

bare, unlovely walls. All his life, in his own home, they had rested on things of beauty. These had come to be almost a necessity to Paul Henderson's art loving nature.

Suddenly his eyes followed those of his prospective landlady and rested on an engraving of the Mother and the Child.

"If you are not a Catholic, sir," the good woman was saying, "I will have the picture removed."

"Pray do not," he answered hastily. "I am not a Catholic, but I like the picture."

So it remained, the one thing of beauty in that attic room. Take what position he would for writing or study, the tender eyes of the divine Mother seemed ever watching. What an influence that picture came to exert over Paul Henderson's life was known only to his Creator and himself.

Even in the first bright and happy days of his college life, looking up from his reading and meeting those tender eyes, he sometimes whispered, "Mother of Christ, pray for me."

In the dark, dark after days, when the bitterness of death was in his soul, the loving eyes seemed filled with tears of sweet compassion; perhaps he saw through a mist, but oftener now, in the darkness of his despair, the cry went forth, "Mother of God, pray for me."

Long before this the picture had become his personal property. The purchase of it had become a subject of speculation and jest among his companions, but Paul Henderson "changed all that."

Among the students of those days are men, grave and elderly now, who have never forgotten a certain winter evening spent in that attic room. Song and laugh were ringing loudest when one of their number rose, with a coarse jest, to propose a toast. No one noticed that Paul Henderson's glass alone was empty, but the speaker never finished. A hand of iron grasped his, and the glass lay shivered in a thousand fragments beneath the picture of the Madonna.

Those who once saw Paul Henderson angry rarely forgot it, and so it came to pass that on entering his room, as one of his classmates observed, "men left the room, the flesh, and the devil outside."

He had taken his degree with honors and still occupied the attic room, for his practice lay almost exclusively among the poor and unfortunate—*les miserables*, as he often called them. They loved and revered him; in return he loved and pitied them, and wished that for their sakes his father's fortune had come to him.

The day came when he left the room poorer than he had entered it, his only earthly possessions the worn circle of gold which had been his mother's wedding ring and the picture of the Madonna.

Mile after mile he walked, while people stared at the gaunt young man, with the fever of delirium already burning in his eyes; jostling and being jostled by the hurrying pedestrians longing only to escape the turmoil of the city and to reach some country hillside, there to close his eyes for ever beneath the shade of trees, with the Madonna's face looking its heavenly compassion upon him.

Suddenly the sound of church bells near turned his thoughts in a new direction. He remembered that it was the Feast of the Ascension, and as in a dream he remembered kneeling on that day, years ago, in church by his mother's side. He recalled the long homeward drive in the liveried carriage as he stumbled blindly and clutched at the gate for support. An Irish gardener crossing the lawn saw him and came quickly forward. With native Irish shrewdness he saw that the young man was exhausted by hunger and fatigue, but he saw also, despite the shabby attire, that he was a gentleman; and with instinctive courtesy he attributed his exhaustion to "the heat of the day."

"Rest ye here, while I go yonder to the kitchen and fetch ye a drink of water, sir."

Paul Henderson rested on a garden chair while this good Samaritan brought him a glass of milk.

"Not a drop of water could I find, sir, and I thought mayhap you would take the milk instead."

There are lies, ere they ascend to heaven, over which the recording angel lets fall a tear and blots them out for ever!

The house happened to be the priest's residence, and Paul Henderson asked if he might leave his picture in charge of the gardener while he went to attend the church service.

"With the greatest pleasure in life, sir. What a grand thing it is to be a good Catholic," he added, looking admiringly at the gentleman before him.

"I am not a Catholic, my friend," Paul Henderson answered wearily, as he rose to go. "If I were sure of a few years' longer residence in this world, I might become one. I have always felt a strange attraction toward the Catholic faith, but as it is I must take my doubts and perplexities as set at rest for ever—to the foot of the great white throne."

The choir was intoning the "Kyrie" as he entered. The waves of pathetic

entreaty for mercy and pardon followed him, as he went hesitatingly up the aisle looking to right and left for a vacant seat. Suddenly the door of a pew was opened, and with a grave, kindly gesture, a young lady bade him enter. He knelt as he saw others around him kneeling, but a noise as of many waters was in his ears, and the myriad altar-lights came and went, went and came, with strange persistency.

He grew vaguely conscious that the young lady's face was strangely familiar. Where had he seen it before? If only that rushing noise in his head would stop, that he might think more clearly! With a gesture of pain he drew his hand across his forehead, and at the same moment the girl's eyes, blue and tender as the sunnier heaven were lifted to his. The pity he saw in their liquid depths brought to his mind a sentence from his favorite novel: "God bless her for her sweet compassion!"

Then he tried to recall the look of the girl who had jilted him; but with a strange sensation, that was half pleasure, half pain, he found that it would not come at his bidding. He only knew that it was not like the face beside him. Above, in the choir, a glorious soprano voice was singing the "Ave Maria." Then the full choir took up the chorus, till the waves of melody seemed "to go up to heaven, and die among the stars."

"*Sancta Maria, Mater Dei, ora pro nobis peccatoribus, nunc et in hora mortis nostrae.*"

"*Ora pro nobis*"—why did the voices suddenly grow so faint, so far away? Was the Madonna praying for him, and was this indeed the hour of his death?

"*Ora*"—the voices trembled, died, and Paul Henderson fell heavily forward.

When he awoke to consciousness it was in a strangely unfamiliar room, but the face of his companion in the pew was looking pityingly down upon him. Again he thought of that sorely tried soul who had made a failure of everything in life except of his love, and in that how transcendently noble he had been! "God bless her for her sweet compassion!" He listened while she told him of the weeks he had lain there, of the delirium that had left him a shadow of his former self, of the talk of his profession, his patients, and the snatches of student songs he had sung. And as he listened, he knew, although she did not tell him, that in his wildest moments of delirium her touch had power to quiet him. The days came and went, and with them came to Paul Henderson a dream of what life might be with this woman's tender eyes looking ever into his.

Almost as mad and hopeless as Sidney Carton's hopeless passion seemed the dawning of love in this man's soul. Yet when the crisis of his illness had passed, and he knew that he would recover, a wild fever of exultation took possession of him. He could have cried aloud for very joy, for he would live and win her love. He remembered the story of Warren Hastings: how at seven years of age he had resolved to win back his father's lost estate, and one day he "Hastings of Daysford."

So one day he, Paul Henderson, would be the happy husband of a happy wife.

In the days of his convalescence he recounted, one by one, the obstacles to his ambition, and overcame them. Poverty? Would that matter to such a woman? Besides, he knew that he had ability to become famous in his profession, and how proud and glad she would be of that. Social position? Well, it was the fault of a clever man if he did not make even a king take off his hat to him. Religion? Ah, yes! little as he knew her, he realized that it was her life, the crowning glory of her womanhood, that which made her lovely beyond all women he had ever known. From thinking on the subject he came to talk of it, and told her the story of the Madonna, and a little of the part it had played in his life.

When he told her how, rather than relinquish it, he had parted with his books, his case of surgical instruments, the precious souvenirs of his home and boyhood, she gave a little, startled cry, and her hot tears fell on his hands lying outside the coverlet.

Paul Henderson was received into the Church some three months later, but he has always maintained that he became a Catholic at the moment when Marian's tears fell on his hands. He says that they washed away forever the last faint traces of prejudice from his soul.

A year from the date of his conversion he became the happy husband of a happy wife. God has blessed and prospered him exceedingly. Many years have passed, and though he has never become wealthy, has never been able to replace his Madonna by a Raphael or a Correggio, he and his sweet wife have stood side by side and heart to heart under Italian skies, admiring the works of the masters.

Paul Henderson's fame is world-wide now. Men tell of the vast work he has done for the Kingdom of Heaven. Visitors to his beautiful home are often startled by the likeness of his wife to a picture of the Madonna in the doctor's study. He is Sir Paul now, and Marian, the guiding star of his life, is Lady Henderson. He smiles, as he thinks how, in his first faint-hearted days, this was one of her favored prophecies.

Is she beautiful, this woman of whom more than one man, in his heart of hearts, has said, "God bless her for her sweet compassion?"

Her husband answered that question once and forever among the Swiss mountains long ago. A friend who had not met him since their student days remarked:

"I hear the most contradictory reports about your wife. Some people aver that she is positively handsome, others that she is striking-looking, others that she is quite plain, and one poor lad, whom she had stopped abruptly on the road to ruin, informed me in all sincerity that 'she was beautiful as an angel.' I dare say you incline to the latter opinion."

"No," the other had answered, "my wife is not beautiful as the world terms beauty, but—here he had paused, and a light that was good to see gleamed in the deep gray eyes, ten thousand feet above the level of the sea, he lifted his hat in homage to a woman three thousand miles away, while he continued—"she will be passing fair in heaven."

Their has been a singularly happy union. The passing years serve only to intensify their affection, for Marian Henderson has fully realized Rogers' beautiful ideal of a wife:

"His house she enters—there to be a light, Shining within when all without is night. A guardian angel o'er his life presiding, Loading his pleasures and his cares dividing, Waiting him back when musing with the throng Of a vain world we love—alas! too long— To household pleasures and to hours of ease, Blessed with that charm, the certainty of pleasure. How oft his eye seeks hers—her gentle mind To all his wishes, all his cares inclined; Still subject, ever on the watch to borrow Mirth at his mirth and sorrow of his sorrow."

LEAGUE OF THE SACRED HEART.

The Reparation of Public Scandals.

GENERAL INTENTION FOR OCTOBER, 1898.

Recommended to our Prayers by His Holiness, Leo XIII.

American Messenger of the Sacred Heart.

Scandal is an offence against the virtue of charity, because it is an injury done to our neighbor: it is the most serious offence against this holy virtue, because it injures his soul; it is any word, deed or omission that causes the spiritual ruin of others; every evil doing and all that has the appearance of evil on our part takes on the malice of scandal when it hurts the soul of another. When anything out of the way in our conduct leads a soul to lose the grace of God, or even to love Him less, or to believe and hope less in Him, and to grow lukewarm and indifferent in His service, we are said to be a scandal, because we are what the term scandal originally meant, a stumbling-block in the way of that soul, coming across the path between it and God.

Scandal injures a soul by depriving it of innocence by making it know what is evil and the way to accomplish evil; it breaks down the constancy of a soul by making it more and more familiar with vice, by magnifying the advantages and urging the motives which allure it to sin; it lessens a soul's esteem for God's majesty and its dread of His chastisements; it gradually begets a contempt for His law, and confirms a soul in its evil ways; it darkens the intellect, perverts the judgment, weakens the will. Sometimes, in the devil's own way, it intends the spiritual ruin it effects, and acts by open advice, solicitations and persuasion; sometimes it merely sets the example, leaving others to follow or ignore it as they may.

Scandal may be given and taken, and fortunately the scandal given is not always taken, though it is none the less sinful for this reason and none the less needing reparation. The blow I aim at my neighbor may be averted or avoided by him, but my intention to harm him is none the less guilty or amenable to punishment for my failure. Scandal is an attempt on the soul's well-being, and even though it may not effect any harm by inducing it to sin, it always pains the upright soul, and often discourages it; "A fainting bath taken of me," sang the Royal Prophet, "because of sinners who have abandoned Thy law."

By its very nature every scandal is more or less public. It is not caused by the hidden private sins, though even these may sometimes come to light to the loss of other souls, as well as to the shame and confusion of the sinner; there is nothing hidden that will not come to light. Still, only such scandals are rightly called public as are given by many persons uniting together in a criminal deed or course, or by one person whose station or office makes his misconduct affect a number of souls, and taken by several to their spiritual ruin. Thus, when schools or societies of men, or those in high places unite together to attack religion, to teach unsound philosophy, or to supplant religious teaching by purely natural science, they scandalize souls, because they put obstacles in the way of their faith. When the vile newspapers and playwrights purposely cater to the lower passions of their patrons, when they make light of lust, divorce and suicide, they become as many snares and pitfalls in the way of an honest life. Scarcely a day passes that we are not surprised by the disclosure of some great public theft, some grave injustice, some startling immorality; here the people's money is squandered; there the goods of the poor are confiscated; elsewhere the properties of the Church, and everywhere vast enterprises are carried on by bribery and dishonesty, and some grow rich while the many want the necessities of life, and suffer oppression and even slavery from their iniquitous masters.

Without dwelling on these enormous scandals that seem at times to be irreparable, we need not go beyond our own domestic and parochial circles to find much that calls for remedy and

reparation on our part. Unfortunately, there are many prominent Catholics leading scandalous lives, and many rich Catholics filled with the spirit of the world. Here and there, Catholics are living in concubinage, after having obtained civil divorce from lawful wedlock; it may not happen frequently, but even one case is enough to constitute a grave public scandal so far as Catholics are concerned. Then parishioners are quarrelling with their pastors, and thou sends everywhere are keeping away from the Holy Mass and from the Sacraments. All this is the stumbling-block that hinders "the little ones that believe in Me," the children of the Church, and much more those who are not of the true Church, and who look to the lives of its children for the surest evidence of its divine origin.

In the face of this great evil it will not do to cry out with our Lord: "He that shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in Me, it were better for him that a mill stone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be drowned in the depths of the sea." Or, "Woe to the world because of scandals! for it must needs be that scandals come; but nevertheless, woe to that man by whom the scandal cometh!" The scandal-giver knows all this, but self-interest and the gratification of his passions make him deaf to the threat, and sometimes he scoffs at those who repeat it as he would have scoffed, doubtless, at Him who first uttered it. It is not enough to threaten, nor is it the spirit of the One who pronounced this threat, since He wishes not the death of the sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live. Hence it is, that we should pray, first of all, that public scandals may be averted, and secondly, that they may be repaired as much as possible by those who cause them.

The scandal-giver is bound to repair his scandal just as a thief is bound to restore his stolen goods. His obligation to repair his wrong is even more serious than that of the thief, who injures his victim by depriving him of material goods, while the scandal-giver robs his victim of spiritual goods. The good example of a Christian life is, in most cases, sufficient reparation for a public scandal, but at times something more is needed, such as a public admission of the evil done, and even direct and strenuous efforts to save those who have been spiritually injured from the lasting evil influences of the scandal-giver.

This is very difficult; it requires humility, and the efforts and motives of the penitent are not always understood or well received. Quite frequently too many are concerned in the scandal to hope to have all or even a few combine to repair the effects of the bad example they have given. And yet the right order of things requires this reparation, and if those who are the guilty causes of a scandal will not offer to make it, then, besides praying for their change of heart, we owe it to ourselves and to Christ to make what reparation we can for their evil lives.

We owe it to ourselves, because our efforts to repair these scandals will be our very best protection against their evil influence on ourselves, a means of appeasing God who is so grievously offended by them, and who visits great public scandals with terrible chastisements. We owe this reparation to Christ, who has asked for it, particularly when the scandal is given by those who should be most devoted to Him, and who yet wound His Heart by their coldness, irreverence, contempt and sacrilege.

Although all our General Intentions are recommended to us by the Holy Father, we may judge that this one comes with special urgency, since he knows well and feels so keenly the scandals given by men within as well as by men without the fold of Christ, whereby the little ones of the Church, Christ's own flock, and those who are not as yet of His fold, are kept from entering the door after Him, the Shepherd. If the Vicar so bewails the evil done by scandalous men, how much more must Christ deplore them. What a pitiful plaint was coupled with His threat against the scandal-giver: "It needs must be that scandals come," as if there were no means of preventing them.

If scandals cannot be repaired, and we are to pray that every Catholic, and for that matter, all who profess to believe in Christ, may be horrified at the enormity of the public scandals that shock the world, and turn to Him and protest that they sympathize with Him and desire to console Him, and aid Him in repairing the havoc wrought among souls by bad example, impious writings and diabolical counsels. He deigns to permit us to unite with Him in this His own great work, and looks to us for our own good examples, both as individuals and as a body in order to offset the evil impressions made by the scandalous lives of His enemies.

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