

The Lower Drawer

By Rev. P.H.D. in the Missionary

(Concluded.)

Father C. must tell the rest of the story.

"In half an hour he came to the room again and said: 'Father, the buggy is at the door, and again I wish to thank you for what you have done tonight.' The same driver was in the buggy, and I must confess I was hardly prepared for the next announcement from my masked friend, I am very sorry, Father, but I must ask you to let us blindfold you once more. Of course I knew that they were afraid that I would recognize some of the country through which I was being driven, as I had been for several years on that mission; so I made no objections, and once more the driver's handkerchief was tied over my eyes. It was half past twelve at night when we left the house; and when we stopped at length and the driver told me he was going to take off the bandage from my eyes, I asked him if we were at the end of our journey; and he said that it would be best for me to get out of the buggy and stand on the ground as he could get at the handkerchief better that way. He helped me down and before removing the handkerchief he got back into the buggy, leaned over and whipping his horse drove away rapidly, leaving me standing in a side street at T, and about two squares from the depot. I looked at my watch and by the aid of a street lamp I found that it was half past three. I walked to the station and was told that a train for home was due at 3:45. I got my ticket, and got on the train; and then for the first time began to study over my strange adventure. It seemed to me as though I had been away from home for weeks, and I could with difficulty persuade myself that not ten hours before I had been sitting quietly at the table taking supper. The train arrived on time and I was home in a short time. According to my promise I said nothing about the sick call to any of the household. I may as well say here that though I made every possible effort afterwards to identify the country through which I was carried in the buggy I signally failed. I even went so far as to go to T. by train and there hired a team and drove through the country for a day in my search, but without any result.

Ten days afterwards Father C. told us of his adventure, and we did all in our power to assist him in his search, but to this day the affair is as great a mystery as it was then. Did the masked man tell the truth? Who wounded the man in the house? Did he die there; or were his remains taken away? We could never find the slightest trace of any house which had been occupied by strange men or find any one who knew of a death or burial near T, which was in any way mysterious. Father C. is long since dead and I have moved to another city, though I have several times been at T. yet I have never heard anything which could throw any light on the "Strange Sick Call."

Father Warner's Patience

By Eugene T. Finn, in the Missionary.

"Well, to be sure," murmured the old house-keeper, "our Blessed Lord gave Father Warner an extra stock of patience." Her listener laughed. "Perhaps Father Warner simply used his stock better than other people do," she said. But the old house-keeper shook her head. "You can't tell me that," she retorted. "I have been with him daily for nearly twenty years, and never once have I seen him any different than he is now—the kindest, truest, most gentle of men. Every one in this parish running to him with their troubles, at all hours of the day and night. They never seem to remember that he is a human being, too, and in need of a little rest occasionally. And for one and all he has the same quiet smile, and comforting words. Sometimes it makes me wild to see him bothered so—and the old house-keeper gave the towel she was hemming a vindictive jerk. "There, there, Sarah," gentle

Pains in the Back

Are symptoms of a weak, torpid or stagnant condition of the kidneys or liver, and are a warning to be extremely cautious to neglect, as important is a healthy action of these organs. They are commonly attended by loss of energy, lack of courage, and sometimes by gloomy foreboding and despondency.

"I was taken ill with kidney trouble, and so sorely that I could scarcely get around, and took medicine without benefit, and finally decided to try Hood's Sarsaparilla. After the first bottle I felt so much better that I continued its use, and six bottles made me a new woman. When my little girl was a baby, she could not keep anything on her stomach, and we gave her Hood's Sarsaparilla which cured her." Mrs. THOMAS L. S. WALLACEBURG, Ont.

Hood's Sarsaparilla

Food's Sarsaparilla cures kidney and liver troubles, revives the back, and builds up the whole system.

Mrs. Lane remonstrated. "Don't get into a temper about it. But tell me why you are so worked up today." "I declare, I can't help it," Sarah burst out angrily. "Just before you came the harum-scarum girl from the village was here. The girl that young Joe Curtis is going to marry. He has persuaded her to become a Catholic, too, like himself, and his for instructions she comes each day. But her questions and her stubbornness near drives a person crazy. I wonder that Father Warner stands it. She claims that she can understand all of the religion except our devotion to our Blessed Mother, but she will not pray to her. Father Warner explains the same things over and over again, yet she shakes her head. 'Tis stubborn she is, and not worth bothering with.' "Every stray lamb is precious in our Father's sight."

The quiet, gentle tones behind them made both women start. Father Warner stepped through the open door to the veranda where they sat. His strong face with its grave smile, was one which impressed every one with whom he came in contact. It was such a face as one would imagine belonged to John, the disciple whom Jesus loved. Father Warner looked every inch a priest and disciple of the Great Master. "We must not judge," he continued in his quiet way. "It is not our place to choose the good from the bad. We must do our best to help all, and save all, leaving the rest to God. This child of whom you are speaking has never had much religious training of any kind, therefore it is harder for her to grasp the Faith. Just a little more time, and all will be well."

"Yes, Father," Sarah answered, still speaking irritably. "But you have been teaching her these past four months, and she is still stiff-necked. Her wedding day is set for the end of this month. What will you do about it?" Father Warner smiled. "Just the same thing that I want you to do," he said. "Wait and pray. She is coming again today, and as I must go with Mrs. Lane now to see those poor people down on the flats, she may have to wait for me. I know you will be kind and soft-spoken to the motherless girl, even though your tongue has lashed her severely just now. I know your heart well, so your words do not scare me," and he laughed at old Sarah's flushed face. Then, turning to Mrs. Lane with a nod of readiness the two went off down the road, leaving old Sarah alone with her thoughts.

Not for long, however, for glancing up a few minutes later she saw Rose Harley coming towards her. Sarah sighed, and her welcoming words came haltingly. For a while they sat in silence, then gradually speech between them grew more friendly; drifting round to religion, and a flood-gate of questions broke over Sarah's defenceless head. "Mrs. Brown," Rose asked suddenly, "do you feel your religion?" "Well, I reckon I do," she said cautiously. "That is, sometimes, like when I am in Church," she added. "Well, I don't mean that," continued Rose. "I mean, don't you feel it all the time—every minute, every day?" "Land sakes! Religion ain't like rheumatism," Sarah granted. "You know you have it, even if you don't feel it."

"Not in my way of thinking," Rose's voice took on a positive tone. "I want to feel it all the time. That's why I won't pray to the Virgin Mary. I don't feel any love for her. I don't even want her."

"Saints preserve us!" gasped Sarah. "Tis blasphemy to say that. Take care, child. No good ever comes of such talk." Rose scarcely heeded her, but went on: "How can I love her? I have never known a mother's love. All my life I have stood alone, earned my own way, fought my own battles. The Catholic Faith seems beautiful to me, after years of unrest, and I love it for Joe's sake. But the devotion to the Virgin Mary seems so useless. Why can I not be a Catholic without accepting her?" "Lord forgive ye," murmured old Sarah. "Sure 'tis glad I am to see Father Warner coming this minute, for no words have I to give you."

Father Warner came hurriedly up the steps. His usually calm face was clouded. "I am afraid that I can spare you no time today, my child," he said. Then turning to Mrs. Brown: "That poor woman whom I visited with Mrs. Lane is in great trouble. Her little son is sick—dying, I fear, and I must stay with her tonight. Mrs. Lane has her own little ones to attend to, so I must stay alone and do my best for the poor mother. I hurried here to tell you where to find me if necessary."

Rose Harley stepped timidly forward, and touched his arm. "Please, Father, let me go with you," she begged. "Surely I can be of some use there."

Father Warner looked down at her anxious face. "Yes, Rose, you may come if you wish, though I see nothing that you can do. But, still, come—and God bless you, for the kind thought."

"The Flats," as that part of the town was called, was miserable indeed. Poverty and misery were on every side, but the hovel to which Father Warner took her seemed to Rose to be beyond description. Rose was used to living amongst people who had to stretch every cent to the utmost limit in order to make ends meet, but such dire want as this had never before been revealed to her. The tiny rooms were clean, but pitifully bare. The widow herself looked pinched and haggard, and the little form on the bed was so wasted and worn that it hardly showed beneath the scanty covers. In one corner of the room a crude altar had been erected. One tiny candle burned noiselessly before it, throwing a feeble ray of light over the beautiful face of the Madonna.

The few comforts which Father Warner and Mrs. Lane had brought lay untouched, and the widow knelt by the bedside in prayer. Father Warner touched her gently. She rose, turned a grateful face towards him. "Go and rest," he said softly. "We will watch for you till the crisis comes."

Obediently, the woman passed into the other room and threw herself upon a couch. Father Warner sat down beside the bed, and Rose busied herself in putting away a basket of provisions, straightening the tumbled covers on the tiny bed, and doing the little she could, with a full heart. More than once her eyes strayed to the pictured face above the altar, but she found no comfort there.

No word passed between them. Some little time passed thus, till, as if unable to stay away longer, the widow came and sat at the foot of the bed. There was something wonderful in her face, Rose thought, as she watched her. In spite of sorrow and poverty, her face wore a look of inward peace as if nothing could disturb some glorious vision. The silence was broken at last by the entrance of the doctor. He examined the child carefully, then turning to the mother said: "If he lives through the night, we shall save him, but I doubt that he will."

The widow drew a sobbing breath, and Rose saw her glance at the dimly altar. A hot wave of rebellion swept over Rose. As the doctor left, Father Warner turned to speak to her, and caught the hard look on her face. "Why, Rose?" he exclaimed in surprise. But Rose interrupted him with a shrill whisper: "Of what good are prayers to the Virgin Mary now?" she began angrily. "Where has she ever

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helped? Even God himself seems far away from scenes like this. How can I ever pray with the memory of such sorrow upon me?" "Hush!" the tone was soft and low, but full of command, and Rose turned in surprise. The widow stretched out her thin hand, and drew the girl down beside her.

(To be continued.)

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