

hat" MacLeod, breathless from running came alongside. "Shaun Rhu," he gasped, "do you want a job?"

"Never worse," said McGuire.

"Cooking?"

"Where?"

"Here."

Providence, sending Lily Gurley out for the family washing, decided the instant answer. "Present!" McGuire decided. "Oh, God sent you," sighed Angus MacLeod with the pious of the Covenant. "We've lost our cook, and we're in the devil of a mess, and there's a strike threatening on the work, and the Big Chief's coming next week."

"That's trouble enough for one day," said McGuire. "Angus, who's the lady next door to ye?"

"Where? Oh, there? She's Lily Gurley. Will you come to get supper Shaun Rhu?"

"I will that," McGuire studied the girl as she took down the clothes from the line. "Tis a fine view ye have," he said.

He went to work with a will that put Residency Number 27 in the debt of Angus MacLeod for his finding of the cook whose prowess had become a part of the North's tradition. He made cookery a fine art while he watched from the windows of the kitchen to the windows of the Gurley shack. To Lily Gurley, plain little phebe of the camps, he made little offerings of his daily work, rejoicing that it brought him within sight of her. To her and of her he sang the songs of his own Ireland as he sat through the evenings on the porch of the dining shack. To the dim April moon of the Bush he told the story of his love for the girl to whom he had not yet spoken. Lily Gurley no longer watched the engineers go by, nor did she wander toward the post-office. Night after night she sat on the porch, listening to the songs that John McGuire was singing.

One night he saw her. Still singing, he went down from the dining-shack to the log fence. He came to a halt within a dozen feet of where the girl sat alone. "Did ye know," he asked her, "that I've been thinkin' of ye?"

"How'd I know that," she asked, "when I've never met you?"

"Tis an oversight about to be remedied," he said. "Come down here and I'll introduce ye to John McGuire, born in Ireland, bred in the Enniskillen Dragoons, citizen of the world, and cook of the Transcontinental railroad."

Lily Gurley hesitated. Conventions in Bush towns are more tangible, more restrictive, than they are in older places; but against the conventions rose five years of loverless life in a land where all other girls had lovers. She glanced towards the windows of the shack, saw her mother reading, then walked to the log fence. "I am pleased to meet you," she told McGuire.

They stood a long time at the barrier. Lily Gurley did not know that no other lover on earth wooed with the power and the poetry of the Irish soldier, but she knew that the big man in khaki was sweeping her into swift currents of life, dragging her from backwaters to rapids. Dizzied by his words, by his nearness, by the coming of her tardy romance, she moved closer to the man at the other side of the fence. John McGuire, his elbows set on the top log, his hat pushed back to show the grizzled red curls, his blue eyes alight with tenderness, watched her. She put out her hand upon his own. He leaned over the barrier and kissed her. "Oh!" she said. Then, without looking back, she left him.

"The next night John McGuire came back to the fence, but Lily Gurley, again on the back porch, did not stir. He stood, whistling softly, for a little while, then leaped the fence. His hat in his hand, he strode over the clearing, pausing at the foot of the steps. "Pulse o' me heart," he said, "will ye do me the honor to marry me?" Lily Gurley stared not at him but at the moon-beams in the clearing. "I don't know," she said. "Won't you come up—John?" To the little porch. "Tis like comin' home again."

home again," he said to her, "and I've been dreamin' of home these many years."

He fell to talking of himself, as man has always done to the woman he loves. No petty tale of petty thrills was his Odyssey, but gusty stories of fighting in far-off lands, of sailings in the gaily colored ports of the world. India glowed under his painting, Africa sprawled, dusty, hot, myriad-bued. Egypt, silvery blue in mellow moonlights, lured. China, staid eyed old siren, sang in the voice of Shaun Rhu McGuire. Lily Gurley listened to him as the Daedemon has ever harkened to theft Othello. To her the man was showing the soul side the world was not to know. To him she gave a heart that no Bush engineer had ever dreamed could flutter within the breast of the drab little girl of Borden. Together they looked out upon the circling pines of the North Country, and together knew that their lives had come to zenith.

Then—with the world before them all mist and moonlight—the door behind them opened. In the stream of yellow light from the lamp Lily Gurley's mother stood, a Medusa of rage. "Are you the residency cook?" She pointed at McGuire with shaking forefinger. "What are you doing here, talking to my daughter? Get out of here I tell you!" John McGuire rose, towering over her. "Faith," he said, "tis meself should have come to the front door of your house, ma'am."

"You'll never come in my house," the woman cried, "and you're never to dare speak to my daughter again!" She turned to the cowering girl. "I'm ashamed of you," she told her, "ashamed that any girl of mine should pick up with a common camp cook. Go in the house!" she ordered her. Force of habit took Lily Gurley away from the moonlight, her dreams and her lover. Her mother followed her. John McGuire stood at the foot of the steps, staring at the closed door. Then, whistling, he walked through the clearing to the road.

On the next night he sang "Molly Bawn" from the doorstep of the dining-shack, but Lily Gurley did not come out. He showed across the fence, saw Mrs. Gurley's shadow in the lamplight, and chuckled as he tried the chorus of a song that he had not sung to Lily Gurley. He sang it now to all of Borden who would listen to him.

"Fare thee well, Enniskillen! Fare thee well for a while,
For I go from the borders of Erin's green isle;
Her parents they insulted me,
Mornin' night, and noon,
For fear she would wed an Enniskillen Dragoon."

"Tis a ha-ard life," he told Angus MacLeod, when the engineer thrust his head out of the office-shack door.

"What's the trouble, McGuire?" the other asked.

"What's been the trouble with all me ancestors before me," said McGuire. "I love a fair maiden truly and tenderly, but her cruel parents forbid the banns."

"Oh, I wouldn't let that worry me," the engineer counseled.

"I don't," said McGuire. "Tis her it worries."

But when Lily Gurley came no more to the fence, when she passed him day after day without speech, McGuire began to worry. His eyes lost their mirth, his voice sank from its lilting strain. He talked with MacLeod of gold strikes in the Baffin's Bay country until the Scot, distracted with threats of labor strikes, vowed that he would put ball and chain upon the cook. When the threats became action and the strike on the Transcontinental began, however, McGuire gave the engineer his promise to stay until the big row was over. "Tis not meself who'd desert in time of trouble," he assured the other man.

That night, while he sang the mournful wail of the Farewell to Enniskillen, Lily Gurley came to the fence. John McGuire looked up to see her. He crossed the clearing in a bound and would have taken her

hands had she not drawn them behind her. "John McGuire," she said, "I'd marry you if you were a man instead of a cook."

"He drew back, scratching his red curls. "But, sure, what difference does that make?" he asked her, honestly puzzled.

"All the difference in the world," she said sharply. "I wouldn't be ashamed to marry a lumberjack, or even a laborer, or any man who does a man's work. I'm not afraid of being poor. I'm not afraid of hard work. But I am ashamed that I even care for a cook."

"Well, if that's all the trouble," said McGuire readily, "twill be trouble no more. I'll quit this very night." His own words halted him even as the light came to her face. "I can't, Lily," he said. "I can't quit now. I've promised MacLeod to stay till the trouble down the line is over."

"Don't be silly," said Lily Gurley. "But a promise is a promise," said McGuire uneasily. "I gave him me word. But why shouldn't a cook be as good as the next man?" he demanded of her. "Shure, cookin' is a virtue," he tried to cajole her.

She faced him, her face afire with anger. "It's not," she cried, "and a man who can do other things ought to die before he sinks to the level you're in. What do you suppose the men who fought beside you in your regiment would think of you if they saw you cooking for a crowd of Bush engineers? What would your Enniskillen Dragoons say to you? What about the honor of your service? Her voice rose to a shriek as she thrust over the top of the fence something that she vaguely recognized as a magazine, while he wondered what possible relation it might have to Lily Gurley's denunciation of himself.

"Read it," she cried to him, "and see what one man of your dragoons did. He was a man, though," she sneered, "and not a cook."

She flung away from the barrier, leaving him standing there, the package in his hand. With unseeing eyes he stared after her as she went toward the porch and entered the door of her own shack. Blinded he was to the starlight as he awoke from dreams of unaccomplished deeds to realities of wasted opportunities. For the first time in his happy-go-lucky life John McGuire looked back over the way of it. A broad thoroughfare through many lands, a road unshadowed by fears or regrets it had been, this highway of the soldier of fortune. It had lain in the sunshine of his memories; now over it rose the murky waters of the bitter flood of reproach. Lily Gurley had opened the dikes. In the scorn of her reproaches all the brightness of other days sank blotting. The joys of the camps, the thrills of the trails, the easy companionships of the wilderness, the careless to-days, the luminous to-morrows, the sturdy sense of a man's democracy, all went down before the gray tide. To himself for many years John McGuire had been the blithe soldier, wagging merry war against foes of cold, and hunger, and privation, always victorious because he kept care without the walls of his soul's citadel. Now he saw himself as Lily Gurley saw him, not the voyager of adventure, but the listless, ambitionless, commonplace cook of the camps, a man doing woman's work after having failed utterly in his own. "I'll quit," he told himself sternly. "No man'll endure this. I'll go back to me pick and me pack."

He strode back to the shack, lighting his lamp and beginning to fling together his few belongings. As he threw his pack-sock on the table it struck the magazine that Lily Gurley had thrust into his hand. Her words, coming back to him sharply, stabbed him anew; but they set him seeking for her reason in berating him. A shrewd suspicion that some influence even beyond her mother had urged her to the attack upon him connected the periodical with her anger. He picked it up, studying it in the flickering light, but finding in it at first glancing nothing to

explain its association with the girl's mood.

It was an American monthly, a little old, worn from much reading, as magazines in the North Country were all certain to become, its blue cover sharply scratched with white paintings of polar mountains and marked with white lettering that proclaimed "The Undying Story of Captain Scott." Curiously, John McGuire turned the pages till he came to the story of heroism, wondering if the tale could have any tangency to his own plight. He knew vaguely as he went over the words that set down the tragedy of how the explorer and his companions had died in the Antarctic as they fought their way back from their futile finding of the Pole that the liad of their heroism would have thrilled him to the soul had he found it an hour before. Now, with his bitterness against life a mist through which he looked out upon the world, he read the story casually, seeking only to find if by chance some bit of it had inflamed Lily Gurley to rage against him.

From one of the pages the photograph of a man in uniform arrested his attention. Beneath it ran the caption, "Captain Oates of the Enniskillen Dragoons." McGuire considered the portrait a moment before there came to him understanding of its part in the story of the Scot's disaster. "Tis ather me own time ye came," he spoke to the man of the picture. "An' faith, what have ye done for your country?" Slowly he read the brief paragraph that ran close:

"Captain Oates fell ill while the party was six days from camp. Knowing that he would burden his comrades if he stayed, he walked out into that vast wilderness of ice. He said only, 'I'm going outside.' He never returned."

"God rest him," said John McGuire. He gazed reverently on the face of the man who had come after his own days in the service that had taught them the same code. "Tis credit to every mother's son of us ye are," he murmured. "Away off in the ends of the earth the Dragoons, wherever they be, will be sayin' your name with pride, Captain Oates." A sudden whimsical humor sent down the mercury of his rising spirits. "But, shure, 'tis yourself who's done me a bad turn this day," he went on. "Tis a sojer like ye that every woman wants her man to be, and all of us can't be fightin' Fuzzies, or trainin' Sikhs, or dyin' on polar trails. So John McGuire, one of your Dragoons, is goin' back to—"

He raised the pack from the table, then just as suddenly flung it upon the floor. "No, by God!" said John McGuire, "woman or no woman, I'll not desert me post in time of trouble. Here's to ye, sir!"

He took out the lamp to the kitchen, setting it high on the shelf, before he tore out from the magazine the picture of the officer of dragoons and tucked it upon the wall of the shack. Then he fell to the kneading of a batch of bread. MacLeod, coming back late, halted at the kitchen door. "What's the trouble, McGuire?" he asked.

"Tis a ha-ard world for the Irish," answered the cook.

He found the world, it not harder, at least more exciting on the next morning. The strike on the last division of the Transcontinental broke. Frenzied contractors besieged the residency for conference with frenzied engineers. Borden swarmed with railroad laborers. "Blind pigs" gained sight. The Borden loafers joined the strikers till the road in front of the postoffice looked like a trail to a recording office on the day after a gold rush starts. Out on the Right-of-Way, where two lines of steel had pushed within a mile of each other and where two lines of steel must meet within four days if the National Transcontinental was to be done on contract time, lay the battlefield. Residency Number 27, back in Borden, was the general's tent, but no general was there, only a little group of frightened aides, another group of raging contractors, and a cook who went about his work with a sullen fury that had nothing to do with the strike. At noon, by date, watching Lily Gurley at her table, McGuire had worked himself into a Berserker rage against life. In token of his wrath he banged the dishes on the table and pounded the iron triangle until it resounded like a battle call over the hostile town.

Dinner was half over when he went to the dining-room door, ready to glower upon MacLeod whom he was beginning to regard as the author of his misfortunes. Even before he reached the doorway he noticed the quiet into which the engineers at the



table had fallen. The clamor in which the meal had begun—for Owens and Perry and two other contractors had stayed to keep up their demands on the engineers—had died down to a hush. McGuire saw the reason for the lull as soon as he reached the doorway. For at the head of the table, next to MacLeod, sat the Big Chief of the builders of the Transcontinental—and the Big Chief was Bannister.

Bannister looked up as McGuire's bulk filled the doorway. The cook saluted him martially, but the other man rose and crossed to shake hands with him. "Glad to see you here, McGuire," he said in that whipstroke way of talking he had when he was angry. "Good to see one man stay on duty willingly." He went back to the table in the sulky silence of the others while McGuire breathed a sigh of renewed self-respect. The cook stood at attention while MacLeod broke silence. "I tell you," he said to Bannister, "that there isn't a man who can drive that mob of wops back to work. You'll have to get strike-breakers."

"I'll have no strike breakers," said Bannister, "and I tell you that one man could break the back of this strike. One recruiting sergeant who knew his business."—John McGuire stepped forward—could send every wop back to work to-day and keep them there till the line's done."

"He could that, sir," said McGuire. The others turned on him scowlingly, but Bannister peered at him sharply. "You were with the Black Tyrants, weren't you?" he asked, gnawing at his mustache.

"With the Enniskillen Dragoons, sir—Drill Sergeant." He drew himself to his great height, flinging back his shoulders, tossing back his head.

"McGuire"—Bannister leaned forward over the table—"would you guarantee to drive these strikers back to work if I put you in command?"

"I'll do that, sir."

"Then take charge," snapped Bannister. He glared at the engineers and contractors. "You will give Mr. McGuire all available help," he ordered. McGuire flung off his apron as he went out of the dining room. A moment later Bannister and the other silent men at the table heard him whistling "Rory O'More," as he passed the windows.

"Isn't it a bad time to joke?" Owens, the contractor, asked the chief.

"Your wops won't find him a joke," said Bannister.

When a man's hurt by the woman he loves, and angry at himself, the chance of action finds him a regiment. John McGuire was an army corps as he went down the road past the post-office, skirting the crowd. He chuckled grimly as he commandeered a handcar, realizing that he was cutting off the main body of the enemy's army from headquarters. For he had recognized in the Borden crowd the ringleaders of the trouble, and he knew that if he could get the men on the line back to work before their bell-wethers returned, he would have won his campaign. His old knowledge of the camps told him that any strike depends for success upon its leaders. Without them the backbone of the revolt against authority would be but the jellied imitation of a vertebra. "Without the few men who were waiting in Borden to assail Bannister with new requests for the men men out on the line would be as sheep for any strong man's driving. Knowing this, John McGuire sped on his handcar toward the End of Steel.

The force of his driving, as he sent the car along the rails with long, even strokes, seemed to awaken in the man a power that he had long known in himself, a flame that had smoldered for years under the ashes of his manner of life. Once more, as he faced the wind of the Bush, he was the leader of men, the sergeant of the Dragoons, a man with a purpose and a tradition of purpose, going out to do a man's work in a man's world. The joy of impending action braced his broad shoulders. The faint of his spirit, kindled the fires of courage in his eyes. The cook of the camps and the residencies was no more. The man who drove out the car to the strikers' camps, the man who had seized his advantage in Bonaparte fashion, was McGuire of the old days of the North Country, McGuire of the pick and the pack, McGuire of the Enniskillers.

So did he enter the field of battle. As he stopped the handcar on the clay embankment a half dozen men standing at the End of Steel watched him sullenly. If they had been set for guard they failed in their duty. Possibly they had been instructed to watch for the coming of a corps. McGuire faced them boldly. Possibly, too, they recognized in him that awakened quality of leadership even before he drew out his revolver. "Move ahead of me there," he ordered them, pointing with his gun to the line of shacks a few hundred feet away.

In front of the shacks were gathered scores of glowering men, watching with stolidly shown attention the spectacle of the six men moving forward in front of the man with the revolver. It may be that the crowd in front of the shacks saw, as McGuire had seen, the smoke of an engine on the horizon toward Borden, and knew, as McGuire knew, that it boded no good to the engine now, and the coming of an engine would inevitably mean the coming of reinforcements for this daring giant who had faced them alone. At any rate the men before the shacks made no movement to come to the aid of their fellows who crossed the ditches and

the hummocks in front of McGuire. "Get down there with the rest of ye," he bade them, when they came to the shacks. He himself mounted the highest clay mound, a colossus straddling a space where steel would even then have been set. With arms akimbo, right hand carelessly holding the revolver, hat thrust back on his curls, he surveyed the man before him. To him their indecision proclaimed them already beaten. And he drove the defeat home.

"How many of ye are workin' for Owens?" he called. No one of the scowling men answered him. "How many of ye are workin' for the National Transcontinental?" No one spoke. "Well, I'll tell ye somethin' ye may not know, me lads," he shouted. "If ye're not working for Owens, and neither for the Transcontinental, ye're workin' for the government of the Dominion of Canada, and just for the minute, me fine laddybucks, I'm that same government. Ye may not know me now, but I'm McGuire, Sergeant McGuire of the Enniskillen Dragoons. An' if ye don't do what I'm tellin' ye, 'tis the Dragoons who'll make ye jig on the line, the same Dragoons that made the little Sepoya dance in India, the same Dragoons that made the Fuzzies run, the same Dragoons who've been in every one of England's big fights since William—and may he be twistin' in his grave—came over the Irish sea. 'Tis the Dragoons who'll make dog meat of ye, ye baythens, if ye touch a hair of the head of Drill Sergeant John McGuire."

He ran his satiric gaze over them. "Tis a fine lot o' fighters ye are," he taunted. "Ye haven't a leader, ye haven't a line, ye haven't a cause. An' what'll happen to ye if ye don't go back to work? Ye'll be stranded up here in the Bush with nothin' to eat. Ye can't get out, for the government owns the railroad, and ye're weak for the walkin'. What'll help ye to win? Divil a bit o' good. What'll happen to ye if ye lose? Jail, me byes, for treason to the Dominion of Canada and to her Majesty, the Queen of England and the Empress of India."

He rolled it out magnificently, forgetting for the time that the Queen he had served in the old days of the Dragoons had been sleeping long years at Windsor. The men before him, Huns and Finns, Slavs and Russians, did not correct him. They were staring stupidly at the big man whose tone they understood, although they failed to comprehend more than the threat of his words. He saw their indecision, saw their hesitation, and fitted his sails to the wind. "Get back to work," he shouted. "Get back on the job, every mother's son o' ye, or I'll blow ye off the face o' the earth ye cumber!" He brandished his gun, rushing down the slope as the handcar of MacLeod's engineers rolled to the End of Steel. Behind it snorted the engine, with Bannister and Owens on the footboard. "Me regiment's in the field," shouted "Shaun Rhu" McGuire; "comin', I tell ye, to rush ye to hell."

Before him broke the ranks of the strikers. Along the grade toward the steel shovel they ran, clambering up the sides of the clay piles until they had reached the place where they had ceased from labor. "Get around there, some o' ye idle good-for-nothin'!" McGuire shouted, over his shoulder to the engineers, "and give 'em their tools." To the laborers he gave warning. "Rush it," he told them, "an' don't ye dare stop for God, man or devil. John McGuire's standin' over ye, and ye'll stand here till steel meets steel!"

With the certainty of a freshman from technical school he gave working orders. Bannister, following the others, grinned when he heard the commands, but he heaved upon the giver of them. "Will they stay at work?" he asked McGuire.

"I'll kill 'em if they don't," came the answer.

"Well," said the Chief, "since you're doing the work, take the title. You're superintendent of construction till the work's ended."

"Shure, I always said 'twas the luck of a cook," said McGuire.

For four days McGuire held the superintendency while Huns, and Finns, and Slavs, and Russians regarded him as the war minister of the Empire of England. On the fourth day when steel met steel and the Bush Division of the Transcontinental stretched away from east to west, ready for the government on contract time, he went back to Borden, going straight to the Gurley's shack. Mrs. Gurley answered his knock upon the front door. He stared at her defiantly. "I've come to see your daughter, ma'am," he told her. "Twas the residency cook ye sent away, I'm thinkin'." Sardonic fire leaped to his eyes. "Tis the superintendent of labor on the Owens contract of the Alaska railroad who comes back. He's leavin' these parts to-morrow."

"Send him in, mother," said Lily Gurley's voice. John McGuire went in, grinning. But as he crossed the threshold there came to him the thought that the old moments of waiting at the log fence had been dearer than this. "If she'd only be lieve in the man inside o' me," he sighed. Then, as he heard her step, he braced his big shoulders with the pride of a man who has earned his epaulets. "Shure, 'tis the old way of the world," he thought, "that a man should win a woman, an' who knows that 'tis not the right way?" With the old dreams agleam in the eyes he waited now as he had waited so often beside the log fence.

table had fallen. The clamor in which the meal had begun—for Owens and Perry and two other contractors had stayed to keep up their demands on the engineers—had died down to a hush. McGuire saw the reason for the lull as soon as he reached the doorway. For at the head of the table, next to MacLeod, sat the Big Chief of the builders of the Transcontinental—and the Big Chief was Bannister.

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A THEOLOGICAL PUZZLE

The Archbishop of Canterbury has replied to several requests from correspondents who are anxious to know how far they may go in praying for the repose of the faithful souls departed. For a good, downright case of theological side-stepping command us to the answer of His Grace. "The subject of prayers definitely offered on behalf of those whose life on earth is ended is shrouded in so much mystery as to call for the utmost care and reserve on our part in handling it. . . I desire loyally to maintain the distinction, markedly drawn by Bishop Andrews and other great Anglican divines, between those beliefs, based upon definite scriptural proof, the teaching of which is incorporated in our public formularies, and on the other hand opinions and beliefs which fall short of such definite proof. If the distinction be borne in mind, I have no doubt at all that prayers for the dead are permissible to loyal sons and daughters of the Church so long as they do not imply a condition of the departed, which our article xxi ("Of Purgatory") has definitely condemned." Now either there is or there is not a Purgatory. If there is, it must be quite evident that prayers for those detained therein are right and salutary. If there is no Purgatory, or any middle place, call it what you will, what then can be the meaning of prayers for the dead? The nebulous advice of the Archbishop sounds woefully inadequate. The Archbishop promises he will give further counsel on the subject to any clergy of the diocese who may desire such help, all of which serves only for one question: If there be no Purgatory, what effect is prayers for the dead meant to bring about? We hope some such question will be propounded to His Grace, even if it were to show his dexterity in avoiding the answer.—New World.

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