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**MOTHER'S WAY.**

FATHER RYAN

Off within our little cottage  
As the shadows gently fall,  
While the sunlight touches softly  
One sweetface upon the wall—  
Dove gather close together,  
And in hushed and tender tone  
Ask each other's full forgiveness  
For the wrong that each has done.  
Should you wonder why this custom  
At the ending of the day,  
Eyes and voices quickly answer,  
"It was once our mother's way."

If our home be bright and cheery,  
If it holds a welcome true,  
Opening wide its door of greeting  
To the many—not the few;  
If we share our father's bounty  
With the needy day by day,  
'Tis because our hearts remember  
'This was ever mother's way

Sometimes when our hands grow weary,  
Or our task seem very long;  
When our burdens look too heavy  
And we deem the right all wrong  
Then we gain a new courage,  
And we rise to prouder day,  
"Let us do our duty bravely—  
'This was our dear mother's way."

Thus we keep her memory precious,  
While we never cease to pray  
That at least when lengthening shadows  
Mark the evening of our day,  
They may find us waiting calmly  
To go home our mother's way.

**THE GOLD WULFRIC.**

"No!" I said in his ear, "no! Whatever comes of it, not another question. I had far rather go to prison than let her suffer this inexpressible torture for a single minute longer."

Emily was led down, still crying bitterly, into the body of the court, and the rest of the proceedings went on un-interrupted.

The theory of the prosecution was a simple and plausible one. I had bought a common Anglo-Saxon coin, probably an Ethelwulf, valued at about twenty-two shillings, from the old Litchfield ploughman. I had thereupon conceived the fraudulent idea of pretending that I had a duplicate of the rare Wulftric. I had shown the Ethelwulf, clipped in a particular fashion, to the lady whom I was engaged to marry. I had then defaced and altered the genuine Wulftric at the Museum into the same shape with the aid of my pocket nailscissors. And I had finally made believe to drop it accidentally upon the floor, while I had really secreted it in my waist coat pocket. The theory for the defence had broken down utterly, and then there was the damning fact of the gold scrapings found in the cocoon matting of the British Museum, which was to me the one great inexplicable mystery in the whole otherwise comprehensible mystification.

I felt myself that the case looked very black against me. But would a jury venture to convict me on such very doubtful evidence?

The jury retired to consider their verdict. I stood in suspense in the dock with my heart loudly beating. Emily remained in the body of the court below, looking up at me tearfully and penitently.

After twenty minutes the jury returned:  
'Guilty or not guilty?'

The foreman answered aloud, 'Guilty!' There was a piercing cry in the body of the court, and in a moment Emily was carried out half fainting and half hysterical.

The judge then calmly proceeded to pass sentence. He dwelt upon the enormity of my crime in one so well connected and so far removed from the danger of mere vulgar temptations. He dwelt also upon the vandalism of which I had been guilty—myself a collector—in clipping and detaching a valuable and unique memorial of antiquity, the property of the nation. He did not wish to be severe upon a young man of hitherto blameless character; but the national collection must be secured against such a peculiarly insidious and cunning form of depredation. The sentence of the court was that I should be kept in—Five years penal servitude.

Crushed and annihilated as I was, I had still strength to utter a single final word. 'My Lord,' I cried, 'the missing Wulftric will yet be found, and will hereafter prove my perfect innocence.'

'Remove the prisoner,' said the judge, coldly.

They took me down to the court yard unresisting, where the prison van was

standing in waiting.

On the steps I saw Emily and her mother, both crying bitterly. They had been told the sentence already, and were waiting to take a last farewell of me.

'Oh, Harold!' Emily cried, flinging her arms around me wildly, 'It's all my fault! It's my fault only! By the fool, ish stupidity I've lost your case. I've sent you to prison. Oh, Harold, I can never forgive myself. I've sent you to prison. I've sent you to prison.'

'Dearest, I said, "it won't be for long. I shall soon be free again. They'll find the wulfric sooner or later, and then of course, they'll let me out again."

'Harold,' she cried, "oh, Harold, don't you see? Don't you understand? This is a plot against you! It isn't lost; it isn't lost. That would be nothing. It's stolen!" A light burst upon me suddenly, and I saw in a moment the full depth of the peril that surrounded me.

PART II

It was some time before I could sufficiently accustom myself to my new life in the Isle of Portland to be able to think clearly and distinctly about the terrible blow that had fallen upon me. In the midst of all the pretty troubles and discomforts of prison existence, I had no leisure at first fully to realize the fact that I was a convicted felon with scarcely a hope, not of release, for that I cared little, but of rehabilitation.

Slowly, however, I began to grow habituated to the new hard life imposed upon me, and to think in my cell of the web of circumstance which had woven itself so irresistibly around me.

I had only one hope. Emily knew I was innocent; Emily suspected, like me that the Wulftric had been stolen; Emily would do her best, I felt certain to heap together fresh evidence and unravel this mystery to its very bottom.

Meanwhile, I thanked heaven for the hard mechanical daily toil of cutting stone in Portland prison. I was a strong athletic young fellow enough. I was glad now that I had always loved the river at Oxford; my arms were stout and muscular. I was able to take my part in the regular work of the gang to which I belonged. Had it been otherwise—had I been set down to some quiet sedentary occupation, as first class miscreants often are—I should have worn my heart out soon with thinking perpetually of poor Emily's terrible trouble.

When I first came the deputy governor knowing my case well (had there not been leaders about me in all the papers?) very kindly asked me whether I would wish to be given work in the book-keeping department, where many educated convicts were employed as clerks and assistants. But I begged particularly to be put into an out-door gang where I might have to use my limbs constantly and so keep my mind from eating itself up with perpetual thinking. The deputy governor immediately consented, and gave me work in a quarrying gang at the west end of the island, near Eadman's Bay on the edge of the Chesil.

For three months I worked hard at learning the trade of a quarryman, and succeeded far better than any of the other new hands who were set to learn at the same time with me. Their heart was not in it, mine was. Anything to escape that gnawing agony.

The other men in the gang were not agreeable or congenial companions. They taught me their established modes of intercommunication, and told me several facts about themselves which did not tend to endear them to me. One of them, 1247, was put in for the manslaughter of his wife by kicking; he was a lowbrowed, brutal London drayman, and he occupied the next cell to mine, where he disturbed me much in my sleepless nights by his loud snoring. Another, a much slighter and more intelligent-looking man, was a skilled burglar, sentenced to fourteen years for 'cracking a crib' in the neighborhood of Hampstead. A third was a sailor, convicted of gross cruelty to a defenceless Lascar. They all told me the nature of their crimes with a brutal frankness which fairly surprised me; but when I explained to them in return that I had been put in upon a false accusation, they treated my remarks with a galling

contempt that was absolutely unsupported. After a short time I ceased to communicate with my fellow-prisoners in any way, and remained shut up with my own thoughts in utter isolation.

By and by I found that the other men in the same gang were beginning to dislike me strongly, and that some among them actually whispered to one another—what they seemed to consider a very strong point; indeed, against me—that I must really have been convicted by mistake, and that I was a regular stuck-up sneaking Methodist.

They complained that I worked a great deal too hard, and so made the other felons seem lazy by comparison; and they also objected to my prompt obedience to our warden's commands, as tending to set up an exaggerated and impossible standard of discipline.

Between this warden and myself, on the other hand, there soon sprang up a feeling which I might also describe as one of friendship. Though by the rules of the establishment we could not communicate with one another except upon matters of business I liked him for his uniform courtesy; kindness and forbearance; while I could easily see that he liked me in return, by contrast with the other men who were under his charge. He was one of those persons whom some experience of prisons then and since has led me to believe less rare than most people would imagine—men in whom the dreary life of a prison warden, instead of engendering hardness of heart and cold unsympathetic sternness, has engendered a certain profound tenderness and melancholy of spirit. I grew fond of that one honest warden, among so many coarse and criminal faces; and I found, on the other hand, that my fellow-prisoners hated me all the more because, as they expressed it in their own disgusting jargon, I was sucking up to that confounded dog of a barker. It happened once, when I was left for a few minutes alone with the warden, that he made an attempt for a moment, contrary to regulations, to hold a little private conversation with me.

'1430,' he said in a low voice, hardly moving lips for fear of being overlooked 'what is your outside name?'

I answered quietly, without turning to look at him:  
'Harold Tait.'

He gave a little involuntary start.  
'What!' he cried. 'Not him that took a coin from the British Museum?'

I bridled up angrily.  
'I did not take it,' I cried with all my soul. 'I am innocent, and have been put in here by some terrible error.'

He was silent for half a second; then he said musingly:  
'Sir, I believe you. You are speaking the truth. I will do all I can to make things easy for you.'

That was all he said then, but from that day forth he always spoke to me in private as 'Sir' and never again as '1430.'

An incident arose at last out of this condition of things which had a very important effect upon my future position. One day, about three months after I was committed to prison, we were all told off as usual to work in a quarry on the cliff side overhanging the long expanse of pebbly beach known as the Chesil. I had reason to believe afterwards that a large open fishing boat lying upon the beach below at the moment had been placed there as part of a concerted scheme by the friends of the Hampstead burglar; and that it contained ordinary clothing for all the men in our gang except myself only. The idea was that evidently that the gang should overpower the warden, seize the boat, change the oars instantly, taking turns about meanwhile, with the navigation, and make straight off for the shore at Lulworth; where they could easily disperse without much chance of being recaptured. But of all this I was, of course quite ignorant at the time; for they had not well thought to intrust their secret into the ears of the sneaking virtuous Methodist.

A few minutes after we arrived at a battery, I was working with two other men at putting a blast in. When I happened to look round quite accidentally, and, to my great horror, saw 1247, the brutal wife kicker, standing behind with a huge block of stone in his hands, pois-

ed just above the warden's head in a threatening attitude. The other men stood around waiting and watching. I had only just time to cry out in a tone of alarm 'Take care warden he'll murder you!' when the stone descended upon the warden's head, and he fell at once bleeding and half senseless, upon the ground beside me: In a second, while heshrieked and struggled, the whole gang was pressing savagely and angrily around him.

There was no time to think or hesitate. Before I knew almost what I was doing, I had seized his gun and ammunition and standing over his prostrate body, I held the men at bay for a single moment. Then 1247 advanced threateningly, and tried to put his foot upon the fallen warden.

I didn't wait or reflect one solitary second. I drew the trigger, and fired full upon him. The bang sounded fiercely in my ears, and for a moment I could see nothing through the smoke of the rifle.

With a terrible shriek he fell in front of me, not dead but seriously wounded. 'The boat! the boat!' the others cried loudly. 'Knock him down! kill him! Take the boat, all of you.'

At that moment the report of my shot had brought another warden hastily to the top of the quarry.

'Help! help!' I cried. 'Come quick and save us. These brutes are trying to murder our warden.'

The man rushed back to call for aid, but the way down the zigzag path was steep and tortuous, and it was some time before they could manage to get down and succor us.

Meanwhile the other convicts pressed savagely around us trying to jump upon the warden's body and force their way past to the beach beneath us. I fired again for the rifle was double-barrelled; but it was impossible to reload in such a tumult, so after the next shot, which hit no one, I laid about me fiercely with the butt end of the gun, and succeeded in knocking down four of the savages, one after another. By that time the warders from above had safely reached us, and formed a circle of fixed bayonets around the rebellious prisoners.

'Thank God,' I cried, flinging down the rifle and rushing up to the prostrate warden. 'He is still alive. He is breathing! He is breathing!'

'Yes,' he murmured in a faint voice, 'I am alive and I thank you for it. But for you, sir, these fellows here would certainly have murdered me.'

'You are badly wounded yourself, 1430 one of the other warders said to me as the rebels were rapidly secured and marched off sullenly back to the prison. 'Look your own arm is bleeding fiercely.'

Then for the first time I was aware that I was one mass of wounds from head to foot, and that I was growing faint from loss of blood. In defending the fallen warden I had got punched and pummeled on every side, just the same as one used to get long ago in a bully at football when I was a boy at Rugby, only much more seriously.

The warders brought down seven stretchers—one for me, one for the wounded warden, one for 1247, whom I had shot, and four for the convicts whom I had knocked over with the butt end of the rifle. They carried us up on them strongly guarded, in a long procession.

At the door of the infirmary the governor met us.

'1430,' he said to me in a very kind voice 'you have behaved most admirably. I saw you myself quite distinctly from my drawing room windows. Your bravery and intrepidity are well deserving of the highest recognition.'

'Sir,' I answered, 'I have only tried to do my duty. I couldn't stand by and see an innocent man murdered by such a pack of bloodthirsty ruffians.'

The governor turned aside a little surprised.

'Who is 1430?' he asked quietly.

A subordinate, consulting a book, whispered my name and supposed crime to him confidentially. The governor nodded twice, and seemed to be satisfied.

'Sir,' the wounded warden said faintly from his stretcher, '1430 is an innocent man unjustly condemned, if ever there was one.'

TO BE CONTINUED

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