

Improvisators of Italy were dead," said the Princess Vivia, when she recovered her breath. It had been two much for her; the honest laugh, that had at first twinkled only in her eyes, had burst through all the restraints of widowed propriety upon her lips, her face, and put the whole of her well-conditioned body in a quiver of mirth. Nemestius came in, and Fabian sprang forward to greet him. With a cry of joy Claudia's arms were in another instant around his neck; and the Princess, who by a violent effort had suddenly resumed her widowed expression, held out her hand, which Nemestius raised to his lips and kissed, with that graceful and deferential air which in all ages has been the most delicate homage that can be offered by a man to a woman.

It was a happy evening, supremely so to Claudia; and when at last the Princess—who, whenever she could do so with propriety, kept the poultry hours of the Alban hill—arose to retire, Nemestius accompanied her to her apartments, and asked her permission to say a few words, if it would not be troublesome. In reply, she cordially invited him to enter, wondering what on earth was coming. When he had seen her comfortably seated in her cushioned chair, and drawn a footstool for her feet, he stood leaning against a pillar, so silent that he might have been taken for a statue of Harpocrates; for the thoughts that were at the moment revolving in his mind concentrated and absorbed every faculty.

"I have a great favor to ask," he said at last.

"Consider it granted, whatever it may be, if it lies within the scope of my power," he gravely answered, impressed by his manner, and a certain emotion which he could not entirely suppress, but which possibly would not have been apparent to any eye except a woman's.

"I am a man of but few words. Promise me to refuse without hesitation what I shall ask, if it be not agreeable or convenient. You must have heard ere this that we may have war with a foreign power; every messenger that comes into Rome is expected to bring information of aggressions which will not allow the contest to be postponed a single day. It is only a question of time. Thus knowest the fortunes of war. I shall go to the front with my legionaries, and may never return. In case I fall, wilt thou be a mother to my blind, helpless child?"

"The gods avert such a fate from thee!" exclaimed the Princess, with quick tears; "but—how should they so order it, yes; I will indeed take thy sweet child for my own." She held out her plump, white hands, which he grasped, and then, leaning over, kissed her forehead.

"So we seal the compact. To-morrow I will make all the necessary arrangements transferring her to thy care, and will leave to Fabian the guardianship of her fortune—a charge which would be too fearful thanks for thy ready acquiescence in my wishes, and the immense relief it has given me," said Nemestius, his few words meaning more than a hundred spoken by most men.

"My Nemestius, my kinsman," continued the Princess, nervously, "I will then listen to something which, in my turn, have long wished to say to thee—something which I have much at heart, but dare not give utterance to without thy promise not to be questioned of it." "There may be no question of offence between us, after what has just passed. It is possible I may have to refuse thee, but I will give thee my word, if I do so, should imperative reasons allow me no alternative. Open thy heart to me, then, frankly and with confidence," replied Nemestius, in low, kind tones.

"Speaking of thy lovely child and the war," said the Princess, girding up her courage—for having got thus far, she saw she would have to come, or if it should be necessary, no reason why she should not escape its perils—would it not be better, for thy own happiness and her future, if thou wert married? It is thy duty to give thy daughter a mother who would tenderly care for her, and train her according to her rank. I know of one, beautiful, accomplished, and of high birth—not unknown to thee, and who would fulfill thy highest requirements, and preside with dignity over thy home."

"Dear Princess," said Nemestius, gently, as the emotions of the Princess gathered in a lump in her throat, and threatened to choke her, "accept my thanks for thy interest in my welfare, which I am convinced is sincere and well-meant; but my heart is wedded to the bride of my youth, whose place no other can ever fill. As to my child, nature can never, but never never the sacredness of such a tie as that between a child and the mother who gave it life. Let what has passed between us on this subject go into oblivion. May happiest dreams visit thee my gentle kinswoman!"

The Princess had covered her face with the end of her scarf, ashamed, sorry, and angry with herself for having ventured on so delicate a subject with a man so reserved and unlike other men, as Nemestius; and when she removed it, and timidly lifted her eyes to his mate appeal for pardon, he was no longer there.

TO BE CONTINUED.

The Humility of Greatness

I do not know in recent times a more stirring answer than that of Lacordaire, to the court of peers in France, who asked him what his profession was when he replied simply, "A schoolmaster," unless it be the answer of his friend, the Comte de Montalembert, the noblest specimen of a layman, of the modern French school, to the same question. "A schoolmaster and a peer of France," he said, "it was but the other day that I learned and humbled man of science, who will live in history as having declared that he had 'no time to make money,' began his will with the modest words, 'so great in their modesty.' I, Louis Agassiz, teacher."—Contemporary Review.

BARONE'S TALISMAN.

Turning up the smoky lamp to its utmost in a vain endeavor to make it fulfill its office of lighting the ten-by-twelve room, Jim Barone proceeded to examine the package which he had picked up on the street.

The removal of the inner wrappings of white tissue paper disclosed a diary elaborately bound in embossed leather, covered with a delicate tracery of gold. The fly leaf bore the inscription: "From Ethel to Jim."

Smiling at the coincidence in names, Barone turned the pages idly, admiring the illuminated order and the design of which changed with the changing months. Then turning back to the beginning, he noticed what had before escaped him, a page for resolutions, and at the top, written in the same girlish hand, was the inscription, "I will not touch wine this year," and after it an interrogation point in lead pencil.

Barone laughed cynically. "So!" he said. "A sting in the tail. Evidently some young woman intent on the reform of her lover. Not a rafter, however, or she would not be satisfied with anything less than a life sentence. Shown her class, too, in taking wine as her symbol. Poor, un-sophisticated Ethel! to start a raid against wine and leave the door open to whisky, brandy and gin."

Jim Barone, sitting with the book in his hand, tried to reproduce in his imagination the sender of the gift and its to-have-been recipient.

Had it been lost by some serious-eyed maiden on her way to midnight service at the church, whose lighted windows twinkled invitingly at him as he fought his way home through the sandstorm that raged outside. Impossible! There was too keen an appreciation for the gilding of life shown in the purchase. Doubtless it was one of the world's people hurrying up town to dance the old year out and the new year in in the good, old-time fashion. Barone sighed.

Time was when he, too, had mingled with wealth and fashion and drank punch from cut glass in company with his elegant debutantes. And perhaps his present dingy surroundings could be traced to that self-same punch-bowl.

But at heart Jim Barone was a gentleman still, and an honest man, for it was his boast that if he dissipated it was not at the expense of his landlady or his washerwoman—a thing greatly to his credit; or was it to the credit of his ancestors, trying up the principal so that it could not be squandered.

Drawing a letter-pad toward him, Barone wrote:

"If Ethel will send her address, the package which she lost on New Year's eve will be returned to her. Address J. B. Times' office."

"Too late for to-morrow's issue," Barone thought; "but I will take it over the first thing in the morning."

Pulling a handful of small change from his pocket he looked at it ruefully. A whole week before he could hope for a remittance, and funds were running low. Even twenty cents counted these days—still, Ethel must have her book.

But nothing came of the advertisement, and the diary remained to keep Jim company. Often he took it out, and as he turned the pages he all unconsciously formed an ideal Ethel, endowed her with the attributes he most admired in women and gradually she became an influence in his life.

One morning, awakened out of a heavy sleep by the shrill cry of a news-boy, Barone sprang to the window and called loudly for the boy to bring him a copy. He scanned the columns with a feverish haste, until he came to an account of a drunken brawl. This he read eagerly, and then dropped back on his pillows with a sigh of relief. The man was not dead, then—those implications were unknown—by a merciful chance he had escaped being a murderer.

For a long time he lay staring at the ceiling, then, rising, he brought from his hiding place the diary and wrote below Ethel's line, "nor any other liquor, so help me God," and signed it "Jim."

But to determine is much easier than to do, and Jim soon found that if he could keep his resolution he must have some occupation. "But what? A stranger in a strange land with a none too savory past might look long for employment."

Jim bought himself a wheel, and when the thirst was upon him he chose, choosing the most crowded thoroughfares, where every faculty must be on the alert to avoid accidents. Killed he might be, but drunk because he chose, the past but yield now would be to acknowledge himself a slave to the habit.

His old comrades naturally resented his desertion, but he put them off with a "Wait till the year is over boys," in a tone that promised great things. "You concluded that something worth the effort was at stake and left him alone."

"Wise little Ethel! Well you knew the limit of a man," Jim would exclaim, grimly, when the temptation was strongest; and then fall to picturing the long, glorious spree he would have when the year was over.

But before that time things had changed with Barone.

In his long rides he frequently ran across a story or a bit of news that had escaped the regular reporters, and as the editor of a newspaper does not inquire into the antecedents of space writers, but is content if the story be readable and the news accurate, Jim readers became a familiar figure in the precincts of the Times.

But the city editor of the Times was a man of observation. He noticed Jim's dissipated appearance when he first began to turn in copy, and he was making interest the plucky fight he was making. Occasionally he gave him a detail, and finding that he had the newspaper instinct and a good judgment, he offered him the place on the regular force at the beginning of the new year.

Sitting in his room, diary in hand, Barone reviewed the year, contrasting past and present. Then, taking up a

pen, he gaily wrote: "Yours for another year, dear Ethel.—Jim."

At that moment three young men burst into the room, exclaiming: "Come on now, Jimmy! Hurry up! Now for the spree you promised us!"

"Oh, I say, boys," exclaimed Jim, in a tone of regret that was not altogether feigned, "why didn't you come sooner? You are just one half minute too late."

"Oh, come off!"

"Fact. Have just signed the pledge for another year."

In vain he offered them a supper with their own particular and unlimited quantities. If he was to be a death's head at the feast they would have none of it. Gloomily they filed down the stairs, muttering uncomplimentary remarks. Jim knew they had turned their backs on him forever, and for a moment he suffered the loneliness that comes of virtue. Then with a shrug he turned to planning his future. His connection with the paper would give him a standing in the community; his salary would enable him to live better; there should be new surroundings, new interests, new friends.

For four years Jim Barone had neared the pledge, but to-night he hesitated. To-morrow he dined with the Governor, an informal dinner, but there would be wine. It would make him conspicuous. Why not postpone the pledge for one day? But was he sure it would be for only one day? Had he the courage to being the struggle over again if the temptation proved dormant—not dead? He had climbed fast and high; could he afford to risk so much?

Half regretfully he wrote: "Yours for another year, dear Ethel.—Jim."

The Governor's dinner was a small one; a rising young lawyer, a doctor, two men prominent in politics and finance and their wives, two young ladies invited to balance the tables were all, besides Barone and the Governor's daughter, a slip of a girl not yet out of school.

Barone had hoped his abstinence would pass unnoticed he was doomed to disappointment. One of the young ladies challenged, and he was obliged to stand by his colors before the whole company. And the young men, taking advantage of the informality of the occasion, made him the subject of much raillery.

The Governor frowned. His dinner was not going smoothly, and he had no wish to take the helm and guide the conversation into smoother waters. His glance fell on his daughter, who sat gazing at the company with flushed face and indignant eyes. The Governor was reminded of the time he found her with a disabled kitten in her arms, keeping at bay a horde of street urchins from whom she had rescued it. Suddenly he determined to throw the game into her hands.

"I had intended," he began, "to propose a toast, but as my daughter Ethel" (Barone started at the name) "has today reached her majority, I will allow her to do it in my place."

Instantly the girl was upon her feet. She paused. A look of sweet seriousness replaced the excitement of a moment before. It was a look that the opponents of the Governor, when he had a young man at the bar, had feared to know and to fear. The droop of the long lashes betokened not so much shyness as a wish to hide the thought until the proper moment for denouncement.

Standing with the unconscious grace of one entirely forgetful of self, the girl began in clear, level tones slowly, as one who chooses words with care.

"Ladies and gentlemen, it is with pleasure I rise to propose as a toast the man that has the courage of his convictions, the man who, when reason dictates, does not hesitate to cut new paths for himself and to walk in them regardless of criticism. Such men the country needs, and when one is found, the highest gift in the hands of the people is not too great for him."

Looking around the company she continued: "We are fortunate in having such a man with us to-day," then, for the first time glancing toward Barone she said: "Let us drink the health of Mr. Barone, editor of the Western Review."

She had thrown down the gauntlet. The company burst into applause. Until the end they had supposed it a speech prepared for the occasion, and expecting a toast to Theodore Roosevelt. They marvelled at the young girl's readiness, enthusiasm, even her sorrow, had combined to fit her for the part. Even the Governor looked at his daughter curiously, with the amazement that parents feel when they see their own traits repeated in their children.

Fortunately for Barone, the laughing banter which followed spared him the necessity of responding to the toast.

When the party adjourned to the drawing-room Barone seated himself by Ethel.

"You were very kind to me to-night," he said.

"I was so angry—at the others, I could have beat them with my fists."

"But why?" he asked, amazed at her vehemence.

"They make it so hard for a man to be good."

"Do you like stories," he asked, "or are you quite too old for that?"

The impulse to tell her his story was upon him.

She smiled encouraging, and he began the story of the finding of his talisman.

"Why, it was my book," she exclaimed, when he got to the writing.

"Impossible. You were a child. It was years ago."

"It had an illuminated border all around the leaves," he asked.

"And who was Jim?" he asked.

"Jim was my brother," and her eyes filled with tears.

Then Barone remembered, early in his newspaper career, the story of a bar-room fight, suppressed because in it the son of the Governor had been killed.

"I should like to keep the book," he said, softly; "it has become dear to me."

"Why, of course," she said.

Just then the Governor glanced that way, and seeing the look with which Barone was regarding his daughter, he frowned.

"I must look up that fellow's antecedents," he thought.

But in spite of that some years later a final entry was made in the time-worn book which read:

"Yours until death, dear wife.—Jim."—Georgine T. Bates, in Los Angeles Times.

IMITATION OF CHRIST.

NOW IN THE TIME OF TRIBULATION GO IS TO BE INVOKED AND BLESSED.

Blessed O Lord, be Thy name forever, Who has been pleased that this trial and tribulation should come upon me. I cannot fly from it; but Thou mayest help me and turn it to my good. Lord, I am now in tribulation, and my heart is not at ease, but I am much afflicted with my present suffering.

And now, dear Father, what shall I say? I am taken, O Lord, in these straits. Oh, save me from this hour! But for this reason I came at this hour, that Thou mightest be glorified when I shall be exceedingly humbled and delivered by Thee.

May it please Thee, O Lord, to deliver me; for, poor wretch that I am, what can I do and whither shall I go without Thee?

Give me patience, O Lord, at this time also.

HEARD PIUS X. PREACH.

Archbishop Ryan was among the first in Philadelphia to receive the news of the Papal election. It came over the telephone from the newspaper offices, which somewhat surprised at the choice, the Archbishop was greatly pleased. Chancellor Turner said: "The election of Cardinal Sarto is a happy choice. The new Pope is an exceptionally good man and no better selection could have been made."

Father Turner stated that the Archbishop had never met Cardinal Sarto, but nevertheless was one of his great admirers.

The news of Cardinal Sarto's election was carried to St. Charles' Seminary at Overbrook, and created some surprise. To one man in particular the news came with added interest. This was Rev. Dr. William Stang, former rector of the American College in Louvain, Belgium, but now rector of the Cathedral in Providence, R. I., and on a tour abroad last year. Dr. Stang availed himself of an opportunity to hear Cardinal Sarto preach, and was so struck with the character of the man that on his return to this country he expressed his opinion that Cardinal Sarto would some day be Pope.

"At last!" he exclaimed, when told of the election. "There is none more fitted. I have only seen the new Pope, once, but in that brief hour I read his qualities. While his election will doubtless prove a great surprise to the world, it seems to me right to me. I have been laughed at for saying that he would be the next Pope."

"It was on the 10th of last August that I saw him. I was traveling abroad, and while in Venice was told that the Cardinal would preach on that date in St. Mark's, so I went to hear. Well may St. Joseph Sarto be called the Patriarch of Venice. His very bearing denotes the title."

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OUR LADY OF SORROWS.

The month of September is dedicated to Our Blessed Mother of Sorrows, in the chronicles of the life of St. Elizabeth, so well known to us all by her wonderful charity and sweetness to the suffering and the poor, it is recorded, that it was revealed to her that, after the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin into heaven, the beloved disciple St. John, to whose care she was entrusted more to see her. The prayer of St. John was heard and granted. In vision Our Blessed Mother appeared to Him accompanied by her Divine Son. In that apparition, as if Mary's soul travelled back, so to say, over that life of sorrow through which she had passed, for sixty years, the evangelist heard her sweetest her Divine Son bestow special grace on those who in life should be devoted to her labors. In answer to it, St. Elizabeth tells us that He promised four marvelous graces. The first was that those who before death earnestly invoked the help of His Blessed Mother under the title of Her Sorrows should obtain the true repentance for their sins. In the second grace, He promised that those who died in the faith should be protected by His love in their own deaths, and especially in the sorrows of death. In the third, that, in recompense for their sympathy for His Blessed Mother in her grief, He would impress on their souls the remembrance of His own Passion, and bestow on them a corresponding glory in Heaven. And, lastly, that in His Divine countenance He would confide such devout clients of His Blessed Mother's sorrows that He would enrich them from the treasury of His love with all the graces she should ask for them. The feast of the Seven Dolours is celebrated on Sunday, the 29th September.

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