

"South Station!" called the guard. There was a general collection of luggage, and in a moment he had disappeared with his party.

It was a wonderful tale of adventure to tell at home. "It sounds like a fairy tale," John O'Kelly said, but he smiled good-naturedly as Anna, excited and happy, said: "Now, did St. Anthony forget me?" and Eileen talked incessantly of the bad man who took "aunt's cross."

Two postcards came from a distant town, signed "E. J. Burke," the first words: "Just to show that I haven't forgotten," and the second: "Will call on Tuesday of next week."

John O'Kelly liked his looks the moment he saw him. "A straight, clean young fellow," was his mental verdict as he listened to his story.

"We were surveying a tract of land near Granby, Maine, last spring," he said. "There had been a fire the autumn before and we saw the ruins of a chapel. I heard it was a Catholic chapel. In making the boundaries we cut into the trunk of a tree near the church and found it hollow. There was a very small opening, made by some animal, and inside were about a dozen prayer-books. We could not get it through our heads how they came there. I being the only Catholic in the party, took charge of them, and I thought the best thing I could do was to burn the lot. The last book while burning turned over on its side and this cross dropped out. There was no name in the book; no one about the town seemed to know anything about the prayer books and I made no mention of the cross. The priest who had charge of the chapel in the summer had been transferred to a distant place; so I showed it to the fellows and hung it on my watch chain for luck."

He handed it to Anna, who received it gratefully. Then they entered into explanations. "Eileen must have spent her time pushing prayer-books through the hole," they said laughingly; but Eileen, who had been listening, made the old persistent answer: "I put it in the birds' nest," and then light dawned upon them as to her meaning.

This first visit of young Mr. Burke was not his last by any means, and as he grew to be a favorite with the family, and also to realize that the sincere regard he had for Anna was beginning to be returned, he said joyfully to himself:

"The cross of the O'Kellys seems to have brought me their blessing, too."—Irish Catholic.

THE STORY OF CHRIST

BY GIOVANNI PAPINI

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THE LOST FOUND

But the exile in Egypt was short. Jesus was brought back, held in His mother's arms, rocked throughout the long journey by the patient step of the ass, to His father's house in Nazareth, humble house and shop where the hammer pounded and the rasp scraped until the setting of the sun.

The canonical gospels say nothing of these years: the Apocrypha give many details but unworthy of belief. Luke, the wise doctor, is content to set down that the boy grew and was strong; that is, that he was not sickly and overworked. He was a boy developed as he should be: healthy, a bearer of health, as was fitting in one who was to restore health to others by the mere touch of His hand.

Every year, says Luke, the parents of Jesus went to Jerusalem for the feast of unleavened bread in memory of the escape from Egypt. They went with a crowd of neighbors, friends, and acquaintances to keep each other company on the journey. They were cheerful like people going to a festival rather than to a service in memory of a solemn crisis: for the Passover had become at Jerusalem a great feast day, when all the Jews scattered about the Empire came together.

On the twelfth Passover after the birth of Jesus, as the group from Nazareth was returning from the holy city, Mary found that her son was not with them. All day long she sought for Him, asking every acquaintance, but in vain. The next morning the mother turned back, retraced her steps over the road and went up and down the streets and open places of Jerusalem, fixing her dark eyes on every boy she met, asking the mothers standing in the open doors, begging her countrymen not yet gone, to help her find her lost son. A mother who has lost her son does not rest until she has found him; she thinks no more of herself, she does not feel weariness, effort, hunger. She does not shake the dust from her clothes nor arrange her hair. She cares not for the curious glances of the passers-by. Her distracted eyes see nothing but the image of him, who is no longer beside her.

Finally on the third day she came to the Temple, looked about in the courts, and saw at last in the center of the circle the waving hair, the shining eyes, the tanned face, the fresh lips of her Jesus. Those

old men were talking with her son of the Law and the Prophets. They were asking Him questions and He was answering; He put questions to them in His turn and they marvelled at Him, astonished that a boy should know the words of the Lord so well. But He remembered the books which He had heard read out in the little Synagogue of Nazareth; and His memory had retained every syllable.

Mary remained for a few moments gazing at Him, hardly believing her eyes. Her heart, a moment before beating fast with fear, was now beating fast with astonishment. But she could not restrain herself any more and suddenly in a loud voice called Him by name. The old men took themselves off and the mother snatched her son to her breast and silently clasped Him to her, the tears which she had kept back till then raining down on His face.

She clutched Him, took Him away, and then, certain that she had Him with her, that she had not lost Him, the happy mother remembered the despairing mother, "Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing."

"How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"

Weighty words, especially when said by a twelve-year old boy to a mother who had sought Him for three long days.

And, the Evangelist goes on, "And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them." But after so many centuries of Christian experience we can understand those words, which seemed at first sight to be hard and proud.

How is it that ye sought me? Do you not know that I can never be lost, that I can never be lost by any one, even those who will bury me under the earth? I will be everywhere where any one believes in me, even if they do not see me with their eyes. I cannot be lost from any man, by any man, provided that he hold me in his heart. I shall not be lost alone in the desert nor alone on the waters of the lake, nor alone in the garden of olives, nor alone in the tomb.

"And who is this father of whom you speak to me? He is the legal father, the human father, but my real father is in heaven. He is the Father who spoke to the patriarchs face to face, who put words into the mouths of the prophets. I know what He told them of me, His eternal wishes, the laws He has given to His people, the covenant which He has signed with all men. If I am to do what He has commanded me, I must be busy about what is truly His. What is a legal, temporal father confronted with a mystic, spiritual and eternal bond?"

THE WOODWORKER

But the hour for leaving His home had not come for Jesus. The voice of John had not yet been heard; and with His father and mother He once more went along the road to Nazareth and returned to Joseph's shop to help him in his trade.

Jesus did not go to school to the Scribes nor to the Greeks. But he did not lack for teachers. Three teachers He had, greater than all the learned: work, nature and the Book.

It must never be forgotten that Jesus was a working man and the adopted son of a working man: that He was born poor, among people who worked with their hands; that He gave out His gospel. He earned His daily bread with the labor of His hands. Those hands which blest the simple-hearted, which cured the lepers, which gave light to the blind, which brought the dead to life, those hands which were pierced with nails upon the cross, were hands which had been bathed with the sweat of labor, hands which had known the numbness of work, hands which were callous with work, hands which had held the tools of work, which had driven nails into wood, the hands of a working man.

Before being a workman of the spirit, Jesus was a man who worked with material things. He was poor before He summoned the poor to His table, to the festival of His Kingdom. He was not born into a wealthy family, into the house of luxury or the house covered with purple and fine linen. Descendant of kings, He lived in a wood-worker's shop: Son of God He was born in a stable. He did not belong to the caste of the great, to the aristocracy of warriors, to the aristocracy of the rich, to the Sanhedrin of the priests. He was born into the lowest class of the people, the class which had below it only the vagabonds, the beggars, the fugitives, the slaves, the criminals, the prostitutes. When He became no longer a manual worker, He went down lower yet in the eyes of respectable folk, and sought His friends in that miserable huddle which is even below the common people. But until that day when Jesus, before going down into the Inferno of the dead, went down into the Inferno of the living. His position was that of a poor working man and nothing more, in the hierarchy of castes which eternally separates men.

Jesus' trade is one of the four oldest and most sacred of men's occupations. The trades of the peasant, the mason, the smith, and the carpenter are, among the manual arts, those most impregnated with the life of man, the most innocent and the most religious. The warrior degenerates into

a bandit, the sailor into a pirate, the merchant into an adventurer, but the peasant, the mason, the smith, the carpenter do not betray, cannot betray, do not become corrupt. They handle the most familiar materials, and their task is to transform them visibly into visible, solid, concrete creations, useful to all men. The peasant breaks the clod and takes from it the bread eaten by the saint in his grotto and the murderer in his prison; the mason squares the stone and builds up the house of the poor man, the house of the king, the house of God. The smith hots and fashions the iron to give a sword to the soldier, a plowshare to the peasant, a hammer to the carpenter. The carpenter saws and nails the wood to construct the door which protects the house from the thieves, to make the bed on which thieves and innocent people die.

These plain things, these common, ordinary, usual things, so usual, common and ordinary that they pass disregarded under our eyes used to more complicated marvels, are the simplest creation of man, but more miraculous and essential than any later inventions.

Jesus, the carpenter, lived in His youth in the midst of these things, made them with His hands, and for the first time by means of these things manufactured by Him, entered into communion with the daily life of men, with the most intimate and sacred life, home life. He made the table around which it is so sweet to sit in the evening with one's friends, even if one of them is a traitor; the bed whereon man draws his first and last breath; the chest where the country wife keeps her poor clothes, her aprons, her handkerchiefs for festivals, and the starched white shirts for great days. He made the kneading trough where the flour is put, and the leaven raises it until it is ready for the oven; and the arm-chair where the old men sit around the fire of an evening to talk of never-returning youth.

Often while the thin, light shavings curled up under the steel of His plane and the sawdust rained down on the ground, Jesus must have thought of the promises of the Father, of the prophecies of old time, of what He was to create, not with boards and rules, but with spirit and truth.

His trade taught Him that to live means to transform dead and useless things into living and useful things: that the meanest material fashioned and shaped can become precious, friendly, useful to men; that the only way to bring salvation is to transform and shed just as a child's crib or a wife's bed can be made out of a log of olive wood gnarled, knotty and earthy, so the filthy money-changer and the wretched prostitute can be transformed into true citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven.

FATHERHOOD

In nature where the sun shines on the good and on the bad, where wheat ripens and grows golden to give bread to Jew and heathen, where the stars shine on the shepherd's cabin and the murderer's prison; where grape clusters turn purple and swell to give wine to the wedding banquet and to the orgies of assassins; where the birds of the air freely sing and their food without fatigue, where chieving foxes also have their refuge and the lilies of the field are clad in more splendor than kings, Jesus found the earthly confirmation of His eternal certainty that God is not a Master who punishes one day of enjoyment by a thousand years of reproach, nor a fierce war-like Jehovah who commands the extermination of enemies nor a kind of grand Sultan who delights in being served by satraps of high lineage and keeps close watch that his servants execute to the last detail the rigorous ritualistic etiquette of that Regia Curia, which is the Temple.

As a Son, Christ knew that God is Father: Father of all mankind and not only of the people of Abraham. The love of a husband is strong but carnal and jealous. The love of a brother is often poisoned with envy; that of a friend is stained with rebellion; that of a friend spotted with deceit; that of a master swollen with condescending pride; only the love of a father towards his children is perfect love, pure, disinterested love. The father does for his son what he would do for no one else. His son is his creation, flesh of his flesh and of his bone, grown up by his side day by day, a complement and a complement of his own being. The old man lives again in the young man. The past sees itself in the future. He who has lived sacrifices himself for him who is to live. The father lives in the son, and feels himself exalted. This child was

born to him in a moment of passion in the arms of the woman chosen from among all other women, born through the divine anguish of this woman, cared for and preserved by his own tears and sweat. He has seen him grow up at his feet, he has warmed his cold little hands between his own, he has heard his first words, eternal miracle ever new! He has seen his first wavering footsteps on the floor of his house. Little by little, he has seen a soul shine out in that body created by him, a new human soul, unique treasure beyond price! Little by little on that face he has seen his own features and those of the child's mother, of that woman with whom only in this common fruit is he corporeally identified. A human couple who long to become one body through love, attain this unity only in a child. In the presence of this new being, his creation, he feels himself a creator, beneficent, powerful, happy. Because the son looks to his father for everything, and in his childhood has faith only in his father, feels safe only near his father, his father knows that he must live for him, suffer for him, work for him. A father is a God on earth for a son, and a son is almost a God for the father.

In the love of a father there is no trace of a brother's perfunctory sense of duty, no trace of a friend's self-interest and rivalry, of a lover's lustful desire, a servant's pretense of faithfulness.

The love of a father is pure love, the only true love, the only love rightly to be called love. Purged of any elements foreign to its essence, it is the happiness of sacrificing oneself for the happiness of others.

This idea of God as Father, which is one of the great new ideas of the gospel of Christ, this profoundly renovating idea that God is Father and loves us as a father loves his children, not as a king loves his slaves; and gives daily bread to all his children and has a loving welcome even for those who sin, if only they return to lean their heads upon his breast: this idea which closes the epoch of the old covenant and marks the beginning of the new covenant, Jesus found in nature. As Son of God and one with the Father, He had always been conscious of this paternity scarcely glimpsed by the most luminous of the prophets. But now sharing all human experience He saw it reflected and as it were revealed in the universe and He was to use the most beautiful images of the natural world to transmit to men the first of His joyful messages.

TO BE CONTINUED

FALSE NEWS DISPATCHES

During a period of two weeks in March the newspapers of France, England and the United States carried dispatches describing a new offensive against the Rifians against the Spanish troops. In this new outbreak the Spanish were said to have been completely beaten, their base of supplies severely menaced, and their troops on the verge of revolt. There followed editorials condemning the regime of the Director, Primo Rivera, and predicting his early fall. In this "press offensive" against Spain, the London Daily Mail seems to have had first place, and our papers to have blindly followed. Now comes direct news from Spain itself that these tales were entirely false. The Madrid daily El Debate for March 11, prints a list of seventeen falsehoods printed in several French, English and American newspapers. The same daily also exposes the motives of this campaign of lies. The stories of Spanish disasters in Africa and of dissension at home were manufactured to coincide with a determined "drive" on the market against the Spanish peseta, directed apparently by the same interests which conducted similar attacks on the currency of Austria, Germany and France. The attack on Spain's currency succeeded partly, but collapsed utterly on the rise of the French franc, another indication of the common source of the two campaigns. At the same time the news dispatches falsely purporting to come from Spain also suddenly stopped. The facts regarding Spain's internal situation are that the Spanish people are almost wholly behind the Director in his effort to purge public life from the corruption that honeycombed it and did so much to discredit, in Spain, as elsewhere, parliamentary government.—America.

When giving yourself devotedly to exterior works let this be your sole end—to give pleasure to Jesus and to unite yourself more intimately to Him.—The Little Flower.

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