

MAY 9, 1914

that had a while previous brought that sudden desperate expression into the man's face. Surely not so grievous a sin, however, judging by what I know of him.

"We walked along for some time in silence. I, with my speculations and he, evidently with his fixed idea. After a little while he began to speak.

"We ain't so given to terrible deeds over here, sure enough. But I've got my suspicion whether we ain't just as bad—with our thoughts."

"Here was a bit of philosophy, a fine point of morals I had scarcely expected from my humble companion. I waited for a few moments and he continued:

"It's the same thing ain't it? Thinkin' sin and doin' it."

"As a man thinketh, so he is," I began.

"It's terrible to know it's gospel truth, my stern moralist was continuing; 'heard a sermon along such lines just time I come to town an' it's stuck with me ever since."

To think of all the hard and angry, and terrible passions a-seethin' in men's hearts—and them goin' around free! Guess most of us'd be in the penitentiary if the truth was known."

"I listened tense. If Jesse's confession were not at hand at least I was about to get a rough draft for a sermon on that excellent text—sins of thought. But Jesse kept silence a moment or so. Could I take my chances? It seemed my duty.

"That's the good of confession. What a relief it is to the poor, sinful, human being dogged by his thoughts, to lay them before the priest and gain absolution. Earthly justice is likely to deal at last with deeds of the hand; sins actually committed. But God's court of justice and mercy alone can deal with secret sins—those angers, hates of the heart—"

"Suddenly, and to my surprise, Jesse interrupted me:

"Even those that would kill a man?"

"We had paused under the trees near one of the little rustic benches, which Jesse's own hands had made. I knew my moment had come. I sat down, saying gently:

"My son, tell me what is on your mind."

"And there, perhaps, under the influence of the understanding which the poor fellow had come to believe I had of him and his heart partly under the somewhat hypnotic influence of our talk and the long-pent desire to get the burden of his heart, Jesse told me to town he had been guilty of one of those violent passions of hate which wills the annihilation of its object. His hand had withheld from the deed—just whose the death desired I need not tell you, it was Jesse's dread secret—but in his heart he had struggled with that fearful anger. The first Sunday he had been in town he had heard the sermon to which he had earlier referred. It had seemed his own particular accusation. It had burned in his heart. It had seared even more distinctly into his conscience the criminality of his anger. He had gone forth from the church, to free never again from that consciousness of his deed. So keen a sense of it he had lived with all these years that never could he get into a confessional."

"I could not give myself up as a murderer!"

"There, with the golden, late summer sun filtering through the trees about us, we sat and threshed the matter out. Jesse had cast himself upon the grass at my feet. It was not an easy task to soothe the long-troubled conscience of my penitent."

"After much difficulty I made him see what gratitude he owed to heaven that his hands had been stayed and that he had come to regret the sudden and wrathful moment that had now so long embittered his lonely meditations. I made him see the matter in true light, while meantime, I was in no doubt as to the sincerity of his repentance and indeed of the long penance he had already done. At last I bade him get upon his knees."

"And now, my son," I said, "do you know what you have at last done?"

"Jesse, with his hands folded, looked up into my face with the simplicity of a child, half incredulous, half wistful."

"Have you not admitted your sin to me? I know it is the greatest one of your life. Have you not been sorry, bitterly sorry, all these years? Now name what lesser sins of your life you can remember—and I will give you absolution."

"Here, father?"

"Here and now, my child. All places and all seasons are God's. The door of His Heart is never closed to him who seeks forgiveness and mercy."

"An hour later we were walking up the avenue leading to the convent, walking together in this new bond of shepherd and the stray brought tenderly into the fold. As we drew near we met Sister Marcia. Bowing to me, she addressed Jesse:

"Where have you been, Jesse? I have been looking everywhere for you."

Jesse's china-blue eyes were dancing like a child's."

"I've been to confession!" he airily blurted out.

"To confession?" questioned Sister Marcia in amazement, as she sat down on the steps, evidently to avert a stroke of heart failure. She glanced from Jesse to me. I bowed my head in assent.

"But where?" asked Sister Marcia. "Out under the trees!" declared Jesse.

"So, that's what's been happening while your supper's been getting cold"

waiting for you?" said Sister Marcia. I know that later she and the other would want more detailed particulars, such as I could give, when Jesse was not within such close hearing distance. I looked at her a moment, meekly and then murmured:

"What man among you that hath a hundred sheep and if he shall lose one of them, doth he not leave the ninety-nine in the desert, and go after that which was lost until he find it? And when he hath found it, doth he not lay it upon his shoulders rejoicing?"—Anna Blanche McGill in Benziger's Magazine.

GENERAL INTENTION FOR MAY

RECOMMENDED AND BLESSED BY HIS HOLINESS PIUS X.

MASTERS AND SERVANTS

In this age of social and economic evolution terms are liable to get mixed; one almost hesitates now to say who are masters and who are servants. The mutual relations of both have changed so radically that the very names which are supposed to differentiate those who command and those who obey, those who earn and those who pay, have grown nebulous in men's minds. The arrogance of wealth in the one and the fear of oppression in the other have had much to do with this state of affairs. And yet the estrangement is not necessarily a matter of personal animosity; it is rather the result of the system that in modern times rules in economic spheres, coupled with a forgetfulness of the lofty Christian principles which should guide men in their dealings with one another.

Not so very long ago the relations of master and servant were cordial; the human element in both was plainly visible. In the good old days employer and employee worked together; one had a care for the other who depended on him for the wherewithal to live. Both classes felt that they belonged to the same human family, and they accepted inequality of status as a matter of degree, not of kind. Talent and opportunity and enterprise and the dozen other elements of success were recognized as inevitable sources of change in temporal conditions. The fickleness of fortune quickly turned the servant into a master and the master into a servant—transformations that were often witnessed. But the needs there were few and simple; complex conditions as we know them did not exist. The principle of human brotherhood was recognized; master and servant were satisfied with enough; no one had reason to complain, and the world jogged along in peace.

But the face of the industrial world has changed since then. The concentration of capital and power in the hands of a few and the slootness of these powerful few from their poorer brethren have resulted in a lack of sympathy which, if not universal, is sufficiently obvious to claim attention. It is one of the disappointing symptoms of our modern civilization. When trusts, corporations, monopolies, combines, syndicates—call them what you like—get their strong grip on the sources of wealth, little by little they replaced individuals as producers; from that time onward the relations of master and servant have been undergoing a profound evolution. The master nowadays is not the sympathetic individual employer looking after the interests of those who depend on him for bread; he is rather an entity created by an act of parliament, composed of hundreds, sometimes thousands, of investors in the one enterprise, who have no link binding them together other than a greed for dividends. This modern creation, a veritable master for all that, employs men not precisely because they are men who have their place in the human family with their claim on its privileges, but because they are units in the labor world, cogs in the wheel that can grind out profits for him. Labor in the estimation of this modern master is purchasable, and like any other commodity the less he has to pay for it the better he is pleased. Human considerations have little influence on him. When his storerooms are filled with unsold stock, he shuts down and forces his workman to take a holiday; if he can reduce expenses and augment profits by labor-saving devices, he hands his workman his envelope and takes his name off the pay-roll. This modern master has little or no personal intercourse with those who work for him. If they have a grievance it is not he who tries to give them satisfaction. He is represented by intermediaries, managers, superintendents, etc., who naturally have the interests of their thousand-headed master at heart, and who are expected to earn their large salaries by making life-blood ooze, if need be, in order to produce results. Can we be surprised if an undercurrent of bitterness and resentment has developed in the millions who are dependent on this impersonal but composite modern master, whether he be a railway corporation or a pin-factory? Can we blame those millions if they try to protect their interests by forming brotherhoods and trades unions? Realizing the fact that union is strength, workmen have organized their forces; they have taken their own hands; they have dared to meet their modern master on his ground and to dictate remedies of their own making. Organized labor has done much to curb the arrogance of wealth and to bring capital to a sense of

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LEAKAGE IN THE CHURCH

"Leakage" in the Church stands for an incontrovertible fact. The term itself is somewhat misleading. It is the cause, moreover, of much confusion of thought. Metaphor is not definitive, and in this case, as a description, it fails. The Church is not an old tub which has sprung a leak, neither are its members inert fluid particles held together by external pressure from running air, or flying into space like a liberated gas. Misapplied metaphor may be made responsible for misdirected energy. But, discarding the metaphor and closing with fact, in the reckoning of loss and gain in the Church it is impossible to question the heavy tale of loss that is made day by day, and which follows gain like a shadow as evil follows good. It is the mystery of free-will. It is inexorable, it is inevitable, it is just. The Church, if it is properly understood is life. The Church is a society, a kingdom. Its members are free. They are free to choose, free to will. The King will have free subjects, and none other. In that spiritual kingdom there is absolutely no room for slaves of thought or will. That is what persons outside the Church fail to realize, and some inside the Church fail to understand. The one thing the world has yet to learn is that the Kingdom of Christ is freedom. It is a society of free souls. It is that or it is nothing. The doors are open wide for all nations and all individuals to enter. They are as wide for them to depart. By consequence the tale of gain and loss will go on as long as the world lasts. Prodigals will turn their backs on home and go into a far country to feed on the husks of swine, to return again to their father's house. Spurred by pride or passion, or over-confidence, some will go out into the darkness, to return in chastened mood and humbled spirit, and some, alas, will go and their place will be open wide for all. They are as wide for them to depart. 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