THE STORY OF TWO SOLDIERS.

The glorious Indian sun, streaming keeping an eye to everything.

Our friend Norman through the open shutters and vein inrough the open shutters and verandahs, announces to the inhabitrants of Bombay that the last month of the year has commenced.

Saturday, June 9, 1900

of the year has commenced. stormy, Yesterday was dark and stormy, the city as if about to dash it to instant destruction, and again dying away into hoarse rumblings of impotent rage; while at intervals the sheet lightning, illumination country for miles round, discovered the ships riding at sea in the distant harbor, like huge sea birds cradled on the deep. But now the sky has on the seep. "all the air a solemn stiliness holds." Presently the roar of the morning gun booms over the harbor, and, as by magic, the city awakes. In a few minutes the trams start, the shops are opened, and the streets become crowded with people hastening in the cool of the morning to their various occupations.

The city of Bombay, as is generally known, was founded about the seventh century by the Parsees, a religious sect driven from Persia by the Kaliph Omar. These people, who are almost as fair as Europeans, have won for themselves, by their industry and perseverance, the foremost place amongst the merchants of India. Bombay has at present a popu-lation of over 800,000 inhabitants, an extensive commerce, a fine harbor, and is, indeed, one of the first cities of our Eastern Empire. It is at this port that passengers arriving from England are generally disembarked, and here also the British troopships make their annual visits, bringing fresh troops from England, and taking home those which have completed their term of foreign ser-

On this particular morning Her Mujesty's troopship "Malabar," is riding at anchor a few hundred yards from the beach. Already she is age. The throbbing of her engines gives one the idea she is anxious to be off; and, indeed, before nightfall, she will have left Bombay far be-

About 10 a.m. a band is heard in the distance, and a few minutes later 19th regiment of infantry marches down to the harbor, and forms up on the landing stage, awaiting orders to embark. Crowds of native beggars surround them, beating their naked stomachs (the common practice of beggars in India), and crying incessantly, "Backsheesh, Sah, Backsheesh."* But the soldiers are too well accustomed to this cry, with its accompanying gesture, to pay much heed. Soon the boats come alongside, and the work of embarkation begins. In about an hour all are on board, save the invalids, who have been brought down to the beach in tongas. They number about a score in all. Presently these also are conveyed on board, but as they pass through the gangway one of them, overcome by weakness, falls fainting to the deck. A couple of men raise him up, open his tunic, and at the command of a young lieutenant standing by, they carry him to his berth. Restoratives are brought, and soon, as the doctor enters, the poor fellow revives. "All right, again, O'Neal?" asks

the doctor, in a kind tone. 'Oh, yes, sir, quite," says O'Neal, who has been in a fever for days past, fearing that he might be declared untit for travelling.

'Oh. you may rest easy," says the doctor, with a twinkle in his eye, "all the doctors in the army would be powerless now to stop you from sailing; and in any case, with Mr. Norman as a friend, you may rest quite easy.

Before the sick man had time to enters, and, going straight over to Neal, asks anxiously if he is all right again.

"Yes, now I am aboard I feel fifty per cent. better," suys the soldier. "I am sure, with Dr. Armstrong's heip and yours I will live long enough to see the old land once again." "Oh, nousense," says Norman;
"you will live as long as any of us

yet: just keep your heart up, and all will be well.

The two officers now leave O'Neal to the care of the hospital orderly, and walk off together. "I need not ask you," says Nor-

man. "to do what you can for poor O'Neal, knowing, as you do, what friends we were before his family got into difficulties. Do you think he will live till we reach Portsmouth?" "Well, that depends more on you

than it does on me," replies the doctor. "In cases of consumption a doctor is practically useless; all that is needed is plenty of wines, jellies, and nourishing food of a light kind." "I will undertake to see that he

gets plenty of that," says Norman. "It is the least I can do for him, poor fellow. Poor Charlie," he adds, softly, to himself, as he passes up the saloon, "I never thought it would come to this.

In a few hours Bombay is out of sight, and things began to look a little more settled. Towards eight his friendshi o'clock, the saloon people prepare for dinner, and at eight exactly all take

Poor O'. their places. There is a little crowding to-night, each one trying to secure a good place, for whatever position is taken the first night must be retained at all meals during the voyage. Each officer has a private to wait upon him, and it looks very picturesque to see the men in their different uniforms standing at attention, each behind his master's chair, while the ship's waiters flit about

*"Parsee" signifies a Persian, but is used in India to designate the Fire Worshippers.

*From the Persian "bakhshidan," meaning to give.

its record of cures is GREATEST. to look up his old friend, bearched high and low, but without avail,

It is the first of December, 1895. here and there lending a hand, and keeping an eve to avanth:

Our friend Norman finds himself Father Drew. During dinner they converse on a variety of general subjects. At length, when dessert arrives, they descend to more personal topics.

"Will you try some fruit, Father?" says Norman, pushing a large dish of mangos towards the priest.

"Yes, thank you. I rather like mangos. May I ask," he continues, 'if you are a Roman Catholic?"

"Certainly: I meant to tell you I was when dinner commenced, but it went completely out of my head. I believe I am the only Catholic officer at the table."

"I am very fortunate then in getting beside you, as, in addition to the pleasure of your company at meals, you will be able to give me information about the Catholic men of your regiment."

give," says Norman. "There are only about every one and everything. The about forty altogether; but there is one poor fellow, named O'Neal, who is an old schoolmate and friend of answering smile of welcome for the mine. I wish you could do something for him. I know he would like to see a priest, for he asked me the fire, either reading, or those who yesterday if there was one on were able knitting and chatting most board."

"I will go and see him first thing in the morning," says the kind-hearted priest, as they all rise to the toast of "The Queen.

Next day Father Drew visited O'Neal, and, having heard his confession, remained chatting with him for some time. Norman also dropped in later on, and gave orders to have everything for the patient brought up from the saloon, as he had made arrangements with the steward for

that purpose. On the voyage many were the devices got up to pass the time pleasgetting up steam for her return voy- antly. It was not uncommon to see a group of ladies playing that manly game, quoits; but it is a pity to have to record that, when they were, a great number of quoits found their way overboard. Shuttlecock also was played with great success. Occasionally a piano was brought on deck and a dance started. Nigger concerts were, however, the chief amusement. A dozen or more of the younger officers used to "paint nigger." and really gave splendid amateur performances. A temporary stage used to be erected, and all on board were free

to attend. On one of these occasions a certain naval officer, Mr. K----, well known by the sailors for the use of an excellent pair of lungs, and a "strong, swearing accent," was taking a part on the stage. After a few jokes had put the audience into good army." humor, the leader of the darkies turned to Mr. K---, and said:

"Well, Massa Sambo, you am werry quiet to-night. Don't hear you talkin'."

Sambo was about to make some witty reply when a voice, apparently coming from the top of the mast

called out : "For God's sake let him alone we'll hear enough of him to-morrow

morning. The roars of laughter which followed this remark almost silenced Sambo for the night, and was worth

(to the audience) any joke he could possibly have made. The ship called at Malta en route. and took in, among other things, about a dozen Maltese cattle. These were arranged at the foot of the

main mast, and were killed as fresh meat was needed. They were the occasion afterwards of some amusement on board.

Just before reaching Gibraltar, the third concert of the voyage was preanswer, Lieutenant Norman himself pared, and proved as great a success as the preceding two. The officers. black and white, sat some time discussing matters. At length, a dispute having arisen concerning the fighting abilities of the Irish and Scotch as compared with the English, a young Irish captain proposed settling the point at once by a bolster fight. The idea took quickly, and in about a minute nearly everyone was calling for a bolster fight. The older men pretended to scout the idea, but being in a minority, they were compelled to submit. To make the sides even, the Scots and Irish united against the English. The preliminaries being settled, there was a general rush below for arms. The fight immediately began, and soon became very hot. The English made

a brave stand, but were eventually dispersed by the Irish and Scots. A few days after this the "Malabar" arrived at Portsmouth, after a short journey of twenty-five days. It was eight in the morning when the landing commenced, and by four that evening all the passengers had de-

parted. The soldiers who had been invalided as unfit for further service were discharged almost at once, and sent

on to their different destinations. Our two friends parted the same evening, but not without Norman giving O'Neal a substantial proof of his friendship in the shape of a well-

Poor O'Neal started for Dublin, but soon after reaching his destination took a turn for the worse, and, all hope being given up, he was brought, through the kind offices of Father O'Byrne, as a patient to Our Lady's Hospice for the Dying, Harold's Cross.

This charitable institution, supported by public subscriptions, is presided over by the Trish Sisters of Charity, who devote their lives to, consoling and assisting the dying. Under the care of these kind sisters, O'Neal rallied a little, but still remained so weak that he was unable

to leave his bed. Shortly after, the 49th regiment ar-A MERICA'S Greatest Medicine is enough, Lieutenant Norman started enough, Lieutenant Norman started to look up his old friend, but could be sesses uncounted and the searched

and had almost given up hope when, quite unexpectedly, he discovered him in the hospice.

Attending the church of St. Mary. in Rathmines, he had become acquainted with Father Bourke, chaplain to the hospice. Meeting him by accident one morning, near the hospice, the priest asked him in to see the place. They went up together, seated beside the Catholic chaplain, and the Rev. Mother, after some conversation, conducted them through

Before passing into the hospice proper, she brought her visitors into the chapel, near the entrance doors of which are a few seats for the benefit of such patients as are able to attend Mass. Here a couple of them were saying their beads most devoutly. Our friend looked on them with great interest. To see them saying their prayers so calmly, when death was, at the farthest, only a few days off, had a strange effect on him. Nevertheless, it led him to thank God more carnestly than ever, for being in the communion of the only religion that is capable of working such wonders.

After leaving the chapel they went upstairs to the women's wards. The first thing that struck the young man on entering each ward "I am afraid there is very little to was the general air of cheerfulness patients, even those who were unable to leave their beds, had all an Rev. Mother's kind greeting. Some the fire, either reading, or those who agreeably.

In one of the wards, however, Norman saw a very sad case. It was that of a fair young girl. Just before the visitors entered she had been coughing fearfully, and, when they approached her bed, seemed quite exhausted. Poor girl, she was not yet twenty years old, and her life was fast coming to a close. As she lay there, her beautiful hair scattered about the pillow, her lovely face flushed, panting for breath, Norman wondered how many hours would clapse till she should pass from all the suffering and pain she was then enduring to the reward of her patiently borne sickness. When they said good-bye to her, she smiled and spoke to them quite naturally, her place of mind not in the least disturbed by the pitying glances was impossible to restrain.

Descending again to the lower part of the house, they went through the men's wards, the last one they came to being Saint Patrick's, the largest in the house.

"Here," said the Rev. Mother, entering. "we have a patient who we all take the greatest interest in. He was in the army, but is still very young.

So saying, she led the way to one of the corner beds, in which lay the dying soldier. Arranging his pillows. she said, "I have some one to see you to-day, someone belonging to the

The sick man raised himself to greet the visitor, and immediately recognized his old friend, Norman. "What. O'Neal! I have been hunting through Dublin for the past fortnight looking for you. Oh, why did aking the sick man's hand, "I would wasted he was: "you must have suf-

fered a lot." deed, as some of the poor fellows here. In any case, it is nearly over now; I'm getting weaker every day, and I feel I can't last much longer. I intended writing to you to-morrow, but I won't need to now.

For more than an hour they sat chatting about old times, and when at last the young Lieutenant rose to go it was with the resolution of doing his utmost to soothe the last hours of his old friend and playmate. He promised to come frequently, and from that time to the time of O'Neal's death, which happened about a fortnight afterwards, not a day passed without a visit from him. He was constantly sending fruit, magazines, etc., and anything he thought likely to amuse or interest his friend.

As duty often detained him during visiting hours, he had permission to come at any time convenient to him-

One afternoon he arrived at the hospice about three o'clock, the hour at which all the patients unite in praying for the benefactors of the institution.

Entering Saint Patrick's Ward he found them all saying the Rosary. Those who were up were kneeling before an image of Our Lady. others, propped up in bed, were lending their feeble voices to swell the volumes of praise in Mary's honor. Norman knelt down near the door.

and, in a low tone, joined in the minds of the patients the story being ended, he proceeded to O'Neal's bed, and was quite shocked to find Irish Rosary Magazine. the change that had come over him in a few hours. Yesterday he had been bright and lively; to-day he lay like one in a stupor. It was pitiful to see the frequent gasps for breath, the convulsive opening and closing of the hands. All betokened, only too surely, that his end could not be far

After watching by his friend for a long time, Norman left the ward, and, telling the chaplain, who had been sent for, that he would wait for him, he proceeded to the little chapel. Here he knelt down and tried to think.

He had always led a most exemplary life, and now he began to imagine he had missed his vocation, and that he was intended for the Church. Whether this was the result of his frequent conversations with Father Bourke, or the sight of the dying in the hospice, he could not make out; but for some time the idea had been growing on him, till now he felt convinced that it was a priest he should have been.

He had entered the army at his father's desire, just as he would have joined the navy or any other profession he might have been brought up to; but he had no ardent love for it, and felt he could leave it without the slightest feeling of regret. He was as yet only twenty-four, the age at which students are usually ordained, and would have at least four years' study before he could receive the imposition of hands.

As these things were passing through his mind, Father Bourke entered, and presently they started off together. On the way the young man mentioned his thoughts to the priest, but Father Bourke, while praising the ecclesiastical state as the noblest in the world, at the same time treated the young Lieutenant's aspirations in that direction very

Separating from his companion on Stephen's Green, Norman returned to his quarters, feeling altogether unsettled. The idea which he had mentioned to the priest, and which had been made so light of, had taken a strong hold on his mind. He decided, however, to take no serious step for the space of a year. If he stood that test he would be persuaded that his wish to become a priest was no enthusiastic idea, brought on by his visits to the hospice, as the priest seemed to think, but a true and solid vocation given to him by God, and which it would be his duty to fol-

Next day he got word of his friend's death, and soon after followed the humble coffin to Glasnevin as the chief and only mourner, for poor O'Neal had few friends and no relations. Two days later he said good-bye to the nuns of the hospice, and left to join his regiment, which had been sent on to the Curragh.

Just a year later, as Father Bourke was making himself comfortable at the fire one evening, a knock was heard at the door, and two minutes later in walked Lieutenant Norman. After a little preliminary chat, he you not write to me." said Norman, told the object of his visit. He had resigned his commission and finally have come to you at once. Poor, decided to enter for the Church. After all kinds premptly attended to. Retinates all kinds premptly attended to. Retinates all kinds premptly attended to. 15 Fe was ted by was: "you must have suf-t who was first inclined to think he who was first inclined to think he had acted hastily, came to the con-"No, not too much," said his clusion that he had a real vocation, friend, smiling; "not so much, in and consequently was bound to follow it.

The next thing was to get the approbation of his father, a landed proprietor in the South of England. This was granted at once. Everything seemed to favor the young man's wishes, and he awaited anxiously the time when he would commence his theological studies.

He visited the nuns of Harold's Cross frequently, and delighted in talking to them about the time when he would be a priest.

But who can foretell the future? One evening, after leaving the hospice, where he complained of not feeling well, he went early to bed, hoping to be quite recovered on the morrow. But the morrow found him still in bed.

A doctor, who was called in, said he had scarlatina, and in three days he was dead.

The grief of all who had come in contact with him may be better imagined than described. The only consolation his relations had was the thought that he had gone into the presence of that loving God who not only rewards the "deeds" of His faithful servants, but also their holy "desires."

There is a picture at present hanging in Saint Patrick's Ward, presented to the hospice by the young man's father. It represents the Child Jesus in the Temple, and recalls to the

prayers of the sick men. The Rosary the two soldiers. May they rest in peace .- B. T. Graham, B.A., in the

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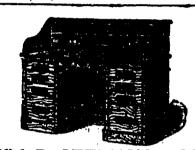
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