

# THE TEST.

## The Story of a Vocation, and the Girl's Decision.

"Martha, dear,"  
 "Yes, John, what is it?"  
 "I got a letter from Franklin's this morning."  
 "Franklin's? Who are Franklin's?"  
 "Why, they are the people I worked with during my summers when I was in the seminary. They offer me a position at twenty-five dollars a week."  
 "Oh, isn't that splendid! You dear! And now we can really get married. When does it begin?"  
 "Why, I can go down there tomorrow; they want me right away."  
 "Can you? Why, you don't mean to say that you hesitate?"  
 "Well, Martha, I am not sure whether I ought to take it. That is what I wanted to see you about it for."  
 "And why not?"

John McMaisters looked lovingly at the beautiful girl for a moment before he began his reply. For a year they had been betrothed, waiting the while for his work to become successful enough to make married life possible. His chosen field of literature did not seem to have become very promising in the matter of making his fortune. By wearing cheap clothes and living at cheap lodgings he was just able to make ends meet out of the small payments his articles brought in.

"Martha," he began very slowly and gently, "you know how I spent my early years in the seminary, with the expectation of being one of the priests. You know what the circumstances were which made it impossible for me to go on, which showed me so plainly that God did not wish me in that holy vocation. We talked all that over at the beginning of our love. You felt as I have, that there could be no question about my vocation now to the state of matrimony. We would not have been happy if there had been a question, would we, dear?"

The girl drew a little closer to him as she whispered, "No, John; I don't think we would."

"Well, my darling, when I saw that so clearly at the time, when I had to leave the seminary, I went into the old chapel and knelt before our blessed Lord's presence. I thanked Him for making His will clear and plain, though so different from my expectations. And then I promised Him that, although He had shown me that I should not be a priest, I would give my life in the world to His service. To the greater glory of God, should still be my motto, whatever I would mean to be."

Martha gazed into her lover's face with something akin to worship in her heart. At first she had fought off her growing affection for a "spoiled" priest. Now she was ashamed that she could ever have doubted the deep piety which had grown a dinner because it found that it might not shine in the more perfect state.

The man went on, "I had done some writing for the church papers. It had been favorably received. In my mind, I had entertained the idea that I might add to my usefulness as priest that of author in a small way. As I bade good-by to my old comrades, one of them said to me, 'John, you can still serve God. If I could write as you can, I would not think I had a vocation to the priesthood.' Maybe I was a trifle too mystical about it, but I took that as a call of the divine voice. Poverty had no terrors for me then, for I thought I should go on and live alone."

The girl sighed. How well she knew the hardships of the life he had chosen; how much he had suffered in silence, how cheap food and unpleasant surroundings had turned his cheeks hollow and pale; how many discouragements he had met; how little hope there was of advancement for some years to come.

As he ended the last words, his hand slipped over hers and he lifted it gently to his lips. "How wonderfully good God has been to show me you," he exclaimed; then kissed the fair hand again before he slowly lowered it to the arm of the chair in which he sat beside her.

"But finding you has made some change," he resumed, after a moment's pause. "Had it not been for you, I would have refused this offer of Franklin's without a thought. But you have rights. As God has given you to me, He has placed upon me the obligation to make you as happy as I can. I did not feel that I had the right alone to say no to this chance. If I make this refusal, it must be because you wish me to."

As John has made his announcement about the fine business offer, Martha's heart had begun to beat with joy. As he had explained his reasons for not accepting it immediately, the gladness had passed away. Perhaps she admired him away. Perhaps for his self-sacrifice; but the more for his self-sacrifice; but she could not find in the increasing admiration much consolation for the disappearance of the vision of speedy marriage and home which the news had raised in her mind. When he turned the question to one of her own privileges in the matter of the choice, it hardly occurred to her not to exercise her right. There was no hesitation in her thought. God reasons instantly presented themselves to her for taking the more selfish viewpoint.

"Why, John," she said, "it seems to me that, since God has shown us that He wants us to have each other, it would hardly be less than

for us to accept any opening which may make it possible for us to fulfill His will in the matter."  
 "So you think I ought to accept. Maybe you are right. Of course, it might be the divine will, yet I should marry some time, yet I will wait. His will that we should marry just now. Still, long engagements are bad on general principles. Probably you are right."  
 "And you will accept it, then? Oh you are so good to poor little me?" She pressed a kiss on his forehead then, seizing his arms, lifted him to his feet and made him do a few waltz steps around the room.  
 "And we can afford to rent that little cottage in Breezesturt," she cried gaily. "I looked at it Sunday afternoon, and it is still empty. My heart was sinking then, for I was sure it would be filled before we could get a chance to take it."  
 "Yes," replied her lover, though it seemed a little too much effort for him to reach her point of cheerfulness. "I don't know but we could do better than that on twenty-five dollars a week."  
 "Now, there you go, getting extravagant the moment you have even a prospect of money!" She shook a mocking finger in his face, then burst forth again into merry peals of gentle laughter. It was not long before her mood had infected him completely. He entered into the little plans that had been neglected heretofore as being too much in the nature of castles in Spain. He enjoyed her schemes fully. All the suggestions she had to offer about the arrangement of their household were met with a responsive chord in his heart. At last the nightmare of the boarding-house was to end. A home was to be his! He had not thought much about that before. His mind had only reached up to the bliss of possessing her. That had been tempting enough. As she unfolded the rest of the possibilities, he realized that it would be pretty hard to give up his chance now, even though Martha should change her mind.

And so they talked, this happy pair. One after another they filled in the lines in their picture of the joy that soon would be their own. He had come to her humble flat immediately after his lecture in the cheap boarding-house which he had called home heretofore.

The sun was dipping over the tops of the other houses when he at last arose to leave. "I must finish up one more story this evening," he said. "I shall not have much time after to-morrow. I will report at Franklin's for duty at nine o'clock."

After he had gone, Martha sat a long time, gazing through the window at the street below. The soiled children who insisted the neighborhood did not worry her as much as usual; the ugly sign boards on the high fence around the opposite vacant lot were less oppressive; the clanging of the street-car bells not quite so annoying. For now she could look beyond these things to a future in which they should have no part. The stitching with which she had long caked out her own livelihood seemed a little lighter task now that it was so soon to end. The happy days to which she had so long looked forward were coming. They were almost here. A month, a delightful month, in which she could devote her labors to the simple trousseau for herself; and then, ah! then everything would be hers, hers.

Oh, it was too much happiness, too much joy to be true! Was it, could it be too much happiness to be right! Was it possible that she might be paying too great a price for immediate possession? Could there be anything wrong about taking her lover from what he seemed to regard as his vocation? Vocations had always seemed to be very simple matters to her. Either a person was called to religion or to matrimony. She had always felt sure that her own call was matrimony. Before they had become engaged she had made sure that John's vocation was the same. But—might there be special vocations inside the great lines which divide these two?

It was a new idea, suggested by John's words, as to the possibility that God's will could be a later rather than an immediate marriage. Altogether it was not a very pleasing idea to Martha. She had always been a pretty conscientious girl. John's talk about the greater glory of God even outside the higher vocations had begun to affect her. By the time that it was necessary to light the gas a large portion of her happiness had taken wings. But as she looked out, before drawing the shade of her window, and saw the dingy street, more dingy in the growing dusk, she cried, half aloud, "I can not stand this any longer. It must be his vocation to go into business."

At that moment the postman's whistle sounded downstairs, and her name was shouted up the hallway. She ran below, eager to charge the uncomfortable trend of her thoughts. It was only a magazine—the one which published most of John's stories. She took it as eagerly as she always had taken it, and tore it open with the same quickening of pulse with which she ever searched its pages for the things John had written. She knew that the story would be one he had already let her read in manuscript. She always read them again in print. It took her a moment to find his particular

place in this copy, and, while she turned the leaves, her heart sank with the fear that nothing would appear.

All at once she dropped the magazine. In a few moments would come a time when there would never again be anything of John's to look for in it! Then she picked it up more eagerly than before. She was almost feverish in her haste as she removed her search. At last she found the page. Rapidly she read the well-remembered phrases. Gradually she lost herself in the interest of the tale. It was a simple little piece, without anything about it to show any great literary genius in its author. His financial necessity had compelled him to write it rather hurriedly. Yet, no one could read it through without being a bit stirred. For, like all his stories, it dealt with the struggle for righteousness and the victory that comes from the grace of God. Till to-day Martha had thought of his work simply in the light of artistic or business success. As she laid down the periodical, the real meaning, the purpose for which her lover labored, stood out before her. And the revelation brought on a battle with self such as she had never experienced.

On one side were all the little comforts of the home that could be. With this strong host, the disagreeableness of her present surroundings arrayed itself, together with the less selfish thought of John's own hardships. At the head of this column stood John himself—the great happiness of calling him "husband." And over against these, all alone, was John's adaptation of the Jesuit motto, "to the greater glory of God."

It was no quick battle. It lasted through the whole evening. Far into the night the pleasures still seemed to have the best of the motto. It was almost dawn when Martha reached her decision and fell into a brief sleep. Her decision had only been to assist at Mass in the morning. The main question had been pushed aside, but to a safe place.

It was later than she intended when she awoke, and she had barely time to dress and reach the church as the eight o'clock Mass was beginning. She found it impossible to pray at first, and attributed the fault to the fluster of her haste in coming. But as the solemn ceremonies proceeded to the supreme moment when the priest again presented the awful sacrifice of God Himself she might have been seen to wipe her eyes furtively with her little handkerchief. No sooner had the prayers at the foot of the altar been finished than she hurried out to the nearest drugstore. Seizing the telephone directory, she turned the pages to the letter F. There were a number of Franklins and she felt very uncertain as she looked at the big clock behind the counter and saw that only half an hour remained till nine o'clock. She had chosen the address of a large manufacturing concern which bore the name.

She boarded a car, then quickly left it as she realized that she had come out without her purse. The offices of the factory were a good mile and a half away, but she started to walk as fast as she could. It was a very breathless and somewhat weary Martha who nearly ran into John McMaister's arms at the door with this sign, "No Admission Except on business."

"Why, my dear, what is the matter?" asked the strong voice of her lover. He looked her over in astonishment. It was not altogether easy to identify this parting, rather

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### Death of the Rev. Bro. Bernardine Whelan, O.S.F.

There has just passed away at the Franciscan Monastery, Cummer, Co. Galway, one of the most widely known and highly revered religious of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis in Ireland. Brother Bernardine had reached the fine old age of seventy-five years, and had entered on the fiftieth year of his religious profession, when, after a brief illness, he passed to his eternal reward. He entered the Franciscan Order about 52 years ago, and after a remarkably fervent novitiate made his perpetual vows in 1859. Having labored for short periods in the Monasteries of Achill and Clara, he was stationed at Amadown Monastery, Co. Galway, where he spent most of his long life in religion. Here he was distinguished for his energy, ability, tact and zeal in the work of education, both religious and secular. His attractive personality drew to him the hearts of his pupils. His pupils, whether at home in Ireland or abroad in America or Australia, maintained a heartfelt esteem for their old beloved teacher. Many touching proofs of this could indeed be cited. Within the past dozen years or so Brother Bernardine had been stationed in the Monasteries of Enniscorthy, Kiltulla, and Cummer, and everywhere he was an object of love and reverence to all his acquaintances.

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