Fadder. He says he's sure he ain't goin' ter last much longer."

All right," the priest answered; " wait for me and we will go back to

In a few moments he had changed started to the home of the sick boy.

The chill of November was in the air, and the hard asphalt pavement, glittering with patches of light from street lamps, gave a cold look to the street. They drew their coats about them and hurried along in the face of the cutting The plate-glass windows of the well lit stores had, for the first time, that hazy appearance which tells that winter is nigh. They noticed that a drug store which they passed displayed a placard in the window, on which were the words, "Hot Soda." Nobody seemed to stop to buy, as on other evenings, at the fruit stand on the corner; the heaps of golden oranges, rosy red apples and yellow bananas looked mare brilliant than tempting under the light from the gasoline lamp which flared in the midst of them. One stray bicyclist in a white jersey flew the avenue, as if blown by the

wind. the priest and the newsboy hurried along the sound of distant music reached them, and when they arrived at Stanton street they encountered two processions; one was a politi-cal procession composed of Italians, and led by a pioneer corps of young men with bear skin caps and showy uniforms. The men in the body of the procession carried colored torches and transparencies with their political sentiments in good Italian and bad English blazing upon them. They shouted, swung their lanterns, waived their torches and twirled their transparencies at the slightest provoca-The funereal quiet which enshrouds nearly all the processions of the more phlegmatic people of the North was conspicuous by its absence. A band of men in flaming red shirts and women with poke-bonnets from the Salvation Army barracks near Cooper Institute formed the other procession. They beat on tambourines and sang a hymn to the tune of "Three Cheers for the Red, White and Blue." Great numbers followed both processions, and the priest and his companion made their way with difficulty through the crowd of people and finally reached

their destination. The house in which the newsboy lay dying was a rear one. You entered to it by means of a long narrow alley running through the front house, and so low that a moderately tall man would have to bend his head in passing through it. The alley led into a yard, which served for several houses. had been wash-day, and the hanging linen choked up all the open space. pool of water from a leaking pump awaited the coming of the priest, and in the darkness he stepped into it.

The house in which the sick boy resided was the last of a row. There was no oilcloth on the rough stairs, and the one defective gas burner left the halls in great darkness. In striking contrast to the rest of the house was the room in which the newsboy lay The mellow light from a large table lamp, covered with a pink shade, and the fire in the open grate, gave a warm, cosy look to the apart-An engraving of our Lord's Last Supper and a League Promoter's diploma filled the space over the man-On the opposite wall there were faded photographs of the late Cardinal McCloskey and the late Father Starrs, in old fashioned frames, and a new one of the present Archbishop of New York, in a white and gold frame. In the narrow bed-room lithographs of Our Lord, with one hand pointing to His Sacred Heart, and of the Mother of Sorrows were visible. . Two things struck one on entering the apartment -its cheerfulness and its religious ap-

pearance. In the corner of the room the young newsboy was lying on a lounge, with the unmistakable look of death on his white face. His elder sister sat by him, tenderly smoothing down his brown hair upon his forehead, while the other one, several years younger than himself, sat at the foot of the lounge looking anxiously into his wandering eyes. The three made up the family. Two friends of the dying boy were standing at his side when the priest entered; Tommy, who also sold newspapers, and Tony, a young Italian lad. The only cheerful looking face in the room was that of the dying boy. He smiled as the priest came in and extended his thin hand to him, at the same time whispering an

apology.
"I'm sorry for boddering you, Fadder, but I want ter bid yer goodbye-I'm going to our Lord to-night.

The priest took the cold hand, and kneeling on one knee by the side of the couch, rubbed the death-sweat from off the boy's forehead, as he said: "And I am sure, Johnny, that you are glad our Lord is taking you."

"Very, very," the newsboy replied earnestly, as he turned his eyes toward the ceiling, with a look of thankful ness in them.

They knelt about the bedside—the priest, the sisters of the boy and his faithful followers, and said the prayers for the dying. When they had finished, Johnnie remained motionless for a few moments, with his hands folded in silent prayer and his eyes looking up to heaven. After that he turned on his side, and, reaching out

his hand, said faintly:
"Good-by, fellers, and if I ever done yous any wrong I take it back.
Forgive me, won't yer, fellers?"
It was a noble little speech. He

added when he caught his breath

Don't forget, fellers, to pray for

The youngest of the trio, sobbing with grief, was the first to grab the outstretched hand.

outstretched hand.
"Good-by, Tommy," the dying boy
whispered. "I thought you'd go be
fore me when the butcher cart ran
hat" trying to smile, "I over you, but," trying to smile, guess you've got as many lives as the

cats in Cat alley."

One side of Tommy's head was terribly scarred where it had been bruised by the wheel of the butcher's cart, under which he had fallen one evening as he jumped off a street car with

his bundle of newspapers.

Tony, the young Italian lad, was the next to take the hand of the dying newsboy, kissing it with the warm affection of a child of a Southern race

and wetting it with his tears.
"He's jes' de same as San Luigi, he confided to the priest as he stood aside from the couch, drying his tears with a handkerchief, which might have been white some weeks before. 'He never missa de mass, he never play de hook, he never fighta, he never play de crap. He jes' lika," he added after some reflection, "Georgey Wash; he never, never tell a curs

It was pathetic to listen to the little fellow's description of the little boy lying on the lounge, while his black eyes grew large and lustrous as the tears flooded them. Evidently he had somewhere come across a garbled edition of the famous hatchet story, and thus, in his compassion, added a new lustre to the fame of the Father of Our

Country. "Migsy," the closest friend of the dying boy, was the next one to come near the couch. Migsy was the name of the newsboy whom the priest met selling "extras" that afternoon on the Bowery. He had been given that name by his companions because he the surest shot at marbles (migs) in that neighborhood. For a moment as Migsy knelt by his suffering friend and took his hand and looked into his glassy eyes, it seemed that he, too, like the others, would give way to tears. The dying boy drew him nearer to himself to whisper in his ear: "Remember what you promised me, Migsy.

No more staying out at nights."

Migsy passionately pressed the cold etween his two and answered : Never, never again !" were filled with tears and his quick breathing gave signs of his mounting He bowed his head a little closer to his dving companion and whispered in the dull ear, as the suppressed grief was fast gaining a mas tery over him: "It's breakin, me heart, Johnnie, for ter see yer dyin."

Just then a sob from the foot of the lounge, where the younger sister was sitting, broke the silence of the room. It was Migsy's warning. It reminded him of the priest's words not to increase the pain and anguish of the dying boy's sisters. He drew his head up quickly, pressed the cold hand once more, say-ing: "Good-by, Johnnie; I'll never forget yer," and then rose from his knees and with affected collness made as if to brush the dust of the carpet from off the patches on the knees of his Johnnie nodded to him worn trousers. gratefully for the expression of affection as his tired head fell back upon

the pillow.
"Say, fellers," Migsy remarked, as he joined his companions, "it ain't no use o' cryin'; yers only make it harder for his sisters, see?'

They dried their eyes at his bidding and dropped on their knees beside the priest, who had begun again to say the last prayers for the departing soul. And then death came. It came as softly as the kiss which the boy's elder sister was just then imprinting on his forehead. Up from the street floated the sound of a bell ringing in an elecioneering wagon. Many a time had the dead newsboy shouted out the 'extras" announcing the returns of His funeral bell was the election. therefore a fitting one.

The knowledge of the boy's death spread rapidly through the house, and the neighbors crowded into the room to ee the body and to offer their services. They all drew back, however, at the appearance of a motherly old woman, with a brogue that was rich and sweet who came into the room, puffing vio-lently from the exertion of climbing To her care, because of her great experience, was committed the preparation of the body for the

The mixture of gas and water that that had been giving a miserable light when the priest entered the house was now extinguished, as it was after 10 o'clock. With difficulty he found his way down the rickety stairs. Through the alley came the sound of voices:

"I sell tomale, tomale,
As I stand at de corner of de alley.
And de people dey cry, as now dey go by,
It's as sweet as a chicken—tomale."

Outside on the street a group of young lads were singing these words to an Italian who, dressed in a linen suit as white as snow, made an artistic picture as he stood behind his shining copper can with its cheerful looking fire peeping out beneath. A woman came through the alley just after the priest, drawing her shawl more closely

around her shoulders as she felt the night air chilling her. "Say, Mikey!" she exclaimed, her teeth chattering with the cold, "stop your singing and go up and tell the undertaker to come down right away.

The singing ceased immediately. "Wadsdemadder, mudder? body dead?" inquired the boy, in an

awed voice.
"Yes, to be sure," his mother replied; "do ye suppose any one would send for an undertaker for a live per-Little Johnnie is gone to

heaven. The boys' faces blanched at the news of the death. For a moment not one of them stirred.

"Are ye going to do what I told dusty ride brought the mourners to the ye?" asked the boy's mother, impaticemetery, and they entered its gate to ently, as she shivered still more from the cold, "or are ye going to stand there like an omadhaun all night?"

This admonition awakened the boy rem the reverie into which he had lapsed, and without questioning any further he started on his errand, the rest of the group falling in behind him. They walked along without speaking for a few moments, not a little fright ened at the news they had heard. smallest lad of all was the first to break the silence.

"Jes' t'ink, fellers, while we was out in de street singin' poor Johnnie

was in de house dyin'. A shudder passed through them all and they hurried out of the gloom of the street to reach a better lighted spot.

The words of the small boy gave them no consolation, but only made them feel as if they had committed a sacrilege. Some kind of reparation was in As they turned the corner Mikey halted under the welcome elec tric light and the company stopped

Wadderyersay," he proposed ten derly, " ef we all go ter confession Saturday night and receive Communion for Johnnie on Sunday mornin'? Dat's wad he'd 'a done ef he heard anny of us was dead.

"We're wid ver," they all an

swered in a chorus.

This resolution seemed to revive their spirits and they gradually recovered from the shock they had re-ceived. The rest of the journey was spent in laudations of their dead friend.

Two days afterwards the funeral of the newsboy was passing down the street on its way to the cemetery. The white hearse shone in the bright November sunlight, and the white plumes on it tossed like bunches of feathery wild flowers in the crisp breeze. A wreath of roses, with the word "Johnnie" in purple stained immortelles, rested on the coffin. was the gift of the newsboys. Chil-dren innumerable blocked up the side walk, to view the funeral procession, and especially to feast their eyes on the white hearse and coffin, which have such a wonderful attraction for children living in the poorer neighborhoods. On top of the second coach, holding the reins while the driver was pulling on his gloves, sat Migsy. He had hired the coach out of his own savings and had invited some of his friends to fill it. Tony and Tommy, together with four other juvenile mourners, sat inside.

An accident to a wagon on the street delayed the funeral for a few moments, and just then the priest who had attended the dead newsboy came out of a neighboring house where he had been on a sick call. He stepped up to the first carriage and said a cheering word to the two sorrowing sisters who were within. Migsy, from his seat beside the driver, caught sight of the priest, and hailed him.

"Good morning, Fadder," he said, as he tightly held the reins in both of his hands. "I put de-two-year-olds in his hands. dere," motioning with his head toward the carriage; "meself and de driver the carriage; "meself and de driver kin take care of 'em." The priest gazed within at the six solemn little figures sitting bolt upright, looking strange in their Sunday clothes, and with their unwontedly sad countenances. They all raised their hats together, and put them on again in a mechanical kind of way. They answered the priest's questions in whispers and seemed to be surrounded by pers, and seemed to be surrounded by an atmosphere of gloom, which even es of the priest weller. The hearse began able to dissipate. to get under way, and the priest turned his attention to the boy on the top of the coach.

"Remember, now, the best way for you to show how much you thought of Johnnie is to try to be like him.

"You bet, Fadder ; you're goin' ter see a big change in me now. I promised Johnnie de day before he died dat I'd be a better boy ter me mudder, an wa' I sez I'll do, I'll do, when I sez it. for his sake.

The last words were shouted back a the priest as the coach rolled away swiftly over the asphalt pavement Migsy tucked the blanket closely about him and after heaving a sigh which told that he was suffering, fumbled in the inside pocket of his coat for a moment and then reaching a cigar to the driver, asked in a blase kind of a

'Have a smoke, pard?"

The driver looked at the youth in astonishment, but could discover no indications that the boy felt that he was doing anything extraordinary. Migsy, noticing the delay, imagined that it came from a want of confidence in the gift.

"Yer needn't be afraid of it," he added: "its de kind I always smokes

Overcome by the sang froid of the boy, the driver accepted the cigar and murmured his thanks. Migsy had been at funerals before, and he knew from experience that the proper thing for the mourners to do who rode with the driver was to provide cigars, to make the long drive to the cemetery

pass as pleasantly as possible.

The white hearse and the few carriages which followed it rolled rapidly along the streets, dodging all kinds of vehicles on their way. Two other hearses were waiting at the ferry when they arrived. Finally their turn came, and the boat with the coffin enclosing the dead newsboy moved out with much creaking and ringing of bells from its moorings and paddled across large crafts.

After leaving the ferry boat a long,

cemetery, and they entered its gate to the solemn tolling of the almost neverceasing bell, which registers the en trance of every new tenant into the

city of the dead.

When the prayers had been said in the chapel over the body, it was brought to the open grave to be laid in its final resting place. sad little group collected around the coffin, and the grave diggers slowly lowered it to rest on the top of the two other crumbling coffins which contained the remains of the dead news

boy's father and mother.

Migsy dropped on his knees by the side of the grave. He took up some of the soft earth and held it in his hand while he said a short prayer, interrupted once or twice by the heart breaking sobs of the dead newsboy's two sisters. The sharp sound of the gravedigger's first spadeful of earth striking the coffin awoke him from reverie. He held the handful of earth over the open grave for a moment, and then letting it fall softly, lest he might injure the silver plate of the shining oak coffin, he registered his vows:

No more stayin' out nights; ne more disobeyin' me mudder. A great lump in his throat made him pause for an instant; then he finished "and I'll try ter be like you, John

The red earth lay deep on the coffin of the dead newsboy. — Messenger of the Sacred Heart.

CONVERSION OF NICOLAS NERLI.

In that period lived Nicolas Nerli, banker in the noble city of Florence. When the morning bell rang he was at his desk, and when it rang at noon he was still seated there, and all day he made figures on his tablets. He ent money to the Emperor and to the Pope. And if he did not lend money to the devil it was because he feared to do unsuccessful business with the one who is called the smart, and who abounds in stratagems. Nicolas Nerli was audacious and defiant. He had acquired great riches and despoiled many people. That is why he is held in high honor in the city of Florence. He lived in a palace wherein the light that God created entered only by narrow windows; and this was prudent for the house of the rich must be like a citadel, and those who possess great goods do wisely to defend by force what they have acquired by ruse.

The palace of Nicolas Nerli was

ornamented with griles and chains. In the interior the walls were painted by skillful workmen, who had repre-sented the virtues under the appearance of women, the patriarchs, the prophets and the Kings of Israel. Tapestries hanging in the rooms offered to the eyes the histories of Alexander and of Tristram as they are

related in the novels. Nicolas Nerli made his wealth dazzle the city by his foundations. He had raised outside the walls a hospital the frieze of which, sculptured and painted, represented the most honorable actions of his life; in acknowledgement of the sums of money which he had given for the church his portrait was placed in the choir. One could see him kneeling, his hands clasped in prayer, at the feet of the very holy Virgin. And he was recognized by his cap of red wool, and by his face bathed in yellow grease, and by his quick little eyes. His good wife, Mona Bismantova, wearing an honest and sad air, and so that no one could ever imagine that any body ever had any pleasure in her conversation, was on the other side of the

Virgin in humble attitude of prayer. This man was one of the first citizens of the republic ; as he had never spoken against the laws, and as he had never cared for the poor, nor for those that the powerful condemned to fines and to exile, nothing had diminished in the opinion of the magistrates the esteem which he had acquired in their view by his great wealth.

One winter night, as he came home later than usual, he was surrounded at the threshold of his door by a crowd of beggars. He pushed them and spoke harshly to them. But hunger made them savage and bold as wolves. They formed a circle round him and asked for bread in a plaintive voice. He bent to pick up stones to throw after them, when he saw one of his servants coming with a basket full of black bread intended for the stablemen, the cooks and gardeners.

He told the man to come to him and threw the bread to the beggars. Then he went into his house and slept. In his sleep an attack of apoplexy made him die so suddenly that he still thought he was in bed when he saw, in a place where there was no light, Saint Michael, illuminated by a light coming from his own body. Archangel, scales in hand, placed on the heaviest side the jewels of widows that the banker had in pawn, the multitudes of scrapings of coins which he had unduly retained, and certain pieces of gold which he alone possessed, having acquired them by fraud. Nicolas Nerli saw that it was his life which Saint Michael was weighing before him, and became attentive and

anxious. "Sir Saint Michael," he said. you place on side all the gains that I have had in life, place on the other if you please, the beautiful foundations by which I have magnificently proved my piety. Do not forget the dome to the church, nor the hospital outside the walls, which was built entirely with my money."

"Do not fear, Nicolas Nerli," anthe rushing river alive with small and swered the Archangel, "I will forget nothing."

And with his glorious hands he

placed in the lightest scale the dome of the church and the sculptured and painted frieze of the hospital. But the scale did not come down. The banker became anxious.

"Sir Saint Michael," he said, try to find something else. You have not put on this side of the scales my beautiful holy water vessel of St. John, nor the pulpit of St. Andrew, where the baptism of our Lord Jesus Christ is ropresented in life size. work for which I have paid a great deal of money."

The Archangel put the pulpit and the vessel of holy water over pital on the scales, which would not Nicolas Nerli felt a cold sweat on his

"Sir Archangel," he asked, "are

you very sure that you are right?"
Saint Michael replied, smilingly,
that, though they were not on the
model of the scales which the money changers of Paris and Venice use they

did not lack exactness.
"What!" exclaimed Nicolas Nerli, looking very pale. "This dome this pulpit, this eistern, this hospital with all its beds weigh no more than the feather of a bird?"

"You see, Nicolas," said the Archangel, "the weight of your iniquity is heavier than the number of your good works.

"Then I am to go to hell?" said the Florentine, and his teeth chattered with fear. "Be patient, Nicholas Nerli," said

the celestial weigher, "be patient; we have not yet finished."

And the beatific Michael took the black bread which the rich man had thrown to the poor the day before. put the loaves in the scale, which came down suddenly as the other went up, and the two scales remained on the level. The needle marked perfect

equality between the two weights. The glorious Archangel said to the banker:

"You see. Nicolas Nerli, you are good neither for heaven nor hell. Return to Florence. Multiply in your city these loaves which you gave at night when nobody saw you, and you shall be saved, for it is not enough that the doors to heaven should be open to the thief who repented and to fallen woman who cried. The mercy of God is infinite. It will save even a rich man. Multiply the loaves th weight of which you see in my scales. Nicolas Nerli awoke in bed. He re Multiply the loaves the solved to follow the advice of the arch

angel, and to multiply the bread of the poor in order to enter the kingdom of During the three years which he spent on earth after his first death he

was pitiful to the unfortunate and a

great giver of alms. Catholics and Protestants.

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