in no sense Catholics. If the latter, they are caught in the meshes of history. In either case, their condition is deplorable and cannot be covered over by idle assertions, because intelligent men expect reasonable proofs even in this twentieth century. —Boston Pilot.

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