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LISHEEN

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CHAPTER XV

A SICK CALL

The man of the world, who is not a cynic at forty, must be a saint or a scoundrel. If he is the former, he condones all things on the principle of infinite pity. If the latter, he forgives everything on the grounds of universal depravity. But if he have no ear for the "still, sad music of humanity," and if he has not come to think "what d—d beasts your godlike men can be," there must remain only a kind of mild cynicism, that cynicism, that contemns while it pardons.

Such was the frame of mind in which Hugh Hamberton came to Ireland. He had modified his ideas after three years' residence in what is called "the distressful country," so far that he still recognised the metaphysical possibility of distinterestedness and unselfishness, and, with this the possibility, hitherto unimaginable, that he might yet have to change his entire estimate of human nature. He found it hard to understand how the lazy, thriftless, drunken Irish, as he had heard them described, could be the same as the quick, eager workers whom he employed; just as he found it hard to believe that gloomy, rainy, wet-sodden, rain-soaked island could be the island of such idyllic graces and charms that many a time he thought he would not change his home to Capua or Sorrento, even if he had a mind. But it was in the matter of political, or rather social, economy that his ideas had to submit themselves to the greatest revolution. It had become an article of faith with him that the one instinct of humanity, innate, irresistible, was that of "getting." No one was free from the low desire. From the child in its cradle, stretching out its little hands eagerly for the glass bead or piece of shining metal, to the capitalist who clutches his wealth, till it drops from his dead hands, it is all alike. Everywhere the passion for acquisition; everywhere the greed of gold; everywhere the reluctance to part with anything once acquired, except under the fierce grip of death. He remembered how often he had practised this little trick on his most intimate friends at dinner, or at a picnic. He would procure for them all the delicacies of the season; heap his table with costly and luxurious viands; order his footmen or waiters to uncork costly wines; draw out all the better elements of human nature under the influence of rich living, and high thinking; lead the conversation to high topics of literature, or science, or humanitarianism, or even religion; see the faces expanding and the eyes lighting and the smile mantling; and then—suddenly drop a hint of unsuccessful speculations, or banking perils, or rapid stock declensions; and it would be as if a ghost stood in their midst. Faces would lengthen and harden, his guests would shuffle in their chairs; they would look askance at one another, and suddenly shut themselves in silence. And Hambertou would smile and think: Yes it is always and everywhere the same. Touch the spring and the harlequinade becomes a tragedy.

Here in Ireland all this was changed. These Irish drove hard bargains at fair and market; were economical almost to miserliness in their homes; knew the value of a shilling as well as any other race; but he soon found that they lent at pleasure; that the poor farmers around were up to their necks in debt for each other in banks and loan offices. And here this old priest! Hamberton had taken him to his heart, because he was a priest—Hamberton, an agnostic, an infidel—and, in turn, the old priest had warmed towards this Englishman in a manner which was a daily surprise to himself. Hamberton was so straight, so matter-of-fact, so manly, so silent; he did such noble work in so unostentatious a manner, that often and often Father Cosgrove caught himself thinking, what a saint that man would be if he were a Catholic; and what a paradise would Ireland be, if we had everywhere such noble and sympathetic benefactors to our poor, struggling people. Yet the beautiful picture was dashed, as by a blur of blood, by one observation that Hamberton had once made in a moment of confidence and forgetfulness; and it was whilst pondering deeply on his words, and uttering a silent prayer in his heart, that he was suddenly summoned one night from his supper, and told that Pierce McAuliffe wanted to see him on urgent business. He was in the little parlour to the left of the hall and had but to step into the hall to see his visitor.

"Well, Pierce, nothing wrong at Lisheen, I hope?" he said.

"Oh, yeh, no; nothin', yer reverence, than' God!" said Pierry.

"The old people all right?"

"Begor, they are, yer reverence," said Pierry, fumbling with his cap.

There was an awkward silence. Pierry turned his cap around several times, turned it inside out, examined the lining, looked around the hall, and at last peered through the parlour door.

"There's no one there," said Father Cosgrove. "What's the matter?"

"Sich a thing, your reverence," said Pierry.

"What is it?" said the priest.

"The quarest thing you iver hard in yer life," said Pierry.

"Well, well, let's have it, whatever it is," said the priest.

"Begor, I don't know where to begin," said Pierry.

"Well, begin somewhere," said the priest a little impatiently. "Is it a sick call?"

"'Tis, an' it isn't, yer reverence," said Pierry.

"How can that be?" asked the priest. "You mean it isn't serious?"

"Well, 'tis serious enough," said Pierry, enjoying the mystery. "But yer reverence needn't bring anythin' wid you."

"That is to say, there's no need for anointing?"

"Divil a bit—I beg yer reverence's pardon—I mane, that's just it."

"The poor patient is not in danger of death then?"

"No; but he's bad enough," said Pierry.

"Well, then, I shall come prepared. One never knows what may be the condition of the patient."

"Ah, you needn't yer reverence," said Pierry, smiling. "You won't anoint him."

"Oh, but I will though," said the priest. "That is, if I find there's danger."

And Father Cosgrove went away and Pierry remained in the hall grimly smiling. He would not practice the joke on other priests; but he knew the infinite patience and forbearance of Father Cosgrove.

When the latter came downstairs, Pierry began to think he had carried the joke far enough, so he said:

"I forgot to tell yer reverence, he's a Prodestan'."

"Oh!" said Father Cosgrove, buttoning his great-coat and looking dubiously at Pierry. "'Tis the strange boy at Lisheen?"

"'Tis yer reverence."

"What have I to say to him?" said the priest. "He's not one of us."

"No, but he said he wanted to see yer reverence, and badly." Father Cosgrove reflected for a moment.

"I hope ye didn't put any notions in the boy's head?" he said. "Did he send for me, or have you come of yourself?"

"He sint for you himself," said Pierry. "He said: 'I wants to see that man.' Thims his very words."

"Then you were speaking about me?" said the priest.

"Begor, we wor; but we were sayin' nothin' bad about yer reverence," said Pierry.

The priest smiled.

"Very good," he said. "If the poor lad wants a word of comfort, why shouldn't I say it? You go on, Pierce, and say I'm coming."

It was very dark as he trudged along the moorland road that led to the house at Lisheen; and the soft mud created by the late heavy rains splashed his boots and gaiters. But he was quite heedless of such things. His thoughts were with his Master; and, if they wandered from him, it was to stray towards the flock, of whom his care, though vicarious, was yet parental and pastoral. And he began to wonder how strange it was that his life should suddenly be linked with two souls not of his fold—Hamberton, a stranger and an agnostic, and this poor boy, who had come hither from unknown regions, and whose history was obscure, except for the conjectures that he was fleeing from justice and in hiding. He determined to be very cautious, to measure his words, and limit his visit to a few short moments of sympathy or help to a sick stranger. He should have known by experience that caution was not one of his many virtues; that he had all the impetuosity of charity, and that he believed, but he would not acknowledge it, that the first thoughts are always thoughts of virtue; the second are the instincts of produce and self.

"Your reverence is welcome," said the old vanithee, courtesying to the aged priest, he entered with the salutation on his lips:

"God bless all here!"

After a few moments of kind inquiries, he asked to be shown the patient, and was ushered into the bedroom where Maxwell lay. The latter was much better, quite free from the dread, feverish feeling he had first experienced, but still suffering from the violent pains in hands and feet. He looked at the old man, with that curious, half-wistful, half-fearful glance with which Protestants often regard the priest to whom they have had a first introduction—a glance that seems to say:

"I know you are a mysterious thing; whether good or ill I cannot say. But I crave your sympathy, if you are capable of such!"

"Well, my poor boy," said the kindly old man, "so you wished to see me? I hope you are feeling better."

"Much better, thank you," said Maxwell, in a tone of such stiffness that the priest began to think he was not wanted here; but had been the victim of a pious ruse. The answer sounded hard and metallic to his ears, accustomed as they were to the affectionate and caressing accents of his own people.

"You have been very unwell, I understand," said the priest.

"Very! It is a relapse, or repetition, of an old ailment," said Maxwell.

"Well, you must cheer up. Courage is half the battle," said Father Cosgrove. "I hope you have good attendance and every comfort."

"As much as human solicitude and every affectionate care could give," said Maxwell. "The doctor wanted to order me into the Workhouse Hospital; but they wouldn't allow it."

"God bless them!" said the priest. "They will have their reward. 'I was a stranger, and you took me in.' But, tell me, have you no friends, no relatives, parents, or a sister, to whom we could write, and let them know of your condition?"

"None! Absolutely none!" said Maxwell.

"You know you needn't be afraid of us," said the priest. "Your secret is safe in the keeping of these poor people. No one need ever know you are here, except you choose to reveal it!"

The words startled Maxwell. Had his secret been discovered? Did these people really know who he was? And, dreadful thought! was this the secret of all their kindness? The suggestion actually frightened him. It would have been such a revelation of human meanness, where he had seen but such noble excellence. But he might be mistaken. He began to feel his way cautiously.

"I have done nothing wrong," he said. "I have injured no man. If it pleased me to become a laboring man, had I not the right to do so?"

"Of course, of course," said the priest. "And, according to all accounts, you have been doing your duty faithfully and honestly. But you mightn't like the world to know you are here. There may be people looking for you and inquiring all about you; and you may prefer to remain where you are."

"I was not aware that I was an object of interest to any one," said Maxwell, now quite uneasy. "I suppose people will talk, and make all kinds of conjectures; but I don't heed, so long as I am let alone."

"Quite right! quite right! my boy," said the priest. "And perhaps, after all, the people are wrong in their thoughts about you."

"What do they think, Father?" said Maxwell.

It was the first time he used the word that means so much to the Irish peasant; and it almost choked him. But it softened yet more the heart of the good priest.

"Well, it is not right to tell, perhaps," he said, "and I hope you won't be offended, because the people regard the matter as a virtue, more than a crime But they have got into their heads that you have been in the army."

"Yes?" said Maxwell, smiling.

"And that you have taken French leave," said the priest.

"Oh, yes; I guessed so much," said Maxwell. "Is that all?"

"That's all," said the priest. "And, as I tell you, the people consider it no great crime."

"Well, they're quite wrong," said Maxwell, simply. "I was never in her Majesty's service; and I am not fleeing from justice."

"That simplifies matters," said the priest. "And now why did you wish to see me?"

It was Maxwell's turn now to be puzzled. For the life of him, he could not express the sudden and singular emotion that made him yearn to see the face of this man. He blurted out:

"Things are lonely here, you know, Father. There is no minister of my own persuasion in the vicinity; and I was yearning for a word from a stranger who might understand me. I hope I have not annoyed you."

"Not by any means, my dear boy," answered the priest. "As you say, we all covet human friendship, even of the humblest kind; and I shall be delighted to come, and come again, if you assure me I can be of any help. But you're sure you have every attention?"

"Quite sure. I'm on a milk diet; and that is easily procurable, although the poor people had to 'clear their manes,' as they say, by deporting their cattle to the mountain. And that young girl has a hand as light as a feather. No skilled nurse ever treated me so gently."

"Yes, God will bless them!" said the priest, fervently. "He always does, even in this world. Poor people! their trials only increase their sympathies."

"So you will come?" said Maxwell, anxiously. And, as the priest nodded, he continued:

"And some day I shall tell you my secret; and you will help me?"

"I have so many secrets burthening me," said the priest, "I don't care for more. But if I can help, I will."

"For your people's sake," said Maxwell, extending his hot hand.

And the priest marvelled much; for were not these the exact words with which Hugh Hamberton solicited his visits to his own house?

CHAPTER XVI

AN INDIAN LETTER

Calcutta, October, 21, 189—

Carissima:—Your dear little note came in the nick of time. You will be pleased to hear that it saved a life—mine—from asphyxia, or apoplexy, or some nameless mode of exit from this horrid existence, called Life. It was thus. There is one awful season here, as you know, when men and women have to breathe vapor, often miasmatic, in a temperature of 120 degrees Fahrenheit. There are punkahs and iced drinks and scandals, and such other stimulants as may make existence barely tolerable, but there are times when nothing short of an earthquake can give you the slightest interest in life. Such a moment was that when, reclining in a hammock on the veranda, your letter was placed in my hand. I was completely used up, could not breathe, nor speak: could only wonder at the native woman, who, cool and unflurried, went about arranging things, whilst the arteries in my neck and temples were swelling and throbbing, and the next thing would be—Suddenly came your note, *un biglietto di cielo*, and, yes, *carissima*, I am not jesting, it woke me to life again. I did not shriek out, nor faint. Both would be unbecoming, as you know—and, whatever happens, we must do what is decorous, even in India. But I started, and said something violent: "*Cielo*" or something (but no one heard me); and the shock, pardon the expression, dearest, has given me back to life—to English official life in Calcutta—for another season. So you have commenced the new *role* you will have to play as benefactress to your quondam friend and Mentoress. But, what do I think? Nothing, dearest, I can't think. That is, no effort of fancy can picture the little fay, Mab, in the awful tragedy of married life. There, now! Forgive me! I must not depress you. No fear, I hear you say. Nothing can depress me. I know it well; and hence do I write in answer to your request; but in terms which would kill another girl; but at which you will merely smile.

But I must answer your conundrum Of course, it will answer itself by and by; but I cannot deprive myself of the pleasure of saying some far-off day when we meet: "I told you!

And now, dearest, sweetest little Mab, I'll tell you all about it. Hitherto, you have been a child, a spectator, down there in the pit, or in some cosey box, calmly munching caramels, or grapes, and watching the little drama on the stage. Doubtless, you have often thought how much nicer it would be to go up and mingle, as one of themselves, with all the knights and kings and princesses and heroines behind the footlights. You are quite wrong; but, *Che sara, sara*. You have envied the princess and the priestess and the shepherd girl and the heroine. You have uttered the fatal wish; and, lo! you are in the green-room, far behind the scenes and lights, and all is revealed. Yes; there are supers and the attendants and the prompter and the dresser. There are the pulleys and the ropes. The golden helmet on King Arthur is tinsel and his shining breastplate of steel is but paper; and his sword, Excalibur, is a painted lath. The awful thunder is hidden in yonder tray; and the lightning in that paper of magnesia. And all the princes and princesses are in *deshabille*, sitting idly on the stage properties, talking scandal and drinking *eau-de-vie*. Yonder Sir Galahad is flirting with Elaine; and Vivien is cajoling some aged Merlin, not for his secret magic, but for his money. For all things begin, and end, here. You did not expect this. No, dearest, of course not; nor do you believe it now. You think me an old, croaking raven, unprophetic, but for the fatal Nevermore! Ah, yes; that Nevermore! It means you cannot go back to the stalls or box again—never again be a spectator of the mighty drama. Only an actor. That is, hide as you like between old trunks and canvasses, there goes the manager's call; and you must come out, and show yourself and play your part before the footlights. There is no shirking the duty—"Breaking heart," "scalding tears," "wounded pride," "lost opportunities"—you cannot, you dare not plead such things. Dry your eyes, and compose your features, little Mab, and step gaily forth from the wings. Play well your part in the little drama. Be proud and haughty and disdainful. Be cold as ice and supercilious as—Mephisto. Contemn all things and all persons; and the audience will worship you. The world likes to be despised. Envious eyes will watch you through opera glasses to detect a flaw in your costume, a blur in your accent, a spot on your hands or face. Be perfect and despise them. They will repay you with envy; and what more can human heart desire? Play well your part. Life is but a drama; and no one can ask of maid or mortal to do more.

But, when you go back to the dressing-room—there, I shall say no more. I have said too much. And, *Che, sara, sara*.

I am wondering whether your future husband is the delicate boy I used to know long ago—Bob, Bob Something! I remember how you used to tease him, ridicule his little peace-offerings, laugh at his moodiness, and call him back with a word or look. Well, do you know, dear Mab, I liked him. The boy had a heart that could love; and that is something, if the thing is not petrified long ago by contact with the world. I think my little Mab would be happy with him, unless, unless—shall I say it?—she would practise too frequently, once too frequently, her little caprices and wiles, and then? There are some natures that bear and bear and forbear, apparently forever, the little frictions of life; and show no more heat or fire than a piece of sandal-wood. And then, one day they flare up suddenly into a huge blaze of passion; and then die out sadly into little embers and ashes. And I think Bob, Bob, Bob What's his Name? is one of those. But I don't know.

Mab, dearest little Mab, if you will marry, marry a tow-headed curate, who hasn't a particle of brains and but £80 a year, and you will be happy.

You won't cut a figure in society; but, with your chickens and vegetables and babies and the love of an honest man, you will be happy. But who wants to be happy? No one. At least, I see half the world throwing happiness to the winds.

I am sending you a little Indian present. I hope it will not be broken en route. And I shall await, with much hope, your account of the ceremony. Please write it in your most vigorous and epigrammatic style, for the hot season is with us yet; and we haven't had news of a single scandal from Simla or Peshawur for ever so long. And tell me all that was said and what every one wore. I know you will keep your head and notice things. And tell me all the banalities that shall be uttered for long life and happiness, etc.; and where you go for your honeymoon; and how you played your part as a mucn married woman, and not a baby-bride of yesterday; and how you stood the shock of intimacy, and the revelations of the new being, whose life for evermore is inextricably linked with yours. Yes, yes; these poor benighted Papists, wrong in nearly everything else, are right in holding that marriage tie inviolable. Nay; there should be strict law that marriage shall not be dissolved in death; because it is enough for each human being to have one world revealed, and no more. My! How I do run on! And I'm sure I'm forgetting lots of things that I want to say; and there will be no opportunity for another letter. Oh, yes; don't let that most detestable Wedding March be played! It is an abominable sacrilege on such an occasion. Get the organist to play an "Ava Maria," or a sonata, or something, lest, when looking back, after many years, you should say: "Woe! woe! Marriage bells mark the time of a departing soul." But, oh, me! I am writing such a depressing letter; and I know it ought to be all congratulations and rejoicings. Put it down, dear, to the awful climate, and our wretched livers, and believe me always,

Cara, Carissima, yours,
Edith Chisholm.

P. S.—I have absolutely sent you no news. But there is none to send. The same daily routine. You can guess its dull, dread monotony. Up before dawn—the only time of day and night when we can be said to live, for the air is crisp and light, and breathable. Tea and muffins at 6 a. m. Such little work as we need here—tending the few flowers beneath the veranda and reading some trashy novel. Then, up comes Sol, red, angry, and threatening, making all the heavens blood and fire. Henceforward, no peace, no mercy from the Day God. Good Heavens! to read these mad poets about pink-fingered dawns, when the dawn is a fiery furnace, heated seven times over as the bad king did for the three children. And all day long and all night suffocation, relieved by the creaking of the punkah-pulleys, and copious draughts of lemonade. How I envy you your Irish climate, with its quiet autumn splendors and mild wet winters. How I long for the cool, sweet, Irish rains that fall so noiselessly, unlike the angry deluges here! And your cosey winter firesides, etc., etc. There is no news. Oh, yes; do you remember that semi-brunette, Gerty Richards? Well, they say she is engaged to Lieutenant Whitbread. I don't believe it, although I knew he would be a catch. He has but two lives between him and ten thousand a year in England; and one of these is an idiot. There is some talk of the Collector General being recalled—something about accounts, which we poor women cannot understand. We know enough—too much, God knows! And one thing I know well is, that I love you, dear little Mab, dearly, and wish you all bliss and happiness.

P. P. S.—I read this letter over, a thing I never do; and I had a hundred thoughts to tear it up. What right have I, I said, to send such a jeremiad to a young girl? But then—well, then, I close it with a few bitter tears. It is the climate, dearest. Please believe so, and say so to yourself. What a dreadful Slough of Despond India must be, when Edith could write me such a letter. That's just it. Forgive it all, forgive it all, little one; and be happy, happy, happy! E. C.

TO BE CONTINUED.

THE RELIEF FORCE

Across Waterloo bridge the wind was strong and bitter, and the colonel must hold his battered old hat on his head.

There was the dark river, the last refuge of the waste of life hurrying on its way: but no, not that, little Marie waited his return, perhaps crying in her loneliness and pain. The colonel raised his dim eyes to the dark, gray sky in mute appeal. A man crossing the road hurriedly struck against him and sent him reeling against the stone parapet of the bridge. The colonel's hat fell off. The man was a robust figure and was well dressed.

"I beg your pardon," he said heartily. "I am afraid it was entirely my fault." Then he uttered an exclamation and drawing himself up raised his hand to his hat. "Colonel Marden," he said respectfully.

The colonel recovered his hat, and peered at the stranger through the gathering gloom.

"You don't know me, Colonel?"

"My eyesight fails me a little. No, I don't know you."

"Webb, sir, George Webb. Captain Singleton's troop."

"Aye, I remember you. Very glad to see you Webb. I hope you are doing well," said the colonel kindly.

Webb looked at his old C. O. with a pitying eye. He could read the marks of famine in the old man's face. He knew why the shabby frock-coat was so closely buttoned up. "Yes, sir," he replied, "I am doing very well indeed, thank you," and on the impulse of the moment he held out his hand.

A faint smile flickered over the colonel's worn face. "You are an honest man, Webb," he said. "You know what they say about me, can you take my hand?"

"Take it, Colonel! God bless you sir, I'm only too honored," and he gave the colonel's hand a grip that hurt. "No man of the old regiment that I ever met thought it was your fault, sir. An officer is no match for those city sharks. Your mistake sir, in having any truck with them. I see you're tired. My way shall be yours."

"Thank you, Webb. I live close by, in a street just off the road. I'm a little dizzy and faint, liver troubling me again, the old complaint. Very glad I met you. I think they were rather hard upon me. The men knew me better, Webb, the men knew me better."

Webb was silent, pondering many things. He was a bluff, good-hearted man, sadly lacking the polish of high society; but he was dreadfully afraid of hurting the colonel's feelings. It was evident the poor old man was starving, yet how was it possible to help him?

They turned into the narrow, miserable street where the colonel lived.

"No. 6, Webb," said the colonel; "the other side, not far up. My eyesight is bad in the falling light."

"Right, sir, No 6, here it is."

"Thank you. I am at home now. I wish you good afternoon, Webb, and all good fortune."

Webb lingered at the door. "All alone, sir," he asked softly.

"No, no, not alone; my little granddaughter lives with me."

"I don't wish to intrude, sir; but I should very much like to see her. I remember Mrs. Marden, and Miss Sybil, too, I should like to see Miss Sybil's child."

"You would?"

"Yes, sir. I am very fond of children. I have half a dozen of my own."

The pride of the patrician soldier was high even now. Colonel Marden had been born and brought up under a system of caste almost as rigid as the castes of India. There was a great gulf between him and the man who had served as a trooper in his regiment. But for all that, he wavered.

"Let me, colonel. It would give me great pleasure to see her."

"You are a good fellow, Webb. I am afraid you don't understand. I am not receiving visitors just now. My arrangements, you know—" he hesitated and stammered.

"It's a liberty, I know, sir; but you won't refuse an old soldier. You used to say you owed me something for what I did at Omdurman."

"Ah, I remember. Not sure I don't owe you my life, Webb. You ought to have had the V. C, but there were others. Come upstairs, you'll have to mount a good way."

They ascended the dark rickety staircase of the old house. On the third landing the colonel took out a key and opened the door. It was almost dark in the little room.

"Marie," the colonel called.

No answer.

"Marie," he uttered the name again with a strange note of terror in his voice and bent over the child's cot.

"Yes grandpa," said a feeble little voice. "I've been asleep, and dreaming of roast beef. Oh, I'm so dreadfully hungry! What have you brought grandpa?"

"I have brought some one to see you, Marie," said the colonel hoarsely a brave soldier who was with me in India and Egypt. Look up. Come in Webb, and close the door."

Webb came in bareheaded. It was almost dark; but quite light enough for him to read the story of the room. "How are you miss?" he said approaching the cot.

"I am very glad to see you. I remember your mother and a beautiful young lady she was." He took the little hand in his and kissed it.

"What is your name? I didn't quite hear," said Marie.

"George Webb, miss."

"I am pleased to meet you, Webb," said the little lady.

Webb lifted her up and carried her to the window. "Why, you'll be a rare beauty one of these days miss; just like Miss Sybil," he said.

Marie laughed up at him and pulled his mustache. "Do you belong to the relieving force, Webb, she asked; "and have you got through with supplies? We can't hold out any longer."

"Yes, miss," he said huskily, "I belong to the relieving force." He was very glad the room was dark. He laid the child gently in her cot again, then turned to the colonel. "Colonel Marden," he said in a low voice, "God knows I don't wish to offend you; if I do, perhaps you'll forgive me for the sake of old times. I ask you if you will so far honor me and my wife as to come home with me now. I live in the Clapham road, the cars will take you there in a few minutes. I know it is a liberty, but—"

The bonds of caste were broken. The patrician soldier and the lowly born man of business could not see each other's faces distinctly. They stood there, and clasped hands in silence. The colonel put on his old hat again and walked to the window.

"Come along, miss," said Webb cheerily, "get up and put on your things; you and your grandfather are coming to my house. It's getting near our tea time, and you shall have a grand time with my little girls. The siege is over, the relief column has come up, and the enemy is in full retreat."—John Cleland in Cassell's Journal.

POOR SUBSTITUTE FOR FAITH

Some comments, which appear in the Christian Century of Chicago anent the going of Dr. Aked of New York to San Francisco, help bring out what may be designated as the mentality of contemporaneous Protestantism. Some time ago Dr. Aked, who is an Englishman, received a call from a Baptist Church here in New York, popularly known as "Rockefeller's Church" from the fact that the Oil King is one of its prominent members. The coming of the English Baptist pulpit orator was announced with a great flourish of trumpets. The local press was full of the subject for some time. Dr. Aked himself was received with open arms by his co-religionists, although here and there criticism was heard in certain Baptist quarters as to the propriety of sending abroad for a minister to preside over an American congregation, where there is so much ministerial talent in the Baptist Church in America.

However these notes of dissent were drowned in the loud acclaims that greeted the coming of Dr. Aked. At first the relations between him and his New York congregation were those of a love feast. But it was not long before disagreements arose, which have resulted in the resignation of the English preacher who has determined to seek new fields of activity on the Pacific Coast. It is said that he was dissatisfied because the place of Baptist worship in which he preached was not so large as he desired, as he believed that his usefulness would be increased if he could have bigger congregations to listen to his preaching. In his farewell sermon he incidentally let it be known that he is one of those Protestant preachers who have given up the old Protestant view of the Bible. After asserting that the deluge was a myth, he went on to say that there is much that is mythiest in biblical narratives and that the real character of the Bible will never be truly understood until this fact is grasped.

Keeping in mind that the teachings of the Bible are the Protestant rule of faith, one can understand that dwelling upon the mythical character of those teachings does not tend to increase respect for them as a guide for right living. Men cannot be brought to shape their lives by myths, even when it is a question of ordinary matters. How much more unwilling will they be to accept that kind of guidance when they are face to face with such transcendant questions as God and eternity, which have filled the minds of men in the remotest past and which still absorb the attention of all thinking persons.

Grim old Thomas Carlyle himself, after he had rejected as untenable that form of Protestantism in which he had been reared, could not shake off the haunting problem, which lies at the root of all religion and will not down. Listen to him: "But whence? O heaven, whither? Sense knows not: only it is through mystery to mystery, from God to God." This is putting in another form Tennyson's sentiment:

"An infant crying in the night;
An infant crying for the light.
And with no language but a cry."

It is the wail of naturally religious minds longing for a key to the mysteries which confront them at every turn. Mere pulpit eloquence, such as Dr. Aked will bring to his new field of activity in San Francisco, will not solve them.

Probably it was this thought, which, though not fully formulated, prompted the writing of the article in The Christian Century to which we have referred. It was written by a Protestant minister, the Rev. J. R. Perkins, who is familiar with the religious conditions, so far as the Protestant churches are concerned, prevailing in San Francisco. Here is his judgment as to the probable results of Dr. Aked's transferring his labors from New York to San Francisco: "The whole truth is, there is absolutely nothing to prove that Dr. Aked, if he comes to San Francisco, or any other noted preacher of America or England, will do more than the average clergyman is now doing in this city of the West. Given an average amount of intelligence, affable manners, and a certain amount of optimism (sometimes too fat-witted) and a Middle West preacher in country towns of 5,000 or in cities of 160,000, will succeed according to the standards the Church has set before it."

In enumerating the present condition of Protestantism in San Francisco, the writer of The Christian Century article gives this not over-flattering picture: "But the lamentable fact remains—the Church in its present form is getting nowhere, there being less than 12,000 identified Protestants in San Francisco to-day with a population of 500,000, against 20,000 when the city contained but half that number of people." We are told that in San Francisco that part of the population which make up the rank and file of the wage-workers are outside of the influence of the Protestant clergy. To quote: "And as for the proletariat—well, the minister does not exist. He is simply a curio if anything."

What message, it may be asked, has Dr. Aked to bring to those workers who now regard a Protestant minister as "simply a curio?" Will his mythical view of the Bible inspire them with new courage to face the hard facts of their daily life rendered less onerous by the eloquence of an English Baptist minister, who since his landing in America has been preaching to one of the richest congregations in the land? It it no disparagement to Dr. Aked's abilities as a preacher to predict that he will not appreciably alter the present numerical strength of Protestantism in a city in which we are informed there are "less than 12,000 identified Protestants in San Francisco to-day with a population of 500,000 against 20,000 when the city contained but half the number of people."

No pulpit eloquence, but a revival of faith in the fundamentals of Protestantism, can change this condition of things. And how is it possible for this revival to take place when the Protestant rule of faith, the Bible, is assailed constantly by those who were ordained for the purpose of expounding and defending it? There is a homely adage to the effect, you cannot have your cake and eat it. Protestant churches cannot expect to wield the religious influence that was their's in the past, if they virtually destroy the source from which this influence flowed. Pulpit eloquence can never breathe life into a Bibleless Protestantism. Sermons, the most brilliant a verbal artist can construct, will never prove a satisfactory substitute for faith. The spiritual part of man cannot be nourished by words alone.—N. Y. Freeman's Journal.

THE REAL ROMANCE OF LIFE

Thomas J. Gerrard, in the April Catholic World.

For really high romance we must turn to the saints of the Catholic Church. The Catholic saint is the only intelligible superman, if by superman we mean a being who has conquered the moral weaknesses of human nature. The Catholic saint is the one who obtains the richest return of life for the renunciation which he makes And why? It is because he is an expert in sanctity, because he is a genius in love, having proved to himself that love cannot be satisfied by the Relative and Transitory but only by the Absolute and Eternal.

In the Catholic ideal the contract of marriage is raised to the dignity of a sacrament. The mutual love between husband, and wife and child is no mere carnal bond binding the family to the home on earth, but rather a triple cord of the invisible spirit binding the family to the spirit world. In the Catholic ideal the vow of virginity cuts away the joys of family life, sacrifices the honor and glory of bringing children into the world and educating them for the kingdom of heaven. But for what reason? Only in order that the spirit may be more free to foster the spirit life in itself and in others. What the virgin sacrifices in the joy and glory of bodily generation, she gains a hundred fold in the joy and glory of spiritual generation.

If we want to see the explicit relationship of passion to the spirit world we must turn to the annals of saintship. Fortunately the deeds of the saints speak for themselves. We can go to the quaint simple narrations of Butler and learn sufficient of the facts of the saints' lives and through the facts catch something of their spirit. But there is an enormous debt due to the saints that their stories should be told worthily. However, a beginning has been made. Francis Thompson has given us a setting for St. Ignatius and John Ayscough has revealed to us San Celestino. We want many more stories of this kind. When the saints are better known, when they are presented truthfully and gracefully, then will be seen who are the real supermen. They are those who have been enlightened by Catholic vision and inspired by Catholic love. They are the lasting apologetic for the Catholic theory of life, for they have verified in their own experience the truth that a man is a distinct personality in himself, that he is related to God as a creature to a Creator, that he has been made for God and can rest only in God.

As a matter of fact, we ought to make a new beginning each morning. We ought to base this fresh start on the net results of yesterday. Yesterday's failures should be our danger signals and yesterday's successes our guide posts.—Leigh Mitchell Hodges.

You Can Cure Chest Colds

And Bronchitis by Using DR. CHASE'S SYRUP OF LINSEED AND TURPENTINE If You Get The Genuine.

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You can readily cure throat and chest colds, croup and bronchitis, by using Dr. Chase's Syrup of Linseed and Turpentine. This medicine is both thorough and far-reaching in its influence on the system. For this reason its merits are well-known and its sales enormous.

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Their likeness is in name only, and when you are in need of medicine you don't want to depend on a name or imitation. Every bottle of the genuine bears the portrait and signature of A. W. Chase, M. D., the famous Receipt Book author, 25 cents a bottle, family size 60 cents; all dealers or Edmanson, Bates & Co., Toronto.