

Towards evening a high wind arose, big black clouds, forerunner of a storm, covered the sky and one of the three breaking the silence which had prevailed for some time said: We had better go home now before the storm breaks, but first let us wake an appointment to meet here again next Sunday. Its a fine old place and we are sure of a good time here."

Yes, provided there is no procession and no visit from a meddlesome old Capuchin, retorted the two.

They had not gone far when the one whose home was across the lake left the others who continued walking. Soon the storm broke in all its fury. The rain fell in torrents, the thunder pealed, the lightning flashed and trembling with fear they sought shelter under a large tree.

The gravity of the situation sobered them. A deafening peal, a blinding flash, and the big tree fell carrying with it, its human freight.

A minute or two afterwards one of them recovered consciousness and called his comrade. Getting no answer, he took his hand but the icy touch of the corpse made him shudder. Recalling the stricken man's imprecation and his defiance of God's thunder he shrieked:

We are accursed. And jumping up he ran as if he were pursued across the fields to his father's house about half a mile distant. When he drew near he saw it a mass of flames and was told thunder had struck it.

Pardon, my God, he moaned. I am indeed accursed. His reason was not proof against the awful shocks so close and so clear of divine vengeance. He became a raving maniac. The next morning among the fatalities to the throne of Him whose mercy is as infinite as His reported as a result of the storm was the following:

A young man rowing across the lake was overtaken by the gale. His boat upset and though he was an expert swimmer, and battled bravely for life, he had no chance in that angry lake whose waters have not yet given up their prey, except his hat which was found quite near shore.

Needless to say the next Sunday's appointment was never kept. Only one of the trio remained, a living witness that we may not vainly provoke the anger of heaven: his reason never returned.