

"Well then more shame 'tis for you. What's the matter?"

"Oh, I dunno, I've lost my best friend in the war."

"Dear me, 'tis an awful business, and goodness knows when 'twill stop. One of your London friends, you mean?"

"Yes, a fine fellow. You'd say the same yourself if you had known him. And a fine artist, too."

"An artist you tell me? Perhaps, Phil, he's better off. Don't take it so much to heart. Work, lad, work. That'll take your mind off it."

"But I can't work, Father Dan. Everything I do falls to please the powers that be. They blame the shortage of print paper, but that, I fancy, is an excuse rather than a reason. It's a little way they have in Fleet Street. If it isn't one thing, it's sure to be another."

"Now, lad, you are given to hasty judgments at times. Don't be too hard on the editors. Forget your writing for a while. The country is full of game, and people are talking of a food shortage. Get your father's gun and go out into the fields. See if your eye is as good as it used to be before you went to London. Just now as I was crossing the bog I stopped for a while to count the wild geese that flew over my head, and there were so many that I had to give up in despair. Go after them, Phil. Do something or you'll go crazy."

I knew that he was right. What I needed was something to occupy my mind, and now that the very thought of putting pen to paper was repugnant to me, it was only natural that in a sport-loving community I should take up some form of sport. Accordingly after Father MacMahon had left, I went out into the bog after the wild geese. Toward evening I returned with a full bag and a common or garden cold, which three days later developed into pneumonia.

Easter had come and gone before I was well enough to sit up, and not until the lambs were playing in the fields would the doctors permit me to leave my room. The first day I ventured out Father MacMahon came over to satisfy himself that I really and truly was on the high road to health and strength again.

"You had a narrow squeak, lad," he said as we sat down to dinner. "There were times when I thought nothing on earth could save you. You were delirious, and every bit as helpless as you were the day I baptized you nearly twenty-eight years ago. By the way, who is this Carlton you kept on calling for in your delirium?"

"That's my friend who was killed in France. Tell me what I said."

"Oh, nothing much. You called him by name several times, and seemed to be disappointed when he did not answer. Then, quoting Francis Thompson, you said you would look for him among the nurseries of heaven."

"And that's where Carlton is, Father Dan, romping with the children that were too good for this world. He loved poor Thompson's poetry."

"So, I fancy, do God and His angels. Was Carlton a Catholic?"

"No, unfortunately; but he loved to hear Mass, and I frequently took him with me to Brompton Oratory."

As I grew stronger the old impulse to write returned, and I yielded to it the more readily, perhaps, because I was lonely and time was hanging on my hands. Much of what I wrote I knew to be rubbish; but I persevered in my labors, and before many weeks had passed I felt I was doing better work than I had ever done before. As day followed day the impulse grew stronger and I became more and more its slave. For me the world outside did not exist. My interests were centered in my writing, and the joy of achievement, the thrill of creative endeavor, increased with every page I wrote.

Then one day Father MacMahon called to inquire if I had made any arrangements for my vacation.

"None whatever, Father Dan," I told him. "The fact is I never thought of a vacation. But there's no hurry. I've got to go to London next week on business."

"And how long will you be away, lad?" he asked.

"Oh, about a month. When I come back I'll take a fortnight or three weeks at the seaside."

"Maybe you will and maybe you won't. It's September now. When you return from London it will be October, and that's rather too late in the year for a vacation. Why not come away with me tomorrow? You need someone to look after you."

"Why should I spoil your vacation? But, gosh, I had no idea it was so late in the year, Father Dan."

"You've been sticking too close to your writing. Give it up for a while and rest your brain."

"But my brain, as you call it, doesn't need a rest. Besides I'm working against time. I've got to get this job finished by Wednesday next at the latest."

"What are you working on now? A novel?"

"No, a play. And between you and me it's a rattling good one. An actor-manager who happens to be a friend of mine has read two acts of it, and so highly does he think of it that he wants to start rehearsals on it at once."

"Oh, bother your old play. I'll never see it in all probability. I

was hoping it might be a good Catholic novel.

I went to London the following week, and for nearly a month practically lived at the theatre. Grier-son had engaged an excellent cast, and under his competent instruction they soon settled down to business. Then when I felt I could render no further assistance I went down to Chelsea to visit poor Carlton's studio. The door was slightly ajar, and when I pushed it open a priest rose out of the chair from which I had often watched my friend.

"Good evening, Father," I saluted. "I called just to have a look round. Someone I used to know rented the studio once. Do you work here now?"

"Oh, no," he answered. "The owner has just gone out to get some tobacco. I come here frequently to talk to him."

"He's a Catholic, is he?"

"Yes, a convert."

"I'm glad it's a Catholic he has the place. My friend had no religion; but he was a splendid fellow, though."

"What was his name?"

"Tom Carlton. He was killed in France about a year ago."

The priest crossed over to the easel that stood in the centre of the room.

"What do you think of this painting?" he enquired as he looked out into the garden.

I went up and examined the unfinished canvas. In the foreground was a wayside shrine before which an old man and his family were kneeling in prayer. A little to the left was a soldier, and in the background was a ruined village.

"How do you like it?" the priest asked after a short silence.

"Fine, fine," I answered. "It's the work of a Catholic artist—a good Catholic who is a great artist."

"Now look a little closer at the soldier. Do you recognize him?"

"Why, yes. It's—it's Carlton."

"It is, and you're Phil Mahony, aren't you? Let me tell you the story of that picture. When Carlton went to France he had no religion as you say. But he knew the difference between right and wrong. He had a sense of reverence, and a sense of beauty. In a word, quite unknown to himself, he had some glimmerings of the Catholic Faith. One day on his way back from the trenches he came upon a scene such as you see depicted there. Pleading fatigue, he fell out of the line and stood at a respectful distance while the peasant and his family were at prayer. The incident made a deep impression on him at the time, on his spiritual no less than his artistic sense. A few days later he was wounded. For months he hovered between life and death, and that probably explains the War Office report that he had gone west, though now he came to be listed among the missing I can not say. When at length he was discharged from the Army, and had recovered from his wounds, he decided to transfer to canvas the scene he had witnessed on his way back from the trenches. To get the right atmosphere, he would spend hours at a time in Brompton Oratory. Then he would return to his studio, but he never could quite get the effect he wanted. Finally he started to read some books on Catholic doctrine, and in a short time became a convert to the Church. After that he had but little difficulty with the picture."

"That's great news, Father. But who's Carlton himself?"

"That's his step on the stairs. He'll be delighted to see you after all that's happened since you last met."

was hoping it might be a good Catholic novel. Yet the central fact should be enough. Faith that is active, spiritual vision that is keen, discerning the Body of the Lord," will guide us to the full appreciation of our actual Emmanuel. Here, then, is the well-spring of new strength and courage to send us into a new week, strong and brave from our contact with our God. Don't waste the Holy Mass!—Catholic Standard and Times.

**GET READY FOR THE CHASE**

**SPECIAL TRAIN FOR HUNTERS**

The open season for hunting deer and moose in Northern Ontario is rapidly approaching. South of the French and Mattawa rivers, Nov. 5th to Nov. 20th inclusive; north and west of these rivers, Oct. 25th to Nov. 20th inclusive. North of Transcontinental Railway line the season is from Sept. 15th to Nov. 15th inclusive.

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The Canadian National Railways are providing special train service, which with regular trains will meet all demands. Special trains will be operated as follows: Leave Toronto Union Station 11:15 p. m., Oct. 31st for Capreol and intermediate points, and 11:15 p. m., Nov. 2nd, 3rd and 4th for Key Jet, and intermediate points. The usual ample accommodation of sleeping cars, baggage cars and coaches will be provided.

The Annual Hunter's Leaflet issued by the Canadian National Railways is now ready for distribution, and may be obtained on application to any agent of the Company, or write General Passenger Department, Room 607, Royal Bank Bldg., Toronto.

**CATHOLICS WHO AVOID SERMONS**

Why is it that so few Catholics are willing to listen to sermons? From year's end to year's end they attend the Low Mass in order to avoid listening to the Word of God. Not for them has St. Paul written: "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." No wonder there are nominal Catholics by the thousands who have little faith and less ability to explain their belief since they shun hearing the Gospel preached to them. And of those who do attend Holy Mass out of mere mechanical routine, how many profit by what they hear? They go to sleep. They yield to distractions of all kinds. Present in body, they are absent in mind.—The Missionary.

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