

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 together."

In a few moments he had changed his cassock for his coat, and the two 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.

The plate-glass windows of the well-lit stores had, for the first time, that hazy appearance which tells that winter is nigh.

As 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.

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 knowledge of the boy's death spread rapidly through the house, and the neighbors crowded into the room to see the body and to offer their services.

"I'm sorry for boddering you, Fadder, but I want ter bid yer good-bye—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 thankfulness 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.

"Don't forget, fellers, to pray for me when I'm gone."

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

"Good-by, Tommy," the dying boy whispered. "I thought you'd go before me when the butcher cart ran over you, but, trying to smile, 'I 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.

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.

"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.

Migsy passionately pressed the cold hand between his two and answered: "Never, never again!" Migsy's eyes were filled with tears and his quick breathing gave signs of his mounting sorrow.

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.

"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?"

The knowledge of the boy's death spread rapidly through the house, and the neighbors crowded into the room to see the body and to offer their services.

"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.

"Yes, to be sure," his mother replied: "do ye suppose any one would send for an undertaker for a live person?" 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 ye?" asked the boy's mother, impatiently, 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 from 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.

"Jes'tink, 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.

"Wadderyersay," he proposed tenderly, "ef we all go ter confession Saturday night and receive Communion for Johnnie on Sunday mornin'?"

This resolution seemed to revive their spirits and they gradually recovered from the shock they had received. 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.

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.

"Good morning, Fadder," he said, as he tightly held the reins in both of his hands. "I put de two-year-olds in dere, 'motioning with his head toward the carriage; 'meself and de driver kin take care of 'em."

"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' w' I sez I'll do, I'll do, when I sez it, for his sake."

The last words were shouted back at the priest as the coach rolled away swiftly over the asphalt pavement.

"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.

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

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.

After leaving the ferry boat a long, dusty ride brought the mourners to the cemetery, and they entered its gate to the solemn tolling of the almost never-ceasing bell, which registers the entrance 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 away in its final resting place.

The 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 newsboy's father and mother.

A great lump in his throat made him pause for an instant; then he finished—"and I'll try ter be like you, Johnnie."

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.

The palace of Nicolas Nerli was ornamented with grilles and chains. In the interior the walls were painted by skillful workmen, who had represented the virtues under the appearance of women, the patriarchs, the prophets and the Kings of Israel.

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.

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.

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.

The 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.

"Do not fear, Nicolas Nerli," answered 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.

"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 represented in life size. It is the work for which I have paid a great deal of money."

The Archangel put the pulpit and the vessel of holy water over the hospital on the scales, which would not come down.

"Be patient, Nicolas 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. He put the loaves in the scale, which came down suddenly as the other went up, and the two scales remained on the level.

"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 the fallen woman who cried. The mercy of God is infinite. It will save even a rich man. Multiply the loaves the weight of which you see in my scales."

Nicolas Nerli awoke in bed. He resolved to follow the advice of the archangel, and to multiply the bread of the poor in order to enter the kingdom of God.

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.

"There was a time," says the Independent, "when no Protestant seemed to be able to look upon the Catholic Church with the least degree of toleration or allowance. He waged war against it as though it were an evil thing, and only evil. The great amount of prejudice has obscured clear vision, both on the Protestant and Catholic side. We hope that the time is at hand when this prejudice will be dissipated, so that Catholics may come to understand their Protestant fellow-Christians, and appreciate them for what they are; and that a similar view may be taken of Roman Catholic Christians."

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"I have for the last 25 years of my life been complaining of a weakness of the lungs and colds in the head, especially in the winter. Last fall I was again attacked. Reading of Hood's Sarsaparilla I was led to try it. I am now taking the fifth bottle with good results. I can positively say that I have not spent a winter as free from coughs or pains and difficult breathing spells for the last 25 years as was last winter. I can lie down and sleep all night without any annoyance from cough or pain in the lungs or asthmatic difficulty." E. M. CHAMBERS, J. P., Cornhill, N. B.

"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."

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