

THE MAESTRO'S STORY

Signorino admires the outlook? Well, it is not to be despised. Look yonder across the valley where San Marco piles up its pink and lilac roofs against the purpling hills. Such lights!

But a thousand pardons, Signorino had laid aside his work and I had meant only to— So? Then I shall rest awhile till the great heat be over and gone.

Signorino finds it difficult, I suppose, to command his mood always. The past intrudes. Well, we are none of us masters of the heart in that respect. Our wistful eyes are forever turned toward the past gateway.

Cure! There is no cure. Only this morning I received a letter from a famous singer, an artist, whose voice thrills thousands; who has riches, health, a world at his feet, who, in his happiness, asks the same question.

No, there is no cure. There are only now and then, blessed, moments of forgetfulness. One of us finds an hour's respite in this task; another in that. Signorino, for instance, is writing a romance. Then he is indeed favored. He can rest at will to an ideal world.

He thinks such work futile, thankless. I have a wise little book that I keep always near at hand. It was written by one of your own countrymen. Somewhere therein is the sentence—"The worst miser in the learned man that will not write."

But Signorino will forgive a garrulous old man who chatters away such needless words. Yes, it is always cool and pleasant there, while across the piazza our little church fairly bakes in the sunlight.

certain a dawn was coming when the mutual stress would burst forth into the air. The fact of the color and light, I thrilled at sight of the Concocta and Matteo—sitting together at evening on this very bench looking over the valley. I knew that there shone for them somewhere in these sunsets the fairy land we all of us glimpse but once, to lose forever. All the romance that had ever been written was beguiling them with hopes and promises.

It was the following spring when we were much together that I noticed a change in Matteo. Sometimes in the height of his apparent happiness he would shiver as if a draught of cold air had suddenly swept over him. On these occasions he would turn to Concocta with inexpressible sad eyes. She would call him by name. It would be a mere whisper; but oh, the depth, the strength, the intensity of it! And she would smile up at him. And he would be himself again.

Oh, yes, I thought of many reasons; but never of the true one. Tell me, Signorino, these premonitions, these inexcusable sensings of disasters; these dark hints that flash upon the soul in the twilight of contentment—what is the truth of them? For years they absent themselves and then, suddenly they are upon us as fearsome realities.

I have only to close my eyes and that fatal October morning is before me. We were at Mass. Matteo's voice rising higher and higher, filled the church with wonderful music. Heaven seemed very near. Just ahead of me knelt Concocta. I heard the end of the service as she became restless, kept turning and glancing behind her. I was puzzled, for I saw in his eyes the look of some hunted creature. Suddenly I saw her grip the chair that was in front of her and sister. When Father Micca had said the blessing she arose and moved swiftly forward to where our Lady's statue gleamed in the candle light.

There, on her knees, with head bowed, she remained till the lights had been snuffed and the people gone. A touch on my shoulder caused me to start violently. I turned around. It was Matteo. His face was pale. He beckoned me to follow him. Outside in the piazza he asked huskily: "Have you heard the news?" "What news," I demanded. "Carlo Volpini has returned."

"No!" I cried. "How did he know?" "The source of his words flashed upon me in an instant. "Are you certain that it was Carlo?" I asked. "I am sure. Just when Concocta came down the steps of the church. She paused a second, came forward, and said wearily: "I am very tired, Matteo, take me home. And together they went down the road."

I have never heard what passed between them that morning; but from that day onward Matteo seemed to rest under a strange spell of abstraction. Some day when he was on his knees, twice I was tempted to speak to him of the things that were in my mind, but I could not.

The next afternoon I met Matteo in the square. We scattered along talking of this thing and that—his studies, his music, his ambitions; but not one word of what I was sure was uppermost in both our minds. Just where the path turns aside from the main road I could feel the gathering strain of Matteo's muscles. It seemed an eternity till the two passed us. Carlo with his fine clothes and worldly air smiled and bowed; a mocking smile. Concocta like one in a dream did not look at us. Suddenly Matteo let go his grip. A hard light flashed in his eyes. I laid hold of him forcibly.

log, sorrow, tenderness rose heaven ward through the silence. We were rapt out of ourselves. These few months after Concocta's flight, some Americans from the Western part of your country heard Matteo sing at Vespers. It was the beginning of the end. Toward the close of that summer he left us to complete his studies in the musical centers of the North.

He came down here to my garden the day he was leaving. We spoke of many things that we had in common; but it was only when he took my hand for the parting that he referred to the unfortunate affair that was so much a part of his thoughts and life. Just before he turned away he pointed to the bench where we were sitting and said: "My heart is all there, Maestro, all there; nothing else matters. I loved her." And he was gone.

A fortnight later startling news flashed through the village. Carlo Volpini, on his way back to his native town, had been laid bare in the journals that brought us the story. Concocta? But what, you shall hear. "I was scoured with deadly heat. Even on these heights we gasped for breath. I sat here in the garden one night thinking what such weary meant to the sweltering thousands on city streets that meant. An hour after midnight, I heard the sound of God for His gift of the Holy Spirit."

Signorino knows how deep the silence is after nightfall. That evening it was ominous. The countryside was paroled, dying. Where stars should be was a luminous mist. All expectancy was abroad. As I sat thinking, a puff of air passed down through the wilted trees. Suddenly I leapt to my feet. A ragged stream of fire tore apart the sky in the west. When Father Micca had said the blessing she arose and moved swiftly forward to where our Lady's statue gleamed in the candle light.

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THE STOLEN SOVEREIGN

By Sylvia Hunting, in Ave Maria A tall, portly gentleman from Australia, with curly hair, was one day walking through the streets of London. He was not particularly interested in London news, as he had been absent from that city for a great many years; and wandered rather aimlessly about, looking into shop windows here and there. Two boys, observing him, with that unfeeling instinct common to the tribe, at once recognized him as a stranger.

"I'm going to play a game on that fatterer," said one to the other. "What you go to do?" asked his companion. "I'll tell you," was the reply, and the two boys whispered together. "I'll bet you lose," said the second boy. "He's a big guy."

"He looks a bit soft, though," rejoined the other. "I'm so sure I can fetch him that I'll write to dump your papers onto him as well as my own, if he doesn't tumble, I'll just buy up the lot for my myself." "All right," said the other. "Try him."

The urchin approached the gentleman, a bundle of papers on his arm, which were further augmented by those his friend had been carrying. "O sir," he began in an appealing tone, "you are so good as to buy a paper? I've been trying to sell mine all day, and hardly anyone has bought. My mother's dreadful sick, and she hasn't one to earn a penny for her but me."

The gentleman looked down at the boy, ragged and pallid cheeked, and his heart was filled with pity. There was something attractive in the peaked little face upturned to his, though the twinkling black eyes were almost too sharp for those of an old man. Attributing their precocious glance, however, to the environment of poverty and wretchedness which had probably surrounded the child from his birth, the stranger did not allow this circumstance to influence him.

"Yes, my lad," he answered, putting his hand in his pocket. "I will take them all, so that you may at once run down to your sick mother with some food." The sharp black eyes dropped to the ground; the boy, little trickster though he was, had not the effrontery to look into the face of the kind stranger, who drew forth a shilling and a penny, and said: "I find I have no silver with me, but I can give you a sovereign?"

"Yes, sir," was the eager response. "I will change for you in a minute." The Australian hesitated. He knew he was plying a strong temptation before the boy, but his trust in human nature was great. "Very well, then," he said. "I will wait here till you return. Put the papers on the ledge by this area. When you return you may sell them over again if you can. I do not want them." "Yes, sir," said the boy, and he took the money, immediately darting across the street, followed by his companion.

"No, sir, I'm just from the steamer." "I would see to it that you are lodged in a decent place. The mother of one of my clerks will take you, I think. Sit down a moment, while I finish a letter, and I will attend to the matter." The young man took a seat, well pleased at his reception, and with his new employer, whose age had a most boyish aspect, which augured well for his future. The moments passed. As Adam sat gazing at the profile and curly hair of the man before him a change came over his own countenance. It first grew puzzled, then astonished, then troubled and anxious. Finally he arose, walked to the window, stood there for some moments; and then turned to meet the smiling face of Mr. Wollstone, who had just risen from his chair.

"Come with me, Adam," he said. "I will introduce you to your fellow clerks and ask Jepson if his mother has room for you. I wish to tell you that so far as I know, I have none but exemplary clerks in my employ. I take it you are a Catholic." "Yes, sir, I am," was the reply. "Well, so much the better; though I bar no man because of his religion. Come now, Adam."

A deep blush overspread the face of the young applicant, as he answered: "A moment, sir, if you please! I would like to say a few words. I do not know—I do not believe—perhaps when you have heard me you will not think me eligible for employment with you. But I feel it is my duty to tell you." "What is it?" inquired Mr. Wollstone, seating himself.

"Were you not in London about ten years ago, sir?" asked Adam. "I was," answered the merchant. "Do you remember one cold morning in the Strand, buying an armful of papers from a boy who went to get change and did not return?" "I remember it very well."

"That was that boy, sir," said Adam. "I recognized you as you sat there writing. I think I owe it to you, sir, to let you know who I am and what I was—a vagabond, without friends or home or restraints of any kind. I knew you were a stranger, and with a pitiful story of my own to tell, I was tempted to buy a paper. I felt certain you would take the whole bunch, as you did. But I never dreamed that you would trust me to find change for a sovereign, which you sold for my shame at having to ask strong for me, sir. Shortly after that I came under the notice of Miss McDonald. Gradually I realized the wrong I had committed; and as I grew older, and reflected upon your kindness and trustfulness, I never expected to see you again, sir, but I hope you will believe me when I say that my being able to repay that money more than sets off my shame at having to confess it to you. Here it is, sir. And taking a piece of gold from his vest pocket he laid it on the desk near Mr. Wollstone.

The merchant took up the sovereign, put it back in the boy's hand and closed his fingers upon it. "Let this be your first deposit in the savings bank, my boy," he said. "You are made of good stuff. We will not quarrel over the matter, but I think it again. Come, Adam—first to settle in a lodging, and then to work. You may begin to-morrow morning. If you wish, I think, all things considered, my sovereign was well invested."

CHAPELS ON WHEELS The idea of having a chapel on wheels is by no means a new one in the British Isles, for even if the name of chapel can scarcely be claimed by the travelling vans belonging to Knott and the Protestant Alliance, no one will deny it to the "Little Ark" of Carrigaholt, that did so much to keep the faith alive in western Clare during those cruel years that followed the great famine in Ireland.

Religious tolerance has made such giant strides in the British Isles during recent years that some people will hardly credit the fanaticism and persecution that were rife sixty years ago. Ireland at that time was only emerging from the thrall of penal laws, and it was as yet impossible in the thickly populated districts of the west for the bulk of the people to be instructed in more than the absolutely necessary truths of religion. The National Board of Education was just coming into being, but its schools were few in number, and it was not only in religious but in secular knowledge as well that the people were lacking.

In the parish of Carrigaholt, a long narrow peninsula that lies between the Atlantic and the Shannon, the Board had but one school for a population of twelve thousand people, but of these a third were carried off by famine and by fever, and the remaining eight thousand were left in the most utter destitution. The parish was twenty miles long and there were three priests attached to it, but none of them occupied the parsonage. The parish priest, Father Malachy Duggan, having said Mass at an outlying chapel and administered the last Sacraments to no less than eighteen who were dying of cholera and fever on the very day he himself was struck down. The Bishop of Killaloe, a namesake of Father Vaughan's, appointed Father Michael Meehan in Father Duggan's place, and when the epidemic had abated he proposed, before the next parish priest was a serious one.

There had been a certain number of hedge schools in the district which were held mostly at night, and where some secular and a good deal of solid religious instruction could be obtained, but now some local Protestants, led by an agent named Marcus Keane, knowing that the people were hopeless and helpless after the famine and the fever, professed themselves anxious to help them to recover from the effects of these double calamities, and their first act was to establish schools where the children would be provided with food and clothing as well as with free education. This was a bold step, when backed by an assurance that there should be no interference with the children's religion, was naturally irresistible to people who were still only one step removed from starvation.

This being so, even when the assurance of non-interference were disregarded, the doles of food and clothing were continued, though on the understanding that the recipients should attend the Protestant children with a cry upon their lips that was heard round: "Good-bye, God Almighty, till the potatoes grow again." The parents allowed their children to remain at the schools, that were now avowedly proselyting centres.

To combat the evil Father Meehan was at his wits' end. He had no school in the neighborhood where this proselyting was going on, and though he tried to say Mass every week in one or other of the people's houses, he soon found that those who thus made him welcome did so at a heavy cost, and more than one of them had been taken to the workhouse. Father Meehan then managed to buy the good will of a couple of cottages from two families who were emigrating, and throwing them into one he erected an altar, and so into their thatched roof of a barn, where St. Patrick came into being. Almost immediately however the priest's claim even to this miserable shelter was disputed, and the same fate overtook him as had overtaken those who had allowed him to say Mass in their houses, and meanwhile the work of the proselytizers grew and flourished, nourished on the starvation, spiritual and temporal, of its victims.

It was now, when everything seemed hopeless, that the idea of the little "Ark" came to the almost despairing priest. So it was built and placed on the foreshore, whence neither landlord nor proselytizer could dislodge it. On Sunday after Sunday, in the heat of five summers and for five wet, stormy winters Mass was offered in the frail movable chapel, with the congregation kneeling by the thought that the sand or along the roadway, heeded by the weather, but offering to God the one mile fable, the hundred thousand welcomes that were denied to him elsewhere.

By slow degrees the leakage was stopped, and even at last those who had succumbed in their hunger to overwhelming temptation came back to the faith that in their hearts they had never abandoned. The existence of the little "Ark" became known to others outside the peninsula on which it stood, and both English and Irish papers having taken up the cause, the originators of the proselyting were obliged to give the site for an immovable church. The little "Ark" had done its work, and so, too, had its promoter, and when Father Meehan was laid to rest in the new church, his last moments attended by the thought that ten years ago he had expended his life for the faith that in their hearts they had never abandoned. The existence of the little "Ark" became known to others outside the peninsula on which it stood, and both English and Irish papers having taken up the cause, the originators of the proselyting were obliged to give the site for an immovable church. The little "Ark" had done its work, and so, too, had its promoter, and when Father Meehan was laid to rest in the new church, his last moments attended by the thought that ten years ago he had expended his life for the faith that in their hearts they had never abandoned.

garden of the British Church, has made well nigh impenetrable. It is in districts where there are already Catholic churches and Catholic congregations that missions to combat heathenism are needed. Father Vaughan and his companions have embarked on a different campaign. They are proclaiming the Truth where for generations no one has dared to proclaim it. Who funds has pressed hope that on his next visit he should find the people more ready to receive the Truth than he had found them on his first tour. Besides the altar, with its vessels, its candlesticks and vases, its crucifixes and pictures, it is well stocked with leaflets, pamphlets and books, for in these days of the ascendant of the press it is not wise to rely on speaking alone; even when the speakers are some of the best known of the time, the diffusion of literature is a most necessary part of the scheme.

Near by a rival "movable chapel," managed by the Protestant Alliance, displayed its old warning, "No Popery," but in spite of this, the hall in which Father Vaughan's lectures were given was crowded, and Fathers Herbert Vaughan and Norgate, with a lay helper, were kept busy in attending to the Question Box, wherein any written query might be placed for answer on the following evening. The Protestant Alliance had not been idle, and on leaving the hall the missionaries were hissed and booed by an antagonistic crowd, but before the end of the week public feeling seemed to have changed, and Father Vaughan's clearly expressed views on the subject of the Heverhill he would speak to them, not in a public hall but in a chapel of their own, was greeted by the people with cheers.

The second week's mission at Rveston, where Father Alton, himself a convert, was the preacher, was no less successful than the first, whilst for other weeks have the same reports to give, of missions preached by the fathers of the missionary society, by Father Nicholson, C. S. S. R., and by Monsignor Benson.

When the full programme of its summer and autumn campaigns have been carried out, the motor chapel will return to its winter quarters in London, and it is not now, but in the future, that the work it has done will be told. The seed has been sown, but no one can tell when or where the harvest will be gathered in.

But those who have assisted at a Mass said at that movable altar, the first Mass to have been said in most of the places since before the Reformation, have no doubt that the grace of God has lingered round those places, and that His blessing is upon those who have carried the Truth or who have received it through the Motor Chapel—America.

WYCLIFFE NO MORNING STAR Let it be clearly understood, says Hilarie Belloc, in the October Catholic World, that in the particular form of special belief which we call Wycliffe, peculiar and contemptible. As to its instance, was no more the morning star of the Reformation than the capture of Jamaica, let us say, was the morning star of the modern English Empire. Wycliffe was many Proteus, a great number of men who were tearing up and down Europe upon the nature and fate of the soul. Such men have always abounded; they abound to-day. Some of Wycliffe's extravagances resembled what many Protestants happen to have since held; others (such as his theory that you could not own land unless you were in a state of grace) were singularly of the opposite kind. Wycliffe was not one of those with the whole lot, and he was hundreds of them. There was no common theory, no common feeling, there was nothing the least like that in the Protestantism of to-day. Indeed that spirit, and more, not only shall show in moments, does not appear until a couple of generations after the Reformation.

A Marvel of Healing Salt Rheum of Ten Years' Standing Healed as if by Magic Hands Cracked so Could Not Work — Cures Effected by Dr Chase's Ointment It does not take long for Dr. Chase's Ointment to prove its magic healing power. A single night is often sufficient to produce the most startling results. Internal treatment for skin diseases is nearly always disappointing. By applying Dr. Chase's Ointment to the diseased parts relief is obtained almost immediately, and gradually the sores heal up and disappear. Here are two letters which will interest you: Mrs. Chas. Gilbert, Haystack, Pleasant Bay, N.H., writes:—"I was a sufferer from Salt Rheum for ten years, and was almost despairing of ever being cured. So many treatments had failed, and I had read of the wonderful cures effected by Dr. Chase's Ointment. I commenced using it, and was entirely cured by eight boxes. I want to express my gratitude for Dr. Chase's Ointment, and to recommend it to all sufferers." Dr. Stanley Merrill, Delaware, Ont., writes:—"For years I was troubled with my hands cracked, often becoming so sore that I could hardly do any work. I got some of Dr. Chase's Ointment and I applied it once or twice to the affected parts. I have had no trouble since using the ointment for some hands." Dr. Chase's Ointment, 60c. a box, at all dealers, or Edmanston, Bates & Co., Limited, Toronto.

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