

RIGHT SHALL RULE.

Short is the triumph of evil,
Long is the reign of right,
The men who win by the aid of sin,
The nation that rules by might,
The party that lives by corruption,
The trickster, the knave, the thief,
May thrive for a time on the fruits of crime,
But their seeming success is brief.

Sneer if you will at honor,
Make virtue a theme for jest;
Reflect on the man who strives as he can,
To seek and to do the best;
Make goodness a butt for slander
And offer excuse for vice;
Proclaim the old lie, the corruption-ist's cry,
That every man has his price.

Yet know that the truth shall triumph,
That evil shall find its doom;
That the cause of right, tho' subdued by might,
Shall break from the strongest tomb;
That wrong, though it seems to triumph,
Lasts only for a day,
While the cause of truth has eternal youth,
And shall rule o'er the world for aye.

—Selected.

Led Into Light

(By Kathleen Eileen Barry.)

I.

George Ross felt tired, mentally and physically; moreover, a sense of impending calamity weighed him down. Although he tried to reason away the intangible fear that tugged at his heart-strings, it increased in force.

For some time he had been walking up and down the length of his library listening nervously to the hurrying feet in the room overhead. But now he paused by the open window and looked out.

Below him the smooth asphalt of Lexington avenue gleamed in the electric light. A ray from the lamp on the opposite corner fell upon his striking head, with its crown of crisp dark hair, and on his rugged face, from which deep, penetrating eyes looked forth.

That he was a man of strong individuality and keen intellect was discernible at a glance. His firm mouth and square jaw betokened tenacity of purpose and a dominant will. But in his expression there was a kindness amounting almost to sweetness which attracted his weaker brethren.

The night was hot; the atmosphere seemed surcharged with electricity. This thirteenth day of June had been a record-breaker in point of heat and a storm was imminent. Masses of lowering clouds hid the moon; a rumble of thunder sounded in the distance.

At another time George Ross would have lingered to watch the marshaling of the atmospheric forces, but just now he was too restless to remain inactive, and he soon resumed his tramp through the room.

Before he had taken many steps the door opened, and a grave-faced doctor advanced toward him.

"I'm sorry I can't bring you such good news this time, Mr. Ross. The child is a fine, healthy little fellow, as I reported before, but the mother's condition is causing us great anxiety; in fact, Dr. Latham bade me tell you that our worst fears are being realized."

Mr. Ross' lips whitened, but he gave no other sign of the emotions that rioted through his mind and heart.

"I have every confidence in Latham and yourself," he said, quietly; "I know you will do your best for Mrs. Ross. Shall I go to her now?"

"No, we'll send for you later on if—well, if we think it advisable."

Mr. Ross nodded. He escorted Dr. Norris to the foot of the stairs and watched him enter the room above; then he returned to the window.

As he stood there he thought of the eighteen years of his married life and of the woman who had been his help-mate in sunshine and shadow.

If he had known how to pray or if he had believed in the existence of God he would have poured out his soul in agonized supplications for her safety. But since he had passed the adolescent stage he had been an unbeliever, and now his maturer years he was known as the founder of a new school of antitheism which out-ripped the Kantian school.

This being so, he could only hope and wait. And all the while the undefinable fear grew stronger, until at last his blood felt as though it had turned into water.

He tried to calm his mind by thinking of his brilliant career as lecturer, author, and man of science. He thought of the pinnacle on which his labors had placed him; of the adulation he was constantly receiving from his disciples; of the ideal home and social life which he enjoyed. He dwelt, too, on the fact that after years of fruitless yearning he had now a son to inherit his name and fame, and that this, the dearest wish of his heart, had been satisfied long after he had ceased to hope for its fulfillment.

For the moment the pride and ambitious hopes engendered by the

thoughts of his boy made him forget all else. The next instant he was roused from his reverie by the breaking of the storm.

The sky looked like congealed blood, streaks of forked lightning shot diagonally along it, peal after peal of thunder crashed over the roof tops, the very air seemed palpitating with terror.

All at once his wonted calmness returned. He leant far out and fearlessly watched the conflict of the elements.

The rain-swept avenue was deserted; even the cable cars no longer whizzed by. In the opposite house he caught a glimpse of a group of women huddled in a corner of the room. The vivid flashes of light showed him their white, scared faces. He noticed that they repeatedly made the sign of the cross, and his lip curled scornfully at the sight of what he considered a superstitious practice.

As he again looked skyward he beheld an intense blue-white glare, from out of which a line of light shaped like a writhing serpent, suddenly shot downward, it twisted about the slender spire of the church, then glanced off, and simultaneously he felt as though a red-hot wire had pierced his eyeballs.

He jerked his head and pressing his hands over his lids swayed to and fro in voiceless agony.

When he again opened his eyes impenetrable darkness surrounded him. With quick, uneven steps he groped his way to the electric button above the desk and pressed it. There was no result. Cimmerian darkness still encompassed him.

He stammered to the bell-ropes and clutched at it. Its loud summons rang through the house. After a moment he heard his butler's quiet interrogative, "Yes, sir?"

"The lights, John!" he cried hoarsely; "I can't turn them on. Bring lamps—candles—anything—only be quick!"

"Lights, sir! Why they were on full head. The room is ablaze with them!"

A low cry startled the man. He advanced hurriedly and peered into his master's ashen face. What he saw there upset his self-possession.

"Merciful God! You're blind!" he exclaimed. "Here—Mary—Jane—Bill—some of you bring down the doc—"

The words died in his throat as a strong hand gripped his windpipe.

"Be still, you fool!" commanded Mr. Ross; "my wife will hear you. Do you want to kill her?" Then the fierce grip relaxed and he said in his usual even tones:

"Go now. I forbid you to gossip about this down stairs. And unless I see you, see that I am not disturbed."

The man whimpered an assent and left the room.

Slowly and uncertainly Mr. Ross walked to his desk in the space between the two windows and sank into a chair. The fury of the storm had abated and a cool, refreshing breeze played on his forehead. He was quaking from head to foot. A sense of utter helplessness oppressed him. The darkness which hemmed him in filled his head with horror. He turned his arms wildly as though to dissipate it. Staggering to his feet he moved towards the window. A heavy oak table was in his path. He collided with it. In his frenzy he beat his hands against it until they were cruelly bruised. Once more he sought the chair before his desk. As he settled into it he moaned, "Blind! Blind!"

And ground his teeth in impotent fury. But he soon summoned his strong will to his aid, and presently he was able to think calmly.

He fully realized what had befallen him. His scientific knowledge made it possible for him to diagnose his own case. And, by a curious coincidence, his friend, Professor Knapp, had told him only three days before of a parallel case, where sudden and complete loss of sight had resulted from exposure to intense light. He remembered that the great oculist had said the prognosis in these rare cases was bad, as the central scotoma or blind spot produced by the exposure invariably remained, despite all leeches, electricity or hypodermatic injections of strychnia that were tried.

The thought that his public career was practically closed in this his forty-fifth year was inexpressibly bitter. He would have to abandon the series of lectures which were setting New York agog; he must cease working on his new book of "Materialistic Philosophy," which he confidently expected would win fresh laurels for him; he would be forever shut out from the sunlight, and, bitterest thought of all, his eyes would never be gladdened by the sight of his child's face!

As these ideas flashed through his mind he was seized with a sickening sensation of giddiness; his head fell forward on his breast and for a period merciful oblivion was vouchsafed him.

II.

When George Ross struggled back to consciousness he served himself to

face with stolid boldness the darkened future. He no longer trembled like a frightened child. He resolved to accept misfortune with as cool and immovable a front as he had hitherto accepted the favors showered on him by Dame Fortune. None must think that disaster had bowed his proud spirit or broken down the superb courage for which he was noted.

His firmness of purpose wavered somewhat as he thought of the grief into which the news of his condition would plunge his wife—that loving, gentle woman who had made him her god in his solitude for her it actually comforted him to remember that if the doctor's fears were well grounded she need never know the worst, that her life would flicker out peacefully and that she would not be called upon to share his burden.

As though in answer to this unspoken thought he heard Dr. Latham's voice at his elbow.

"Ross, dear friend, I have a painful duty to perform. Your poor wife is dying. For years she has suffered with valvular heart trouble of a serious nature. She would not let you know lest it disturb you to the extent of interfering with your work. Neither Dr. Norris nor myself dared oppose her will by speaking openly. But for the past few weeks I have been trying by guarded hints to prepare you for the inevitable. She wishes to take leave of you now. I beg that you will try to keep your natural emotion in check. She has been so patient and resigned all along that it would be a pity if her serenity was disturbed at the end."

He paused and waited for an answer. None came.

Ross, dear fellow, you must meet this trouble like a man. Come now, look up—Oh, good God!"

The exclamation was wrung from the doctor at sight of his friend's anguished face and unseeing stare.

"So you, too, think this is the handiwork of your god!" said Mr. Ross, bitterly; "yet you call Him good and John dubs Him merciful! Why not say He was wise, also, to bide His time and make me blind when I most need my sight?"

Dr. Latham answered soothingly and asked for details of the accident. They were given clearly and succinctly.

"Knapp is out of town," wound up Mr. Ross. "When he comes back tomorrow I will place myself under his care. He has one similar case. In speaking of it he told me the eyes looked normal when glanced at casually, but that the ophthalmoscope disclosed an opaque spot of white at the macula surrounded by a ring of congestion. Examine mine and tell me if Millicent is likely to notice my blindness. I intend to conceal it from her, if possible."

"She won't know. Dying eyes are not sharp. But have you strength enough to play such a part beside her deathbed? It would be a terrible ordeal."

"Not half so terrible as to let her suspect the truth or to remain away from her when she asks for me. Give me your arm, Lat-am. You must help me to a chair close by her and guide my hand so that it may clasp hers. Don't be afraid. I won't break down."

A few moments later he was in the room where the Angels of Death and Life hovered over the mother and her babe.

"I have given you a son, Heart's Dearest," Mrs. Ross said, faintly; "before long he will take my place."

"No one can ever do that, Millicent—neither man, woman nor child."

He could not see the love-light in her face, but the weak pressure of her fingers spoke volumes.

"I want you to look at our boy now," she whispered. "Nurse, bring him here, please. See, George, isn't he pretty? What color do you think his eyes are?"

Mr. Ross' head dropped lower: "I—I hardly know, dear Blue, are they not?" he hazarded.

She smiled triumphantly. "George, you are color-blind! They are brown—deep, deep brown, like your own."

A stifled groan broke from the blind man. She did not hear it. The fictitious strength which had come to her at sight of him was fading away. She gasped for breath and moaned feebly as a spasm of pain shot through her.

"Is there anything I can do for you, Millicent?" he asked, tenderly. "Is there any wish of your ungratified?"

Her cold hands clung to his. In broken sentences she cried:

"Oh, George, I'm afraid to die! You said there was no after life. I gave up my faith for you. And now it is so dark; everything is slipping away from me, there is nothing to hold on to. I feel death's icy touch on my heart. The logical sophistries of the people we now bring me nothing of comfort. There is a God somewhere. I feel it now. But I cannot reach Him!"

She fell back exhausted, the death-dew on her brow. He bent over her, murmuring every fond and reassuring word that came to him. For awhile there was silence. The ticking of the clock of the mantelpiece seemed to

beat on his brain with the force of a sledge hammer.

Presently she spoke again, this time more faintly than before:

"George—the baby—I want him baptized. I won't rest easy in my grave unless—" The weak voice trailed off into silence.

The nurse, an old woman in snowy apron, kerchief and quaint cap, stepped to the bedside again. Her tear-stained face looked like a withered apple which still retained a fleck of pristine roshness.

She bent over the dying woman and said softly: "Listen to me, accush—listen to Peggie, who has known you all the thirty-eight years of your life. Let me send for the priest. Old Father Mack lives in the next block. He'll christen your baby and whisper the good word in your ear. Darlint, let me fetch him!"

With sudden and marvelous strength Millicent Ross raised herself on the pillows:

"George, I may send for him? You will let him come?"

"If it please you—yes."

Old Peggie hobbled off as fast as her rheumatic limbs would carry her. Dr. Latham administered a cordial, which brought back some color to the gray face. George Ross sat beside her, with lowered eyelids. His iron self-control never faltered, although he was undergoing torments. Soon a venerable priest entered. When he approached the bed Millicent whispered: "My baby—baptize him!"

Peggie made some hasty preparations, and picking up a small white bundle from the foot of the bed came forward.

"What name?" asked Father Mack.

Mr. Ross did not answer; neither did his wife. She was watching that animate bundle with wistful eyes.

"George, after his father, perhaps," suggested Dr. Latham.

Mr. Ross shook his head negatively.

"Anthony, after your father, darlint," put in Peggie. "And this is St. Anthony's birthday, too."

No objection being made, the priest repeated the name and went through the baptismal service in its simplest form. Then he again stooped over the mother and spoke to her in low, earnest tones.

"You can do nothing for me," she gasped. "It's too late. I gave up my faith long ago. I am an unbeliever."

"My poor child, it is never too late. And no creature is an unbeliever at heart, whatever they may say or think to the contrary."

He talked on and on and she listened greedily. Then she said the Lord's Prayer, and her faltering voice repeated it after him, word for word. The creed was gone through in the same way and a fervent act of contrition.

Suddenly Mr. Ross felt her hand slip from his grasp to the crucifix which was held out to her. His heart was wrung with pain. She had loved him so wholly, so absordedly, yet now that she was going from him forever she forsook his clasp to cling to the emblem of Christianity against which he had waged war for a score of years!

"Verily, if this priest be right," he mused; "if Jesus of Nazareth, whom I called the Galilean idyl, was truly God, His hour of triumph is here!"

The trend of his thoughts was disturbed by her thrilling whisper:

"Dear love—good-bye! We'll meet again. Our boy will bring you to me. I'll wait for you—up there—with my Saviour and—"

These were her last words. Her breathing became more labored, her "dread" death rattle sounded in her throat; then followed a few long-drawn breaths, a convulsive quivering of the limbs, and all was over.

Father Mack closed her eyes and, turning to the bereaved husband, murmured a word of comfort.

"That will do; you've completed what you considered your duty," was the cold answer. "Now go! Here—I will pay you."

He thrust his hand into his pocket and pulled out a roll of bills.

The priest gently pucked back the outstretched hand.

"We expect neither money nor thanks for doing our duty," he said, with simple dignity. "Good night. May God in His mercy console you. And may you one day see light."

A species of frenzy shook George Ross.

"Clear out, all of you!" he shouted; "Latham, Peggie and you, sir, go! Leave me alone with my dead."

They obeyed silently. But at the door the priest stopped and took the child from the nurse. He went back and held it up so that its soot face touched that of the stricken man.

"The living has a claim on you as well as the dead. Remember that!" he said, solemnly.

George Ross ever-increasing gloom and despondency.

The leading oculists of America had failed in their efforts to restore his sight. They had all declared him incurable. But an English specialist, who had won fame by a new method of treating the eyes with electricity, gave a different verdict. He assured the patient that he would bring back the sight by persistent treatment, and that it would probably return as suddenly and swiftly as the lightning flash which took it away. Mr. Ross put himself in this specialist's hands, yet he felt utterly hopeless as to the result. He was weary of life, and was only restrained from self-destruction by love for his son. The child was the one ray of light in his darkened existence—the one bright star in the never-ending night through which he moved. He idolized the boy, and Anthony in turn adored this sad-faced man who was so cold and stern to all save him.

As soon as he could toddle he caught his father's hand and tried to lead him into the sunshine. As he grew older he gravely called himself "Daddy's Eyes."

They were inseparable. Mr. Ross talked to him as though he were a companion of his own age. The most perfect understanding and sympathy existed between them.

Just now Anthony was perched on his father's knee. He held a small mirror, into which he gazed intently.

"I haven't grown much since my last birthday, daddy," he said. "You 'member how I looked then?"

"Yes, little son. You gave me a word picture of yourself. But I want another now."

"Well, my eyes look like Peggie's chocolate drops, on'y there's a lot of shiny white round them an' they's very big; an' my hair's the same as that golden floss they sew things with. It's too long; it makes me hot an' the boys call me girl-baby. Can't I cut it off, daddy?"

"I'll speak to Peggie about it by-and-by, dear. Go on."

"Oh, that's all, on'y I have a teeny weeny red mouth, and there's a frowny place just like yours on my forehead."

"But you never frown, Tony; you are always smiling?"

"Deed, no, daddy. I've got a big temper inside of me. It did jump out to-day like my Jack-in-the-box, an' I knocked Cousin Eddie down."

"Anthony! he's older and stronger than you! What was the trouble?"

"He sulted you. He said you didn't believe in God; then I hit him hard an' he fell."

"So, my son, you are an exponent of muscular Christianity! Hump! All you professing believers, big and little, are alike; you are ready to kill each other at any time for a mere difference of opinion. Now, you must tell your cousin you are sorry. He was quite right. I do not believe in God!"

The child wound his arms around his father's neck and, kissing the shut lids, said, pityingly: "Oh, my poor, poor daddy! That's 'cause you can't see!"

The sorrow in the sweet voice went straight to the father's heart. He dared not trust himself to speak.

"I am your eyes, daddy dear. I'll show you where God is. His house is in the sky. My mudder is with Him. She comes 'sometimes when I'm asleep. She says she's waiting up there for you an' me, an' that I must bring you to her."

George Ross started as he remembered his wife's farewell words. Then he said quietly: "You are fanciful, my boy. Your mother died when you were six hours old, so how could you know her even if it was possible for her to come to you in a dream?"

"Oh, I did know her the very first time," the child said confidently. "It was when I was so awful sick. She did hold out her hand and smile at me. Daddy, you b'lieved in God that time. Peggie said she did hear you pray to Him!"

George Ross winced. He did not like to be reminded of what he called his "monetary weakness," when he had dropped on his knees beside his fever-racked child and echoed old Peggie's prayer: "Oh, God, don't take him from us! In Thy mercy let him live!"

He put the boy down gently. "Run away, Tony, and play with your birthday present."

The child obeyed, and the father paced the length of his library wrapped in thought.

He recalled the days of his youth and the unhappiness in this home resulting from that crying evil known as "a mixed marriage." When he grew old enough to have an opinion of his own, he refused to embrace the religious tenets held by his father and was equally reluctant to adopt his mother's beliefs. He resolved to find out for himself the underlying principles of Christianity and select the creed that seemed most in accord with them.

To further this end he began a course of desultory reading, and was soon lost in a quagmire of sophism as misleading as it was brilliant. He emerged from it a confirmed unbeliever, and for twenty years waged war against the Creator. His wear-

pon was not the sword of ridicule so clumsily wielded by some of his brethren, or the blasphemous invectives which defeated their own end by disgusting the listener. With all the strength of personal conviction he denied that there was anything psychical in the universe outside of human consciousness. He rejected the Bible as an authority in doctrine and morals on the plea that it consisted solely of hypothetical assumptions and untenable statements, and he had a way of presenting the rationale of his narratives—stripping them of their mysteries and theological adjuncts—which impressed the hearers.

As he was master of one of the best prose styles, his writings were eagerly read and his lectures were largely attended. "Facts" when expounded by this clear-voiced, keen-brained man of science were accepted more readily than they would be presented by a less gifted individual.

He paused now in his walk and sighed heavily as he remembered that this was the fifth anniversary of the night when his public career had come to a sudden end.

His gloomy reflections were interrupted by the hasty entrance of his son. The boy rushed up to him and in a voice vibrating with excitement cried: "Daddy—daddy—come quick! Peggie's niece told me about a church in Sullivan street where blind people are cured. St. Anthony is down there, let us go. He will make you see. Hurry—oh, daddy, hurry!"

"Don't be a silly baby! Peggie must not let any one put such superstitious notions in your head. I won't have it. Now, let me hear no more of this nonsense!"

Never before had Anthony heard a note of sternness in his father's voice when addressing him. He slunk back, dismayed, abashed, quivering with pain. He was a brave little fellow, so he tried to restrain the starting tears, but he could not choke back the sob that shook his small frame.

At the sound of it the blind man's heart melted. Dropping on one knee, he opened his arms and said tenderly: "Come to me, Tony. I didn't mean to be cross."

The boy clung to him. After a moment he whispered pleadingly: "Oh, daddy, if you'd on'y come! Please do—jus' this little once. For my sake—do!"

Mr. Ross marvelled at the child's insistence. Hitherto his lightest word had been a law to the boy—a law to be obeyed instantly and unquestioningly. He was displeased to find this instance proved an exception, but when he found that the child was trembling with earnestness and that his whole heart seemed bent on visiting the church, he gave in.

"Very well. I will take you there, since you wish it so much. Tell John to get a hansom."

An ecstatic hug rewarded him. Five minutes later father and son were bowling towards Sullivan street. The servants in the Ross household were greatly excited over the incident. They crowded to the windows and peeped after the retreating vehicle.

"Sure it's a beautiful sight to watch the mather goin' towards the House of God wid an angel ladin' him be the hand," sobbed old Peggie. "an' mark my words, girls and boys, he'll come home to us a changed man! Something inside of me whispers it. Let's kneel down every wan of us an' pray for him!"

IV.

As the hansom neared the Church of St. Anthony of Padua, in the heart of the Italian district, the boy looked out curiously. He saw a dirty, narrow street, shut in on either side with frowning tenements and swarming with half-clad children, who tumbled over each other on the car tracks and in the gutters.

When they alighted before the door of the basement or lower church, where the Tuesday night devotions are held, he drew his father after the people who were entering. They were late, the services having been in progress for some time. An usher piloted them into a pew in the middle aisle, not far from the altar. Anthony could not see over the heads of those before him, but he listened eagerly to the preacher, who from the altar steps exhorted the congregation.

Dr. Ross listened, too, but with very different sentiments. He felt an impatient desire to rise and combat those dogmatic statements relative to the great truths of Christianity. And he scoffed inwardly on hearing the long list of favors asked for and received through St. Anthony's intercession. Then, too, his fastidious nature rebelled against the enforced contact with the sweltering mass of humanity around him.

Meanwhile Anthony's anxiety to see the preacher grew too strong to be repressed. He climbed on the seat and looked towards the altar. As he did so his heart gave a great throb for he saw there a strangely familiar figure clad in a long brown robe, with a girdle around the waist.

Nearly every one present knew that the wearer of this Franciscan habit

was not the sword of ridicule so clumsily wielded by some of his brethren, or the blasphemous invectives which defeated their own end by disgusting the listener. With all the strength of personal conviction he denied that there was anything psychical in the universe outside of human consciousness. He rejected the Bible as an authority in doctrine and morals on the plea that it consisted solely of hypothetical assumptions and untenable statements, and he had a way of presenting the rationale of his narratives—stripping them of their mysteries and theological adjuncts—which impressed the hearers.

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