

dropped into the first chair and began rocking him gently. "You're no bigger than a pint of cider."

"Mrs. Dugan says I'd grow faster if I had more on my stomach and not so much on my mind," he confided. "You see I have to worry some. Mother can't wash. She's in the hospital and God sent her a baby. We named her Persis 'cause it's most like Precious.' The words came, half smothered against her, but convincing."

"What's your name? Where do you live?" she asked.

The boy sat suddenly upright, pushed the soft hair from his eyes, and began backward at the questions. "We live on High street. It's respectable. We rented two rooms from Mrs. Dugan, but now a lady has them and I sleep behind the stove. I'm Lane Curtis. And God will take care of me, no matter what happens. Mother said so at the hospital this morning. She was tired and kinda whispered. I'm not to be afraid, and stay by Persis, and make my name good."

"Make your name good?" questioned Miss Challoner, while the doctor stood looking on. The boy nodded his finely poised little head. "Lane is for mother's folks. They're all dead. They were terrible good, but nobody loved 'em. And Curtis is for dad. His folks is dead, too. They was kinda wild. But everybody in the world loved them. Most nobody could help loving Dad—Mother couldn't—but her folks could. They didn't have no use for dad. But mother and me love him. We all have our faults, you know," he confided, looking up at the doctor gravely, "and he's the only father I have but my father in heaven."

Again he slid from the Love-Lady's lap. He recovered his cap and his papers, and finished the matter under discussion.

"When I was real little, mother and me talked it over. Dad drinks. And his father drank, and his father. It's got to stop somewhere in the family. So it's up to me to be good like the Lanes and loving like the Curtis. I'm the good half of her and the good half of dad, so I'll come out all right. When he gets well and the baby ain't so awful little we're going to have a home again."

Miss Challoner reached to set his cap straight, but she found nothing to say. She exchanged glances with the doctor. It was past closing time, but neither wanted to go. "My tooth doesn't hurt now. Thank you for fixing it," he said to the doctor. "If you won't let me pay you I'll leave this buffalo nickel with the Love-Lady, so's you can get it if you ever need it when I'm not 'round. It's yours." He gave the coin to her.

"When are you coming to see me, Lane?" she asked.

"Perhaps to-morrow, if I don't have to go to the hospital after school. Thank you for holding me. Good-bye."

He started for the door, but the doctor sprang after him. "My runabout's at the curb," he said over his shoulder to Miss Challoner. "I'm going to see where that young one roosts and be sure he's all right."

A moment later from the window she saw in the dim dusk a big man leading by the hand a little boy who trotted delightedly towards the muddy old car on the street. She put on her wraps and turned off the lights.

"The love lady! Bless his little heart!" she said, happily, to herself on her way to the door. Just then she would not have changed places with any woman on earth.

Three busy days passed before she heard again of Lane Curtis. A sudden fierce storm had brought a deluge of relief-work to the office, and the doctor also had been gone night and day. But at last, one morning, he entered her door, a little worn and tired, and said his say without preliminaries. "Your wonder-child is on our hands Miss Love-Lady. The mother was buried yesterday. I've been making his affairs my business. The Terry Home has taken the baby till the Juvenile Court gets the case, but Lane has to be kept somewhere a week or two. He's quality, Ann. The mother was quality—I had a look at her. Even Persis, two weeks old, is a personality."

"Where is the boy?" she asked.

"Trust you to do the right thing, Jim Freer!"

"In my office, I'll get him. I thought about Mrs. Jordan. This is her chance, isn't it?" Can you make her take him?"

"It would be her salvation," she answered slowly. "It's all my life is to mention it, despite the fact that I seem to be the only person she cares anything about these days. But there's no time like right now."

She turned to the telephone and called for a number.

"Can I speak with Mrs. Jordan?" She waited and turned to smile at the doctor, who stood listening. "Mrs. Jordan? It's Miss Challoner. Are you coming to town this morning? You are? I'm glad. Please come to the office. I need to see you. Thank you."

A moment later the doctor sent in the boy, clean and pale in a cheap, worn, black suit three sizes too large for him. He approached her with a pathetic little air of dignity, quite tearlessly. She reached her arms to him, but he shook his head, and she let them fall.

"I'll cry if you cuddle me," he warned her. "She said I'm not to cry. A soldier can't—he's gotta fight all the time. I got Persis to look after. She's going to be awful pretty,"

she gulped over the word—"said to talk things over with you and the judge, 'cause we have no folks and dad's in for two years. They sent for him, but he was sick, too."

"There'll always be a good home for you both, dear," answered Miss Challoner as matter-of-factly as possible. The boy sighed.

"I must keep in school, but I can work nights and mornings for my board. I carried papers and gave Mrs. Dugan a nickel every night for sleeping there. A nickel gets a loaf of bread. She said a loaf of bread was a loaf of bread. I could stay at Dugan's, but they've got too many kids now."

She had to attend to the wants of a woman who entered. It took some time. When she had finished and the woman had gone, she felt the boy's hand slip itself into hers and cling there. She looked down at him, and his eyes shone with a great inspiration.

"Don't you want to take me and Persis to raise? I love you already. Loving helps a lot. And I'm good at errands, and when she isn't so terrible little any more I can take care of Persis myself."

This time Miss Challoner did not deny herself—the gathered the child close to her. She could not bear to tell him that in all human likelihood he and Persis would be separated.

"Darlingest," she said, "I'd be the happiest woman on the earth if I could have you. But I have to love so many folks all the time that I haven't a home in the world nor any time to stay in one. Don't you see? But don't you be afraid. You'll be taken care of."

"I'm not afraid," he averred. A soldier hasn't get scared. If he was scared he couldn't fight—could he?" The boy's glance left the love lady and fell entranced upon Mrs. Jordan, who came sweeping in. Her beauty was like a perfume, filling the place. No child can resist real beauty, and Lane, a born lover, drew in a deep, delighted breath. As for her, her glance caught and held his face, tried to look away, but could not, drank the child in with a sort of bewilderment. Her eyes, brown also, but darker than his, softened, then hardened. She drew herself up and turned to Ann Challoner, white with anger.

"You—presume!" she breathed. "And you are cruel! You know the sight of a child tears my heart. I cannot look upon children any more. They kill me! And this boy—just his age—and so beautiful—you know that I avoid children!" Her voice broke, but Ann Challoner's tone was as steady as a surgeon's knife.

"You have no right to avoid children, Mrs. Jordan. Indeed, you can't avoid them, and live. The world is full of them. They are to be reckoned with. You cannot escape the law of love." To her own surprise she found herself utterly unafraid. Marian Jordan was regarding her with trembling wonder.

"Children need you, but you need them even more," she continued. "You are not by nature a selfish woman—look at this boy!"

"I will not," Mrs. Jordan breathed, but her friend came and took her by the hands. She pulled away and hid her face.

"But you have looked at him," pursued Ann. "You can't forget him nor his claim on you!"

"On me? You dare say that?" She looked up, astonished.

"On you. His mother died yesterday. His father is sick in an almshouse. His two weeks' old sister is at the Terry Home. Judge Preston can't bear their case for two weeks. You have said I am to call on you when I need help. Well, I need you to take Lane Curtis home with you until then. Think about it—I have to step out a moment"—She slipped out so quickly that Marian Jordan, rising to protest, found herself alone with the child, gazing at him hungrily, as if fascinated. It had been long since she had allowed herself to feel a child's sweetness.

But still she rebelled, though she certainly did not intend to speak aloud. "Beautiful," she murmured, "but common. A street-child. Probably with bad blood, and of course she thinks she can make me keep him."

The boy flushed and came closer to her. "I won't go with you," he said manfully. "You don't love children. And you are not polite. I'm not a street-child! And Mother said I had good blood in me, both sides. No body has to drink because their father does. You shan't take me. I can work. The Love-Lady will help me—I'll help her. I'll help her. I'll help her."

"I just loved you—to pieces when you came in," emotion made him revert to his baby vocabulary, "but now I almost hate you! You made me cry—when I promised my mother I would not cry"—Tears fell down his cheeks.

For the first time since her own bereavement Mrs. Jordan forgot all about herself. She went down on her knees beside the child. She coaxed and comforted him in mother-sweet ways long a part of her. She lured him to her arms, for she was irresistible when she forgot herself and loved. She kept talking to the child.

"And now you have forgiven me for being naughty, come and visit me till they find you the right home," she coaxed. "It will be in the Love-Lady. You don't have to love me at first—you could just like me for a while. Will you come?"

Lane backed off a little and considered her. She was loath to lose the dear delight of his nearness, but she waited.

"Would you mind my—thinking it over first?" When she nodded assent he sat down in a big chair with his little legs stretched out stiff before him. He closed his eyes very tight and his lips moved. Ann Challoner entered, but Mrs. Jordan gestured her to silence and tip-toed to meet her.

"My dear," she whispered, "he's adorable. I've invited him to visit me, but he is not sure that I am worthy. Neither am I. At this moment he is making the matter the subject of prayer." Tears shone in her eyes, but she laughed a glad little laugh such as Ann had never heard from her.

Miss Challoner knew something about human nature. "It'll be for less than two weeks," she said. "He will not trouble you long. The Kinneys, some lovely farm people, have long wanted me to find just the right little boy. Most people want curly-headed girls but a boy like Lane will not be long homeless—"

"A child like that to—farmer's—" began Mrs. Jordan, and then checked herself. "But of course it's better than the streets. Do not imagine that I shall—keep him." She struggled towards her lost hauteur. Miss Challoner did not reply, for the boy, with eyes shining, came to take her hand and to lean against her so lovingly that Mrs. Jordan looked away almost jealously.

"She called me a street-child," he said to Ann, "but she was sorry, so I forgave her. I think I am going to love her, but not as much as you. I am going to visit her. But now I gotta go back to Dugan's 'cause Patsy needs his clothes. He lent 'em to me 'cause they're black."

"I'll take you in my car," offered Mrs. Jordan. "But we'll get you some new clothes first. Brown corduroy for school, don't you think?" she asked Miss Challoner eagerly.

"And then, Lane, we'll buy things for the Dugans because they have been kind to you. You shall choose."

"The boy put his hand happily in hers. "I shall love that! I s'pose you have a Ford, too? Doctor Jim has. You could take me 'round by the Home and I'll let you have a look at my sister Persis." Miss Challoner rather wistfully saw them go away like life-long friends. Then she plunged into the work that awaited her.

The matter of the Curtis children came up fully three weeks later, on a March morning unseasonably warm, sunny, blue-skied, a very lamb of a March morning, despite snow melting into rivers everywhere. Miss Challoner had been swamped with work and had not seen Doctor Freer for days, but as she was preparing to go to the courtroom, he breezed into her office. His face was serious.

"Well, Miss Love-Lady, those babes-in-the-wood have surely pulled heart-strings, right and left. It gives me a twinge to see Lane's home go glimmering. Now it will have to be the Kinneys, I suppose. But Mrs. Jordan was his natural sort. And she was taking to him. I hoped—"

"What on earth do you mean?" she asked rather crossly. "Of course Mrs. Jordan will keep him! She hasn't said so, but I feel in my bones that—"

"Then your bones are false prophets," he retorted. "But don't be savage with me—I didn't embezzle her money!"

"What has happened?" she demanded impatiently.

"Just like a woman to begin the day without the morning papers!" growled the doctor. "Well, Mrs. Jordan's bank has gone to smash. Cashier speculated with her money, juggled the books—and is safe in jail. She has nothing now but her big house and personal property. She won't want a child. Do you understand? And we'll be late to court."

"I don't want to hear it all. It's mere formality, anyway. It won't take half an hour. But your news changes it. Let's be going."

They walked together to the corridor and towards the courtroom, silently. Suddenly the doctor spoke again, shortly.

"I haven't told you all. The little soldier has a bad morning before him. He has still to learn that his father died yesterday of pneumonia."

"And he still thinks he and the baby can be together—they ought to be together." Her voice vibrated with feeling.

They quietly entered the small side room where it was Judge Preston's custom to make the Juvenile Court a seat of big family consultation, with everybody sitting about a big table and himself at the head. The apparent informality made for a freedom of speech that often brought out facts which would otherwise have been concealed.

This morning Mrs. Dugan and three other women of the neighborhood were inconspicuously grouped with Mrs. Curtis' hospital nurse, two doctors, the Kinneys, solid, kindly folk, and the Terry Home matron, a dark, handsome woman, who held Persis, a rose of a babe, in her arms. Mrs. Jordan was there, pale-faced, her beautiful eyes afire with a wronged light. Lane, strangely with a nowhere to be seen.

The judge spoke to Miss Challoner, asking first her and then Dr. Freer a few questions, and waited for them to seat themselves. The evidence was all in, for he had questioned the others present, and indeed nearly every one concerned had been privately to see him within the week preceding.

"The east, and we can find no relatives. There is no money. The court can put them into institutions, or adopt them into private families. It is an unhappy circumstance that they will have to be separated. Mr. and Mrs. Kinney, whom we all know and respect, want the boy. Nobody else has asked for him." The judge paused and looked straight at Mrs. Jordan, but she said nothing, so he went on. "Lane, the boy, has remarkable character—remarkable intelligence—and remarkable beauty. He clings to the baby as his own charge. He does not know of his father's death yet. He is now in the next room because I do not wish to grieve him with this discussion, but I do not want to give a decision without first talking with him. Will you get him, Miss Challoner?"

But before Ann could stir Mrs. Jordan swept to her feet and leaned towards the judge pleadingly. "Oh, let me, Judge! Let me bring him!" He smiled assent and she left the room.

There was something new in her face as she re-entered leading Lane by the hand. Seeing the two together, beautiful woman and beautiful child, was a thing to remember. From top to toe he looked the little aristocrat in his new clothes, perfectly groomed, with his shining curls and his great steady eyes. He saw his baby sister and smiled, but Mrs. Jordan led him straight to the judge and stood there with him.

"Judge Preston," she said, "you have known me nearly all my life. I must tell you very little. I lost my husband and my boy—you know that. I have lost most of my money—you know that. What you do not know is that this child, thanks to Miss Challoner's courage, has kept me from losing myself. I have come to my senses. I have come to my selfish grief and I want to live. I am not rich, but if I sell my house and go to work I can care for this boy. Will you give him to me? He shall be my very own."

Mrs. Jordan seemed to roll years from her. The old witchery of her girlhood seemed to return, but added to it was a sense of responsibility and steadiness. And she forgot everybody but the boy and the judge. As for him, he put a hand on Lane's shoulder and drew him closer.

"Lane," he asked, "will you be the lady's son?"

"I will live with her," he answered with characteristic precision of thought, "but I can't be her son. I gotta stand by Dad. When he gets well he will make a home for me and the baby. We can stay with her till Dad comes."

Another dead silence fell. Then the judge nodded to Miss Challoner, but again Mrs. Jordan jealously took matters into her own hands.

"Darling," she said, "be a little soldier and don't cry. I have something unhappy to tell you. Your father was very sick. And yesterday he went to be with your mother. He can't come for you. But I love you. Come and be mine and make me happy." She put her own handkerchief to the boy's eyes, for he cried, though quietly.

"She'd have cried herself—about Dad," he said at last. "I'll come with you. The Love-Lady can't have me. She can't have a home, she's so busy loving so many folks, you see. And Persis is so little. I love you quite a lot, and we will come with you, I guess, he decided quietly. His eyes fondly sought the cooing babe, but the judge temporized.

"That's right, Lane," he said. "Mr. Jordan will take you for her own, feed you, clothe you, send you to school, and give you her name. You will be Lane Jordan, and—" but the boy stiffened to attention.

"Lane Curtis," he corrected firmly. "Not Jordan. 'Curtis' is for Dad. I gotta make his name good. Me and Mother talked it over. I promised her. Now he's dead I gotta do it, you see. And Persis can't be 'Jordan,' neither. She's Curtis, too. God put us in one family, and He'll help us stay in one family. Mother said so. She said—" he was going on but the judge interrupted him.

"Lane, be a man. Mrs. Jordan can't take the baby, too—" but he stopped, less at sight of the boy's troubled face than at Mrs. Jordan's gesture of distress. She reached out and took the baby from the matron.

"Judge," she said simply, "I shall take them both. I want them on any terms. Lane is right—let them keep their name. There is none too much family loyalty in the world, is there? Just fix the papers so that they can have what little I have, and give them to me."

She shifted the baby to her shoulder and reached down her free hand to the boy, who nestled against her.

"You are both mine," she said to him, regardless of the judge, whose decision was thus taken from his mouth. Then he remembered the Kinneys and courtesy.

"Mr. and Mrs. Kinney—" he began gently. But the farmer broke in. "It's all right," he said. "It's right they should go to one family. Come, Mother."

Everybody began rising and talking, and the judge lifted his voice. "Mrs. Jordan has the children," he announced unnecessarily. For the world could see that Mrs. Jordan had come into her own. Finally she looked up at Ann Challoner, who, with the judge, stood waiting to go.

"If it weren't for you, Love-Lady," she said, happily, but Ann walked away with the judge. Her own loneliness stung for a moment. They walked together down the long corridor, and she became aware that his eyes searched her face.

"The Love-Lady," and his tone was carefully unsentimental, "is so busy loving so many folks that she hasn't time for a home for her own."

"Don't," she said, crossly, "don't you know better? Do you want to rub it in?" He saw that this was not his time.

"Oh, all right," he said, steadily, "all right!"—Jeanne Olive Loizeaux in McBride's Magazine.

THE SWEET USE OF ADVERSITY

The trials of life are a heavy cross for the Children of Adam. Sickness, misfortunes, sorrows, and woes, are the lot of the greater part of humanity. There is scarce a smiling face but hides some anguish. Why does it all come from the good God?

Am I so bad that God afflicts me thus? Not necessarily. Your sufferings and misfortunes may be for the glory of God and the sanctification of your soul. Christ rebuked the Jews who thought that the Galileans slain by Pilate's soldiers and the workmen killed by the falling of the tower of Siloe were sinners above all the rest. The man born blind has his affliction that the glory of God be manifested, and not for his sin nor his parents. So these sorrows come to us not always as punishment for sin, but frequently that we may, by our humble submission, glorify our Father in Heaven, and detach ourselves from the vanities of this world.

Christ taught that His Father purposely sends us afflictions and misfortunes. "Every branch that beareth fruit my Father will purge it that it may bear more fruit." God chasteneth every son whom He loveth. "As gold is tried in the fire, so is the just man in the furnace of tribulations." "As a man traineth up his son, so the Lord God hath trained thee up." The Holy Scriptures are replete with evidence that God purposely sends us trials for our own good and not as punishments for sins. As parents correct and discipline their children, so our Heavenly Father disciplines us. It is with parental love that God sends us trials and sicknesses. Many that are prosperous and happy in this world, through evil-doers, are receiving here the reward of the little good they do in life, while their punishment comes in the next world.

All the saints suffered in this life. They were sinless and holy, yet many forms of misfortune were their lot. There is no saint on the calendar of the Church that has not, like Christ, borne some Cross to enter into his glory. If they had to suffer to be made holy, why not we?

Suffering is a great refiner. Nothing so turns the heart of man away from this world as suffering. It lifts his mind to God for help, and to reflect on Heaven as a place of peace and relief from pain. It brings us the gift of sympathy, makes us charitable to others. People in a hospital become like members of one family. The hospital is a great reformatory of character. Every hospital is a missionary for God.—H. F. Roney in Our Sunday Visitor.

BISHOP HOBAN ON THE USE OF THE PRESS

CATHOLIC PAPERS AS A MEANS OF INSTRUCTION AND CONVERSION

On a recent Sunday Bishop Hoban, of Scranton, delivered a sermon from which this striking extract is taken: "Do we strive to advance the Kingdom of Jesus Christ? Do we share our treasure, our knowledge of the faith with others? Converts say we do not. Converts tell us that they do not owe their conversion to any assistance rendered them by Catholics. In this country there are thousands who are anxious to learn the truth. They hear the worst that can be said of us, and this worst has been so vile that intelligent Protestants have been horrified, others not so intelligent believing every story that is printed. Do we do our duty in offsetting these evils? Do we support our Catholic magazines and newspapers? Do we subscribe to them and help them spread the truths of religion? We do not do these things as we should. Every Catholic home should have one or more Catholic newspapers, and Catholics should read these regularly. When you help support Catholic publications, you are advancing religious interests."

"Our Catholic magazines and our Catholic newspapers have a field distinctly their own. They are messengers of religion. They should be in every home, and after being read by Catholics, they should be handed to fair-minded non-Catholics, whose good opinion we should always strive to secure and retain. The early followers of our Lord were zealous in spreading the truth. We can look across the gap of the centuries and we can picture the scenes that are narrated in the Gospel and we can see in our minds the people spreading the Word of God. My dearly beloved brethren, if these early followers of Jesus Christ spread the Gospel so eagerly, why shouldn't we in the twentieth century do our share in this great work. We should carry home with us these two lessons: First, the kindness, gentleness, generosity and charity of Jesus Christ as exemplified in the Gospel, the eagerness, the zeal and devotion that was in the minds of those who gathered in that far off Eastern land to hear the words of Jesus Christ."—Philadelphia Standard and Times.

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