

The quiet streets were well nigh deserted for the cricket-field, tennis lawn, or river, and they were free to pace slowly along as the sad story was made known.

Dick knew of old the passion for cards which had been such an evil factor in Ralph's past life. More than once he had rescued his friend from the consequences of his culpable folly by the sacrifice of his own slender funds, and the inevitable condition, avoidance of the evil companions who had been Ralph's bane, was always observed for a time, and things went well. But the weak nature would again succumb, and the story would repeat itself.

It was Dick who was the real Raphael, the guiding, sheltering angel. The other, for all his blue-eyed golden-haired beauty, was only too miserably mortal. And now he had fallen into deeper depths still.

All was to have been changed when he married. A home of his own, a devoted wife, the cares of a family were to wean him from his infatuation, and for a time all went well. But the old temptations had returned, and Ralph had yielded again and again. The support of the little household dependent upon him made the matter more serious than ever.

The miserable gambler, driven to meet his "debts of honor" as he provided for daily needs, began a course of petty pilfering at his house of business. He had meant to borrow only—it is always so in such cases, and could easily rectify matters. But one led to another, until he had become heavily involved and detection seemed inevitable.

"Oh, Dick, old fellow," he groaned out, as he made confession of his guilt to this one friend who had never yet failed him, "how you must despise me! But you will hate me, God help me! when you hear all."

And Dick, as he listened, felt his passion stir within him for this so-called friend, and for this so-called man, had involved him in his own ruin. The misuse of the money entrusted to Ralph had necessitated the corruption of his own books; but to shield himself from discovery something more was required. It happened that the accounts which served as a check upon his own were in Dick's keeping. A few minutes now and again when others had left the office afforded opportunities of falsifying Dick's work to make it balance with his own. In this way he had escaped detection, though at great risk. The danger was that suspicion might be aroused by the unwonted excess of expenditure in his particular branch of management, and should this lead to a more minute inspection of the books, detection was certain.

Dick saw the danger, realizing it the more keenly because he himself was involved in it. Speedy action was a necessity.

"Now, if I'm to help you, old fellow," he said at length, "I must have a free hand."

"What do you mean?" the other stammered out.

"I mean that we've reached a crisis now which affects the future of both of us. I think I can only way out, but only on condition of absolute submission on your part to what I propose to do."

"I'll submit to anything, Dick, if only you can right me. This will be the last time I shall ever need it. I give my solemn promise. Oh, for Nell's sake, help me if you can!"

"It's of Nell I'm thinking," was Dick's quiet reply. "You must feel, old chap, that you've scarcely earned the right to be helped for your own sake."

"Oh, don't be hard on me, Dick! You don't know what I've suffered. I believe I should have drowned myself long ago, but it hadn't been for Nell and the child. I've been a brute to you, and I know it."

"Well, say no more about that," said Dick. "It's done and you're sorry for it, so we'll try and look at things impersonally. Now leave me the night to think it over, and tomorrow we'll see what can be done. Good night, old chap—Helen will be getting anxious about you." And so they parted.

Next day the office closed early for the weekly half holiday.

"Meet me at Jackson's at three," said Dick, as he left Ralph at the corner of the street. "We'll have a boat and go to the river. It will be quieter there than anywhere."

The river was pretty free at that hour, and the two men pulled for a mile or two till a more secluded part was reached, where they could discuss matters without fear of interruption.

"I've been looking through my book to-day," began Dick, "and I must own that things look a little rough on me. However, that will fit in all the better with my plan. Now, first of all, old chap, give me your solemn word of honor that you will never touch another card as long as you live."

Ralph gave his required word with promptitude.

Dick thereupon stated his plan. As usual, he was to be the real sufferer. He had no ties, he said, such as bound Ralph. He intended to make arrangements for the repayment of the money which had been embezzled and to enclose the cheque in a letter to the head of the firm, exonerating every one but himself from all blame, taking care that the letter should only be delivered after he had left for America. Such action would shift all suspicion from Ralph, the falsification of Dick's accounts lending color to the transaction.

It was an act of genuine self-sacrifice, and Ralph was deeply touched.

"I don't deserve it, Dick," he said, penitently, "that you should lose

your reputation for me. If it were not for Nell, I would never listen to such a suggestion. But you've no right, old fellow, to accuse yourself falsely."

"I don't intend to confess openly that I have been a thief," said Dick. His companion winced at the word. "I shall merely let Gibbs infer it. No one will be likely to defend me against myself, so I shall have no need to tell lies."

"No," broke out Ralph, excitedly, "no one will even give you credit for noble self-sacrifice! How mean was all this, and what a cur it makes me feel!"

"It ensures your salvation from that detestable gambling," said Dick, with energy, "it's worth the stake. And I feel sure it will."

"I swear it shall!" returned the other.

"They rowed back in silence, each occupied with his own thoughts."

"When do you mean to write to Gibbs?" asked Ralph as they drew nearer the town.

"Probably to-day," said Dick. "Now don't be so down in the month, old fellow. I shall get on all right in the States. I've no doubt Gibbs will let the matter drop if I pay the money back. It's the only thing to be done."

"They had allowed the boat to drift to the bank under some trees."

"I only wish I were a free man," cried Ralph, "and there should be no necessity for leaving at all. Gibbs need never know of the loss of the money."

"My dear fellow," interrupted Dick, "I take the will for the deed."

"Excuse me, Upton," said a familiar voice, and Mr. Gibbs's well-known face appeared over the wall of a garden abutting the river bank. "It's always best to be straightforward," he continued, "and so I may say at once that I overheard your conversation—though not intentionally—and feel bound to ask for an explanation."

"I shall be glad if you will give me an opportunity of seeing you, sir, in an hour's time," replied Dick, as he lifted his cap to his chief.

"I shall be at home," Mr. Gibbs replied gravely.

"What a fool I was not to remember that we were close to his house!" muttered Ralph as they pulled towards the landing stage. "He was evidently smoking his pipe under the trees and heard his name mentioned. I'm afraid it's a bad look-out."

"Not at all," said Dick, hopefully. "It will probably save trouble."

The interview was a very short one. When asked the meaning of his remarks, Dick was able to say that they referred to certain culpable irregularities in his books which were intended to cover the repeated embezzlement of small sums of money for which he was unforgotten sorry. As Mr. Gibbs had heard, he had resolved to return the money and voluntarily relinquish his position under the firm. He hoped therefore that he might count upon Mr. Gibbs's readiness to condone the matter and allow it to remain a secret.

The merchant was a man who took little personal interest in his clerks. As long as they did their work satisfactorily he was content. He had therefore no special reason for showing kindness to Dick, nor on the other hand, did he care for the publicity of a police court with regard to his business affairs, when he himself was at no pecuniary loss.

He contented himself, therefore, with a pretty severe lecture on the ugliness of dishonesty, and agreed to the settlement which Dick suggested.

"You must be well aware, Upton," he remarked as the interview closed, "that everything must have come to light at the half-yearly balance next month, and you have shown your shrewdness in forestalling a disclosure. Not that I can sconeerize you from blame, but this settlement of the matter will give you another chance in life. I shall not forget Cunningham's generosity in desiring to shield you, if it had been possible. One does not come across such disinterested friendship often, and I hope it appeals to your better nature."

Poor Dick, be it remembered, had no angelic traits—only red hair and an ugly nose!

"What a strange fellow Dick is!" remarked Helen to her husband next day. "He's actually off to America—but of course you know it."

"Yes," answered Ralph, "it's all settled now."

"I can understand why you've been so low spirited lately. Poor boy, how lonely you'll be without him!"

Ralph's muttered interjection escaped her, and she continued: "It would be hard on your mother if it were not for Aggie's marriage. I suppose she'll live with Aggie and Tom now. But I always looked on Dick as a fixture, for of course he's not a marrying man, and he seemed quite like your mother's own son—he was always so good and affectionate."

It was a cheerless autumn day when Ralph and Helen stood on the platform saying the last farewells to Dick as he leaned from the carriage window. Helen had persistently kept to her resolution of coming to the station, though her husband had done his best to dissuade her. He had let her shift for herself for the last few minutes. Dick looked pale and haggard. The worrying events of the past week had been hard to bear. The one drop of consolation was the hope, which seemed well founded, of Ralph's thorough conversion. Dick's heroic sacrifice had made an impres-

sion upon him which would not easily be effaced.

The signal was given and the train began to move.

"Good-bye, old fellow!" cried Ralph. "Mind you write soon. I'll keep my promise, never fear!"

Dick knew what he meant, and the assurance gave him a crumb of comfort in the moment of supreme suffering.

"He's awfully cool," remarked Helen, with some irritation, as the train disappeared. "I thought he had more feeling; but, after all, you never know people as they really are."

"That's true," said Ralph, and he bit his lip to keep back the retort which would have compromised himself.

Dick wanted in feeling, indeed! He knew something about that. What did our Lord say? "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

What had Dick given up? Something more than life; everything that made life dear—home, and country, and friends, and good name, even—all to save him (a poor specimen of a friend) from the consequences of his own crime.

Ralph's wife caught sight of the tears that rushed to his eyes, and prudently abstained from further pursuit of the subject.

"We went to the station to see Dick off," she remarked to Ralph's mother later on, "and you can't imagine how calmly he went through the parting. Poor Ralph was quite cut up. I don't think Dick has very deep feelings."

Ralph—and he alone—could have told a very different tale.

STRONGER CATHOLIC PRESS FOR IRELAND

CARDINAL LOGUE DECLARES THAT PRESENT ONE IS INEFFICIENT

Cardinal Logue declared recently the need of a strong and efficient Catholic press for Ireland, instancing the harm done the Catholic cause without it, and the good done where even a less paper persistently demanded Catholic rights.

"The press is a wonderful power at the present day. I need not dwell upon that, because it is so continuously said that it has become known to everyone. You have instances of it every day. You see how what was considered the strongest Ministry in England has been wrecked the other day, for I consider it was wrecked—it was at least going on the rocks, and it would not have given up so easily were it not for something—it was wrecked by the influence of two or three newspapers in England. That shows the power of the press. What is worse than that, I am afraid that the newspapers and their publications have acted in such a way as not to favor the interests of the country at the present crisis. I think they have given more information and useful information, to the enemies of the country than all the spies that have been concentrated round about by Germany. Germany has reduced espionage to a fine art, but still notwithstanding the efforts made by her in this direction, I believe that more mischief has been done by newspapers than by spies. However, I am not very much at home on this subject, but, as it strikes me, I think the publication of our weakness in the matter of munitions and in other things in the press has given more information and more courage to the enemies of the country than even spies had been able to do. I mention this merely as an instance to show what the power of the press is. Hence, I think we should encourage the Catholic press, such as we have it. We have to a great extent, Catholic newspapers, principally concerned with the political and material affairs of the country; but some of them are Catholic papers, and we should encourage them in every possible way, because they will be our safeguard and our strength if we do so. We should, therefore, encourage them where they exist, and, where it is necessary, help to institute others."

POWER FOR GOOD

"I have given an instance of what the press can do for mischief, and another instance occurs to me of what the press and the conductors of a good Catholic paper can do for the spiritual well-being of the people. You are all aware that the commencement of this terrible war—the greatest war, I believe, of which we have a record in history, and greater

than any that is likely to exist in the future—in the beginning of that war, especially in the case of the battle of Mons, there was a terrible sacrifice of human life, and our Irish soldiers were at the forefront, as they always are. They are always where there is a hard work to be done. They will not hide behind others or behind the trenches, and as long as they can see a head they hit it. After that battle of Mons I think there were only three or four chaplains to look after these poor people, and a number of them died without the last Sacraments. Catholics can understand and feel for those poor men. That condition of things went on for a considerable time, and it required a good deal of pressure to have it remedied. The Irish Bishops moved in the matter, and I believe the Irish members of the Parliament did their best. We succeeded at last in getting a fair number of chaplains for the army, but the best was even worse. Even before the war the fleet was a source of anxiety to some of us. On the seaboard of my diocese I had some three hundred young men in the Naval Reserve, who went away for two or three months of the year for training. When they came back they said they did not see a priest or hear Mass during the three months they were absent. It required a great effort to present anything done. There is a practical difficulty in the way, because our Catholics are a small minority in our fleet, they are scattered over various ships in different places, and it is difficult to make arrangements. With some ingenuity, however, adequate arrangements can be made. For a good while after the beginning of the war, there was no provision made. It is not so many months since a man in my diocese came home from the Grand Fleet in the North Sea, and he told his parish priest that he had not seen a priest during the whole time of his absence. These things had to be remedied, and an agitation got up, with the result that a good deal has been done.

There are about ninety-six chaplains now, and there are a number in the Fleet. Formerly it seemed to be a rule that no priest was to be allowed on board His Majesty's ships, but there is some change now in this respect. There are two chaplains in the fleet in the Dreadnaughts, and there was one, Father Finn, who died a heroic death. He insisted on landing with the troops in face of a terrible cannonade of high-power shells, machine guns, and rifles. The poor man died before he reached the shore, a martyr to duty. There are some 28,000 Catholics in the Fleet, and the number of chaplains is not at all in proportion to the number to be attended to. I must say that lately the Admiralty seem very agreeable and prepared to do as much as they can. As far as I can gather from reading the public press there never was an army in the field better provided from a material point of view, and those who are fighting the battles of England to-day, between what is done for them by the Government and voluntary philanthropy, are carefully looked after so far as their corporal wants are concerned. But still there is room for more improvement, and for an increase in the provision made for their spiritual welfare. About a week ago I saw a letter written by a young soldier who said he had to try to make his confession to a French priest with the aid of a French dictionary; so there is some increase required still in the number of chaplains.

I saw the other day that the Archbishop of Canterbury asked for an increase in the number of chaplains; he has 228 chaplains, and he has, moreover, a chaplain-general, getting 300 pounds. There is a chaplain-general who is paid 1000 pounds a year, and a secretary, paid a salary rising from with the Fleet who is paid 1,000 pounds a year, and a secretary whose salary goes up from 300 pounds to 1,000. I don't know what the limits are, but I think we should recognize that they have no official position; we have no chaplain-general; no regular organization for the permanent supervision of the religious interests of our people. However, I say, a great deal was done. I don't want for a moment to blame the War Office or the Admiralty; they are Protestants and they don't understand the feelings of Catholics, especially Irish Catholics, with regard to the desire they have of the necessity for having a priest to go and see in the hour of danger, and especially at the hour of death. They are not sufficiently made up in our feelings, our practices, and the requirements of our religion to appreciate those things. When it was brought home to them they were agreeable enough. Well now it was brought home to them by the energy, the perseverance, and the persistence if I may so call it, of one journalist, and that is the editor of the 'Irish Catholic.' He kept at it in season and out of season, and between telegrams and letters, even when he was suffering from illness, he brought the matter to the attention of the War Office and the Admiralty until a change was made in the system.

The Bishops, of course, made representations, and I believe, the Irish members did their best, but he brought it before the public, and kept it before the public, and showed that if they wanted to get recruits in Ireland they would have to make a concession on this ground. Hence I attribute such success as we have had in getting these chaplains chiefly

to him. I mention that as an instance of what the press can do, and if we had a greater number of journalists like the 'Irish Catholic' in Ireland, and they were energetically and intelligently worked, there would be fewer of the jobs going undetected, and there would be more attention paid to the interests of our people, spiritual and temporal.—Providence Visitor.

THE BLOODSHEDDINGS OF BELGIUM

The war has lasted so long that war news has begun to weary us. People say, "I am tired of reading the newspapers." All news is war news. And war news has ceased to be new. It is a monotonous list of attacks successfully repulsed, with no apparent result save the long rows of the Roll of Honour and the laconic obituary notices of the dead officers, mostly a few years beyond their teens.

Even "Belgium" threatens to be no longer a war cry. We remember that once upon a time—it now seems almost a lifetime ago—Belgium stood up against the war-giant of Europe as David stood up against Goliath; that Belgium was stricken down by the giant's mailed fist; and that Belgian blood stained the rocks that guard Liege and Antwerp, and the sands that belt Louvain and Termonde.

Even I myself, who, from the outset have mobilized to serve Belgium with my pen, as long as my teaching mother needed service and a pen—even I have of late almost forgotten "Belgium Desolatum." But may my pen be shattered in its case and my hand withered by my side if I forget the wounds Belgium bore, and still bears, for freedom and for me.

"The wounds Belgium still bears." Yes! Belgium, having undertaken the way of the Cross, is not yet come to the end of her crucifixion.

Someone has said, "C'est le premier pas qui coûte." "It is the first step that costs." I cannot think that he had ever trodden a way of pain. "Again and again it is an easy thing to open a furrow; and a work of heroism to plough doggedly to the furrow end. In a mood of heroic joy said: 'The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.' He said it in the beginning of sorrows; and never said it again. The first step in his way of sorrows found thanks on his lips, the last step found heroism in his heart."

A ring of barbed wire, guns, and Tautonic intelligence shuts out Belgium from the world. A woful Pax Teutonica broods over the little unconquered kingdom. Belgium still lives; as we know, because Belgium still fights and Belgium still suffers. Yet so little news contrives to find its way to us through the barbed wire that Belgium might as well be dead. Sometimes, however, we hear a word from the other side of Belgium's prison walls, to tell us that Belgium is still drinking her chalice of suffering in his heart.

The other day, whilst on a north-bound train, I met a group of Belgian refugees who threw light on what has been to me of late the impenetrable night of Belgium. They were a pathetic little group of three—a husband and wife and little grand-daughter. None of them spoke English. They had a few biscuits to eat. It was an afternoon of tropical heat. For drink they had a little bottle of cold water, given in great part to their grand-daughter, whom they seemed to guard as the apple of their eye.

I was soon in conversation with them, and soon informed of the chief causes of their coming into exile. They belonged to Liège. When so many of the stricken folk of Liège had fled at the beginning of the war, when even their own married children had come to England, they were brave enough to remain in the home. They thought that their own grey hairs and the tender years of their little grand-daughter would be their safeguard.

"But things have been very bad, Monsieur," they said. "The Germans are still making our people suffer. They stirred up the miners to go on strike for more food. When the strike began the Germans easily quelled it, and made prisoners of some of the strikers, whom they sent to the mines in Germany."

Again, when the dead body of a German soldier was found in Liège, the Germans blamed a "Russian student" at the University for the murder. This "Russian student" is like a broken spectre of the German Army of Invasion. Whether he is in the flesh or out of the flesh I know not. But my Belgian refugee train-fellows assured me that in consequence of the one dead German soldier, a block of houses near Liège University was burnt down, and the poor folk who fled into the street were shot.

The wan-faced grandmother said: "But, sir, we have been spending night after night in the cellars. We were afraid to sleep elsewhere in the house. The Germans were still shooting. The night before we left Liège for Holland we heard that fifteen had been shot in the street next to us. We were afraid, not for ourselves so much as for her. Here she turned her eyes towards her little grandchild, who was playing an impromptu game with her grand-father's hand. "We went to Holland. But there's everything so dear, so dear. So we came to England, where my son and daughter are."

It is part of the prolonged agony of Belgium that we have no means

of verifying the details or even the main facts of these refugees' sad story. German thoroughness is especially exemplified in their gaoler functions towards Belgium. What facts we know are not of a nature to discredit even the details told to me with such simplicity in the northward facing train. We know as a fact that for some months there is not a word of authentic news about Cardinal Mercier. The last news was the disconcerting event of his imprisonment in his own house. Another fact is that Madame de Wiart, the wife of a Belgian Minister, has been tried, and of course found guilty of keeping up a secret correspondence with her husband. She is now in Germany, and I presume is not there as an honoured guest. Another fact is that old folk who have never before quitted their own beloved country, and can speak no language but their own, are leaving their homes and all therein to come into exile. Simple folk like these, especially in Belgium, cling to their home with a doggedness that is rooted in the depths of human nature.

When I was in Belgium I was told of a very beautiful custom there obtaining in many parts of the country. The kitchen fire is to the Belgian killers of the soil what it once was to our vanishing farm folk. Once that fire is lit on the hearth of a newly wedded couple they never let it go out. If they go from their home for a few days, they arrange that some neighbour shall come in and keep the fire alight. If they change from one house to another, hot embers from the old fire must be carried to enkindle the new. I think I was told, though I needed no telling, that this unquenched fire meant the love that should burn in the two hearts now made one by the great sacrament. It also shadowed the love borne by these two hearts to the root and which they dwell, and from which only some cruel fate could part them.

But O scattered children of Belgium, this fire which you fed with unquenchable love seems to some of us whom you have saved a symbol of your own selves, who cannot be daunted, and of your own beloved fatherland, whose freedom will never be quenched.—Vincent McNabb, O. P., in London Tablet.

DANGERS THAT LURK IN PUBLIC DANCE HALLS

In Europe, where everybody in a small village knows every one else, public dances are not objectionable, because they are almost family affairs, but in this country, where the mass of people are strangers to each other, where there is in many cases no home influence and no religious control, and where we can only judge of the individual when we have had time to see and study his character, public dances to which any one can go for a trifle are extremely dangerous, and the prudent girl will keep away from them.

Some years ago we had, all over the United States, skating rinks. They were harmless at first, no doubt, but they speedily became such dangerous places for the youth of the communities in which they were located that in many places they were closed by the public authorities.

A young woman who values her reputation as every woman should would not make the acquaintance of a young man of whom she knows nothing, but even the most careful girls are liable to be introduced to objectionable men, and the fact that a girl goes to a public dance is more or less an indication that she is not particular as to the society she keeps. She is more than likely to meet men who are there for no other purpose than to take advantage of her innocence.

Parents who allow their daughters to go to public dances, to associate with men of whom they know nothing and to remain out at night at all hours—the father and mother who through carelessness or laziness allow their children, boys or girls, to take the chances of sin and ruin which lurk in public dances should not be surprised if disgrace, shame and sorrow overtake their children as a result of their indifference; neither should they be surprised if, when they appear before God—as some day they must—they shall find that they have prepared for themselves a very severe accounting because they neglected their plain duty as parents.—Church Progress.

We are not put here merely to enjoy ourselves; it was not God's purpose, and I am prepared to argue, it is not our sincere wish. As for our deserts, the less said of them the better, for somebody might hear, and nobody cares to be laughed at!—Robert Louis Stevenson.

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