

loved each other well. "I want to say something to you, Stephen," Martin said.

"Right here?" asked Clisson. "What is it?"

"I guess it wont do any harm here. I guess the Sacred Heart knows all about it. Stevie, don't give my name to Father Harkins for any place at all, this time."

"Not give your name! Of course I shall," cried Stephen. "Come into the sacristy, and tell me what's up now. Why, you love to be acolyte on Christmas Day! You've earned it too. You're the best boy here, by all odds."

Martin freed himself gently from the kind, firm grasp, that was playfully throttling him. "Yes Stevie," he said, "you will do it. See here: our Lord would like it."

"How do you know?" And then suddenly Stephen's face changed. Something in the sweet young eyes before him seemed to tell its own story to the older boy, who had again and again his own talks with the Sacred Heart, in the vesper twilight when day was done. "You think our Lord would like it, Martin?" he asked.

Martin spoke slowly, as if he found it a little difficult to put his thought into words, although not at all because he feared to tell it to Stephen who, next to his mother and their pastor, had won his loving heart.

"I was saying the St. John Berchmans' prayers," he said, "the *five* prayers, you know."

Stephen nodded. He was very fond of the short prayer which all of them said together after High Mass, but those "*five* prayers" he knew he did not say nearly so often as this most faithful little sodalist did. "Go ahead, Martin."

"It says, you know, '*That I may ever and everywhere glory in His cross*'. I was saying that and thinking how I would love to be acolyte on Christmas, because we get so near the priest and the altar and the Sacred Host; and oh! it seems like getting near the Infant Jesus. Suddenly, something made me think that to get near a cross—to *have* a cross—is a sure way to get near the crib. Do you understand?"