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A STORY OF EVERY DAY LIFE

BY MRS. CLARA M. THOMPSON

CHAPTER II. SISTER AGNES

I must speak of dear Sister Agnes over whose life, lovely and beautiful the grave has but lately closed-Re

At the tender age of twelve, Agnes Shaw was left an orphan with a large fortune, to be wholly at her disposal when she had reached her majority. She was educated in the family of her guardian, in all the pomp and parade of fashionable life; every circum stance seemed to conspire to make her thoroughly worldly and selfish; but the good Spirit brooded over her heart, and with a naturally devout turn of mind, she soon came to eschew as vanity the aimless round of fashionable living.

To a strong, powerful will, she added a temper of unsurpassed sweetness; persevering, energetic, somealmost obstinate, she was necessarily somewhat eccentric in her efforts to live for a purpose : sometimes breaking away from all the conventionalities of society, and rushing headlong into her own plans of benevolence, which were often dan-gerous, and wholly impracticable from her position in society as a woman. But for her large means and extraordinary good sense, she would have been deemed a candidate for the insane asylum by her companions, who could not comprehend how one of their set could really love a round of visits to the dirtiest alleys of the city, to hear the tales of the poor, or to relieve some scene of wretchedness. They wearied themselves teasing her, and ceased their ridicule when they found themselves powerless to prevent her stopping the most miserable objects she met in her walks, and listening with unwearied ear to the unvarying tale of woe. They contented themselves with dubbing her, far and wide, as the "Protestant Sister of Charity. She pursued her way, in spite of remonstrances and entreaties, escaping sometimes from places and scenes of vice in its worst farms, as if by

On one of these occasions she was preserved from insult by the providential appearance of a stranger, a gentleman, himself "on kindly deeds intent." The acquaintance grew and ripened into a warm friendship for nany years, before it culminated in that affection which made the two hearts one. Mr. Pendleton had the qualities she most needed to complete her character, and from him Agnes Shaw first learned that there is a pleasure in submitting to true and rightful guidance. Seldom does the sunlight visit a more charming abode than Fairview Cottage, just in the suburbs of the city. Devotedly religious himself, and an earnest Cath Mr. Pendleton soon taught his bride to love the holy ways, and par-take of the spirit of the Church of which he was a devout member. Together they made and executed large plans of benevolence: together they sought the sick, the desolate, the fallen, and brought them life and Ten years of bliss, such as seldom falls to the lot of humanity. was the portion of these good people, when in, as it were, a single day, by a peculiar visitation, Agnes Pendleton vas left alone; her noble hearted husband, and two precious children, were snatched from her arms by the ruthless stroke. The suddenness of the blast, the short space of one month, opening upon her in joy and ace, and shutting down in the end in a night of deep darkness, without moon or star; the very suddenness crushed her spirit, her energies gave way; her indomitable will, that had first learned submission through love, succumbed; she became absorbed in speechless grief. How mercifully our good Lord brings out of the direst evils good to individuals and com-Mrs. Pendleton was first aroused from the abstraction of her grief by one of those sudden and awful visitations that thrill a com-munity to its very centre, and desclate so many homes in a single mo-ment of time. Her soul was wakened by the crash to its life object, and with a weary, aching hears, she gave all her energies to the sufferers. From this beginning of action, her faith in the good God revived, and at length she gave her property and her life to the Lord, as a Sister of Charity. Not many years passed before her sweet, self-denying life, with her energy and devotion, placed her at the head of the House of the Infant Jesus. "Sister Agnes," she was called, wherever her sweet voice and quiet determination were known. Destitution and suffering were the passports to her favor. Mrs. Benton, the friend of her youth, had been her

> CHAPTER III. THE NEW HOMES

co-worker as a lay sister in the world

for many years, and now, when the

dark mantle of scrrow shrouded her

friend, Sister Agnes was her earthly

The drive of Mrs. Benton, Rosine, to the new home of the latter, in Colonel Hartland's family, was nearly a silent one, each clasping the other's hand, each striving to hide from the other how utterly miserable this decree had made them for the time being. Many interviews had passed between the ladies of each family, in which Mrs. Benton always passed between the ladies of each family, in which Mrs. Benton always made it plain that the sacrifice on her part was made as an act of obedience of the ladies of each family, in which Mrs. Benton always made as an act of obedience of the ladies of each family, in which Mrs. Benton always had branded your name and your part was made as an act of obedience of the ladies of each family, in which Mrs. Benton always had branded your name and your part was made as an act of obedience of the ladies of each family, in which Mrs. Benton always bottom of the wagon.

"Ay, all alone!" She savored the the threatening lyshadows. There was bottom of the wagon.

"Them bottoms," continued Rice, no faintest gleam of light to be seen, giving each of the leaders a smart but unhesitating the man pushed his giving each of the leaders a smart but unhesitating the man pushed his

not conceal the hope that the separa-She ation was only temporary. requested that her child should be kept untrammelled in the exercise of crime. her religious duties, and that as

special friends, she might often see Sister Agnes and her own pastor. Mrs. Benton felt, from her first conference with Mrs. Hartland, that there would be but little congeniality between the worldly-minded and some what stately person who was to take the place of mother, and her timid,

shrinking child. Sometimes she questioned whether the confidence and self satisfaction of Marion would not have mingled better with the spirit wishes of the Colonel's lady. She could not see that Mrs. Hartland was rejoicing internally that the mother's choice had fixed upon the younger of the two girls, for she was but a school-girl of fifteen, while Marion was seventeen, and her two sons were yet bachelors and at home, and she had a great dread of any

woman coming between them and herself. She might bring a young Miss to a realizing sense of this fact, while a well-grown young lady might be too attractive before she could put out an anchor. She had received Rosine after much argument and discussion between herself and husband, simply because he wished it she had an inherent dislike to girls For his part, the Colonel was at first disappointed that the tall pretty Marion was not to be his daughter. He had never known Rosine except as a blushing child; Marion was more like his friend, Philip Benton, in his boyhood. He wanted a companion-daughter that he could pet, for his

two sons were grown into full man-hood, and had business and pursuits of their own seeking.

Edward, the elder, was an established physician, utterly declining to follow the example of his father and brother, and seek the United States' service, or be the tool of anybody, as he expressed it. He was full thirty years of age, of middle height, and being stout built, with broad shoulders and erect carriage, he had a more soldierly bearing than his brother Alexander, who was contented to serve his country as Lieutenant in the Navy. Alexander was the taller of the two, but neither as stout nor as straight as his brother. The doctor's prominent Roman nose, and broad chin, with his keen gray eye, and thick dark bair and beard, contrasted with his brother's handsome features, Grecian in their out-line, thoughtful hazel eye and profusion of light brown locks. were the companions and pride of their fond parents, and had never made for themselves any other permanent home than their father's

many years in the city. But we must leave Rosine, with the last words and tender caresses of to ride on the box with the driver, those she loved best, in her new but much to the joy of Harold, he home, and follow her mother in the took his seat with his wife and

house. Lieutenant Hartland was now

on a furlough, waiting orders from the

department, while his father served

as commissary, and had resided for

rough path she had chosen. Mrs. Benton, Marion, and Harold, that place. The owner of the estab with the little Jennie, an infant of lishment, Captain Rice, or "Old Cap, two years, took their departure under | as he was called, made many vehement the escort of Colonel Hartland, in the endeavors to enter into conversation dreary days of November, for what with Mr. Benton, but finding his was then the far West. At Chicago queries answered in the driest of (then the little one that has since monosyllables, or altogether unbecome a thousand,) they were to noticed, he turned at length to the meet the husband and father, who young boy by his side for companhad so clouded the happiness of his ionship, and was soon filling the ears his Lucy was making, but he had a of disgrace had fallen upon Harold, morbid dread of his children. How the boy felt again the joyous free-could they, with their young honest that might recognize him, and rush and he did not read shame in all his out to receive his family; but a sense of burning shame held him back, and he sunk down into a seat in the agony of remorse. He was not conscious how long his soul lay prostrate cle, and flocks of prairie chickens, so in this deep distress; suddenly two tame that he could touch them with arms were about his neck, and a kiss the long lash of the whip, of which on his cheek, tears and sobs were he had relieved Mr. Rice. The road about him, and a sweet voice came to became more thinly settled as they his ear which said, "I have come, Philip; I am here, will you not speak miles in extent, uninterrupted by to me? we will be separate no more." tree or rock. The course of every He did not look into that face, where brook was marked by strips of time the sight of his stony grief had brought the first blessed tears; he could only say, turning away his head, and writhing in distress— Cruel, miserable man that I am, better that I were dead, than to bring you to this!"

God has spared us to each other, on the broad prairie. Philip," said the wife; "we will go together and make ourselves a new home, and prepare for the rest which "The child of God!" he said, despairingly. "Call me rather, the child of the devil."

"The indignation of Harold, who inquired impatiently why these people did not bridge their streams, as they did at the east. Old Cap grinned

"No, Philip dear, we will go back to our good Father in Heaven. He does not turn away from us even when we sin. He longs after us; He seeks us; we will find Him together. We have trusted too much in man,

from his dark eyes that made her tremble, "but for you, I should have been in the grave of the suicide. There were moments when I thought you would never come to me; that you could no longer cling to one who

to her husband's wishes, and she did one of those moments that I nerved myself to take my own life; every thing was ready, when your letter came, saving my soul from this added

'Blessed be His name!" said the

wife, with deep earnestness. Hours passed before Mrs. Benton could arouse her husband to the duty of seeing Col. Hartland and his children, but pleading love conquered Marion rushed to her father's arms eager for the first kiss; but Harold held back. Mr. Benton saw at a glance how deeply the arrow of shame had struck into the boy's heart, but pride in the presence of his child came to his assistance; pride, that grief and shame conquer last, and he quelled his son's slightly defiant look, by the glance of authority from which he dared not rebel.

Chicago was, even at that day, the centre of trade and travel between the great East and the greater West, and was no place for the stricken family who sought seclusion. After two days' delay, they were ready for their further journey. Here they took leave of Col. Hartland, who, as a last act of friendship, placed in Mr. Benton's hand the deed of the farm to which they were going, recorded in Mrs. Benton's name. It was a galling, bitter thing, to the not fully humbled heart of Philip Benton, to receive this new token of the Colonel's friendship; but his friend checked all the ebullitions of this same pride, by declaring that all he could do would not pay for the dear little girl, whom he now called his own

A teamster, with his wagon and four stout horses, had been engaged to transport the family to prairie home. He had come to the great mart, to exchange his wheat for his winter supply of groceries and other necessaries, and was glad of a load for his return to his log cabin. which was only a few miles from the farm to which the Bentons were

bound. He was a true "sucker"; imported in his early youth from "York State, he was now identified with the seil on which he had grown to the height of six feet three, and broad in proportion. His wagon, the fashionable carriage of the times and place, deserves a description. It was as safe and without the style and spring of a Fifth Avenue turnout. It con sisted of a rough wooden box, about ten feet in length, by three in breadth set down firmly upon the stout axles, on which turned the very cumbrous wheels. The top was a rag carpet, drawn over hoops of domestic manu facture. There were no seats in the vehicle, except the front box for the driver, the usual method of being seated was in chairs arranged under the cover; but Colonel Hartland, in view of the tender nature of the trav ellers, had procured a mattress and bad, which were placed in the back of the wagon, to the great comfort of

surroundings. The broad

advanced through long flat prairies

tree or rock. The course of every

juice ran down his rough chin.

daughters, leaving his son to occupy rooms, a kitchen, two family. It may well be believed that of the child with stories of the great up as "cute traps." The house he Lucy Benton's heart graw sick in the crops, great snakes, and great people considered quite spacious, indeed he prospect of this meeting, as they he would meet on the grand prairie. said, "it might be taken for a meet-rounded the one pier that there The commencement of their route in as, as it was so grand." After he invited the steamer Madison to unlay through settled farms adjacent had run through all the buildings laden her burdens. From the window to the city. The farms were laid out with Harold, he took leave of the of the room where he had remained, Philip Benton saw the vessel glide down the lake and anchor at the travel, the roads leading around the saying, "Well, neighbor, I shall draw down the lake and anchor at the travel, the roads leading around the saying, "Well, neighbor, I shall draw wharf; he knew the precious freight two sides of every mile square. For Smith's wheat to Chicarger, and if she bore for him, he felt the sacrifice | the first time since the thunderbolt | you want any fixins, I'm your man."

hearts, look upon him with any thing but dislike? Once he resolved to brave the danger of meeting those teen. Now he was away from men, bow, she took leave of her rustic was before him, peopled with deer scarcely startled from their grazing to sunder.

THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR

ber on either side, varying in breadth according to the volume of the stream they bordered. The timber It was New Year's eve. was walking as though weary. was genera?ly the chosen home of the Dutch and German, the Norwegian and the Irish, while the Yankee almost invariably pitched his tent pall of darkness accentuated here on the broad prairie. The Fox river was forded the second day, to the great terror of Mrs. Benton and her daughters, and the indignation of Harold, who inwith his broad mouth, from each but his replies to their friendly side of which a stream of tobacco greetings were subdued though

"I reckon," he said, spitting right the right nor to the left as he purand left, "it would take a right sued his onward way.

The wind rose and the air grew let us lean upon our dear Lerd."

"O Lucy," he replied, looking up for the first time, and with a glance from his dark eyes that made her tremble, "but for you, I should have been in the grave of the suicide.

They were approaching the ford of the lilinois river, below the (then)

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They were approaching the ford of the lilinois river, below the (then)

They were approaching the ford of the lilinois river, below the (then)

cut, "was clean covered last corn plantin", them cabins all under water."

Toward the close of the third day root door. On the panels of this, and the close of the third day and the close of the third day and the close of the third day and the close of the same and the close of Rice pointed out to the weary travel-

lers the grand prairie, where was to be their dwelling. Yonder it is, the perary," he said, tightening his coat, which we have forgotten to say was, like his nether

olored the invariable butternut dys of the country, and fastened with

'I reckon you is a heap too far from folks to suit me; though there's old Buck off yender," he added, fleurishing his whip in another direction. " who owns thirty-two eighty lots and swears he wouldn't give his best friend an acre, to make a nigh settlement, 'twould spile his

garments, of coarse linsey woolsey,

range, you see."
"How much further is it?' in quired Marion, with a heavy sigh, as she peered across the unbroken sur face, blackened with the autumn fires, and uninterrupted by tree,

shrub, or fence. 'A smart piece of three mile yet, replied the man. "I tell you Miss, you wont be plagued with sparks Mr. Benton drew Marion to his side, giving the man a look, meant to be annihilating. Old Cap was daunted for a moment by the erociousness of the look, but soon turned to Harold, and resumed the conversation respecting the bridges, which the boy thought a little eastern ingenuity might find a way to build across the streams and sloughs, not one of which since they left Chicago had been crossed except by fording.

"Now youngster, here comes a reglar old he one;" said Rice, as they entered a broad uncertain looking morass, covered with long rank grass which had refused to burn when the fire had swept over the adjoining ground. The man rose up, gave his horses several quick cuts with the long whip, at the same time yelling at the top of his voice, "Up Zeb! hi Job! out with it Pete! stir up Fan!"

The faithful creatures plunged into the mud, scrambled through in a manner frightful to behold, and aided by the encouraging screeching of the driver, and the frequent application of the goad, even this difficulty was overcome, and the wagou with its precious freight was drawn out on the other side. "I reckon they're up to the scratch," said Rice proudly, as the wearied horses stood panting after the fatiguing plunge. bor Hendig spiled one beast here last wheat harvest, now mine you see is as piert as ever."

It is a shame to use them so?" said Harold, coloring with indignation.

Well, stranger," replied Rice, coolly spitting a stream of tobacco which shot as directly between the ears of his off forward horse as if it had been aimed from a pictol, "if you

don't like it, next time you may unlight and try your own pegs."

It was sunset on a raw November when the family reached the small frame house in the middle of the farm, that was now the only spot they could call home. Colonel Hart land had dispatched a message to the tenants, to prepare for the recep tion of the family, and the coast wa clear. The house consisted of four and a large unfinished attic over all. A barn and stable were on the premises, besides many New England con veniences, which Mr. Rice summe considered quite spacious, indeed be

Mrs. Benton's more delicate nature appreciated the true kindness of this neighbor under his very rough exterior, and taking the offered hand friend, urging him to come and see them again. Indeed, to her he seemed in a way the last link that bound them to the world they had left, a link which she was reluctant

TO BE CONTINUED

Helen Moriarty ln St Anthony Mes

The traveler on the country road short winter day had long ago closed abruptly into heavy shadows, the dows, and the buoyancy of the homebound spoke in the elastic step of the few pedestrians whom he met; courteous, and he looked neither to

blistered and marred by the sun and rains of many years, he knocked loudly. It was not until he had applied his knuckles to the wood a It was not until he had second and even a third time, that a glimmer of light showed through the dim glass at the side of the door, and soon a querulous voice threw

out the question : "Who's there?"

" A traveler who craves a bite to eat and a place to rest for an hour

After a short silence there was fumbling with the bolts and lock, and the doer was pulled open with a jerk. An old woman stood there with a lamp in her hand, a tall old woman, big of frame, but with spent look on her sharpened eatures. She raised the lamp so as to throw its rays on the face of the intruder, while she asked suspic

tramp, did you say? Why didn's you come to the back door?" 'No, not a tramp," was the firm respectful reply. "And if you are if respectful reply. "And if you are Mrs Reagan, I was directed to come to your front door."
The old woman gave a slight start

and the lamp quavered for an instant in her grasp, as she cast a keen lock at the man outside, whom the blustery wind was whipping and whose coat showed thin and shabby under the powder of light snow but whatever question had sprung into her eyes at his words was her lips, and she only said, shortly enough :

Well, you might as well come in this way, since the door is open. She moved aside to let him pass in, then shut the door and locked it carefully. Without a word she piloted him through a long hall, past ghostly closed up rooms, through another shrouded room, and thence out into a large kitchen, clearly the living room of the house. It was warm and comfortable, and with a sigh of relief the traveler approached the stove and held out

his hands to the grateful warmth. Sit down," his hostess said, a bit less ungraciously, placing a chair for him in front of the stove. "You must be chilled through. Have you come far?" eyeing him furtively. long way," was the quiet

answer. The old woman drew the kettle forward on the stove, and the stranger glanced casually around the room as she set about preparing his supper. The room exhaled an air of com fort and cleanliness, from the shining

stove to the neat white curtains that fell before the tall windows. The floor was covered with linoleum, a few old fashioned rugs woven in lively colors adding warmth and brightness. From his lair on one of these a majestic cat stared at the visitor with unwinking eyes, then purring loudly, stepped daintily toward the man and jumped on his knee. He stroked the animal gently. A canary in a cage by one of the win dows, a moment ago a yellow ball of feathers, slipped its head from under its wing and began to chirp, hopping alertly from perch to swing; while on a narrow shelf high on the western wall an old clock ticked loudly and protestingly, as though at variance with the shuffling steps of the old women on her journeys back and forth between the capboard and a small table, which she was laying with a white cleth. No!-No! No!" it seemed to fling down sharply into the silence of the room, a set defiance on its broad

flowered face. You are very good. Mrs. Reagan. to take me in," the strauger remarked sad abstraction. at length, turning a pleasant look on his hostess. 'I fear I am giving you a great deal of trouble."

Not at all," she assured him

one to-"
"Some one to feed and warm," he ne away, I'm sure."a

'No"-her breath appeared to No! No!-No! No!-No! No!

the clock agreed, crisply and coldly. But they don't often come as late as this," she added. She was pouring the boiling water into a squat brown teapot. "And it's a bad night to be out. "You might," diffidently," be able to get some place to stay the night hereabouts. Of course, I couldn't keep you," she hastened to say.
"I know," the stranger returned

"No, I cannot stop tonight. must be-on my way." He had a very still way of speaking, a still way of looking about him, and his very pose was calm and quiet

as he seated himself before the viands she had prepared. He ate sparingly of the simple food, and praised the cup of fragrant tea for its strength and refreshment. You have a big house here, Mrs.

Reagan," he remarked, as he drew back from the table.

"Big enough, and too big for an old woman to live in all alone," was the

though slightly surprised. "All alone!" And the familiar words, so quietly spoken, echoed and re-echoed through the big room with a new

power they still held to prick her heartstrings. Then something smoul dered in the cavernous depths of her dark eyes. to be alone, too, I can tell you-forty

"It is a long time." The stranger's eyes, luminous, and deeply blue as the summer skies, soothed her unac countably as he turned on her his grave regard. Curiously enough, they made her think of others who were alone, too-of others who might have suffered as she had. Then, "Jim Reagan," the strange quiet voice went on, "he found it long, too."

A convulsive gasp shivered through the angular body of the old woman. She stopped short in her approach to the cupboard, interrogating the speaker with eager, haggard eyes before she broke out:

'You know him-you know Jim

"I knew him, yes," he corrected gently. "He came to me long ago, in his loneliness. I—I, too, have known "infinite sadness crept into the still tone—"what it means to be lonely in a world full of people. So, comforted him. I was with him on many a trying journey; and when death came to him, I was there. He was wishing for you, and he longed for your forgiveness-

My forgiveness! Oh, may God forgive me !"

The woman sank into a chair and covered her face with her thin, worn old hands. "Dead! dead!" moaned, "my poor Jim, the man of my young days! Why didn't he ever come back, and me so lanesome and sorehearted at driving him away? Why—why didn't he—" She caught herself sharply, the slow tears dropping down her cheeks, while in her neart sobbed the balance of the sen tence which forty years of repression kept her from voicing—"come back to forgive me—come back to forgive

He did forgive you," the stranger said, as though he had heard the words. "It was not in him to do otherwise. You know how gentle he was?" She nodded dumbly. because in his last hours it would have eased him to know that you for gave him whatever share he had in all the old mistakes, he came to know what his forgiveness might mean to you. And he asked me to bring it to . through the front door." Mrs. Reagan's head sunk on her

breast. Ah." she muttered, "that was itthe front door. It was mostly that we quarreled about. You wouldn't think it, would you, sir—such a silly thing to part man and wite? But it was temper, and pride, and Ah, well, maybe we were both at fault, but I-I was the most to blame through it all." She sighed heavily There are always faults on both

sides.' "Ah." as though she had not heard him," but I was the headstrong creature in those days!" shaking her head sadly. "I was an only child, petted and spoiled by my father and mother and made proud afterward by the inheritance they left me. He was a city man-Jim Reagan-when he married me, and he thought to live just like he did in town. That was all well and good at first, but after awhile I got impatient with his genteel ways, especially as the neighbers would make remarks and say he dressed up too much for a farmer. I liked nice ways of living, too, but I had been raised to be saving, even with the house, and to keep the best rooms closed except on Sundays and big days. Oh, and many's the big day we had here, too, before I ever laid eyes on Jim Reagan !"

Your father built this house her auditor asked, as she paused in

"Yes, he built it, and watched every stone and brick that went in it," was the answer. " Built it for me and my children, he said, and my quickly. "I'm used to this. There's children's children. He liked to children a day passes but I have some think that in the years to come "Some one to feed and warm," he finished gravely, as she paused in a slight contusion. "And you turn no one way I'm sure." and you turn no ohild's foot ever struck the floors

that he laid with his own hands. No"—her breath appeared to catch on the word—'I never refuse any one." The statement might have been prideful, but it was weighted rather with a sad and strange humil of a front door if you never use it? he used to banter me. You know, it's a way country people have of not using their front deor much. came that we quarrelled about that, and made up, and quarrelled again—"

She stopped with another deep drawn At that I believe we would sigh. have made out finally, but for the neighbors mixing in and my unfor tunate domineering ways. And one black day, God help me, in a fit of temper, I called him a beggar, and told him to leave my father's house which was too good for the likes of

"Ob. I'll never forget, sir," she exclaimed, "the white, terrible look of anger on his face."

Yes, I will go,' he said, 'and I'll never come back again as long as I live! 'Ha! ha!' I laughed as insult-

ing as I could, 'you'd come back any day that the front dcor was opened to you!'
"'I'll never trouble your front

quick answer.

"All alone," the guest repeated as though elightly surprised. "All whether the four the four that the fou against my forgiveness!

She burst into bitter weeping.
"Oh sir, Oh sir," she sobbed, "I desolation, gathering into themselves, as it were, all the loneliness of all the years that were past and gone. Or so it appeared to his aged listener. ao it appeared te his aged listener.

"Ay, all alons!" She savored the words dully, turning them over and the salt tears on my pillow; and never since, until tonight when I let

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