

SO AS BY FIRE

BY JEAN CONNOR

CHAPTER XVIII—CONTINUED

The Road House and Rosecroft! The gulf between yawned wide and deep indeed.

I could cross it on one jump, thought Duffy, the old pain stirring in his heart.

Three weeks later, while closing a deal for the whole mountain side into the hands of Mr. Mills...

For a moment the two men looked at each other, all the heights and depths between them leveled their gaze...

And Allston might follow his little toe-headed guide through the forest path...

Everywhere! No! For suddenly the path on which Fritzie led opened into a rough, weed-grown road...

All around it in the untiled fields, the ruined outhouses, the briar-grown wastes of hollow and hill...

"Hello, yer's back, too, are you, Rip?" said Fritzie. "This 'ere is the place, mister.

"No, I won't wait you," said Leigh tossing his guide a dollar, and as Fritzie bounded delightedly away...

"The road stood half open. He knocked. There was no answer. He pushed forward into the wide gloom of the old hall with its closed rooms on either side, its black ribbed ceiling.

And then as he stood there a cry rang out of the silence—a thrilling, tremulous cry, that made every pulse within him leap.

He bounded through the wide-open door of the old kitchen, and sped where the voice was calling, over broken fence and field, down into a great hollow that yawned deep and dark in the shadow of a heavy old yew.

"Help, help!" the girl cried, as she tried to lift the stiffened form to the top of the door.

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"Dearest, there is no help; she is dead," said a low pitying voice at her side.

"Allston!" she started to her feet, with a sharp cry of pain.

"I am here, yes, to claim my wife," he said, gently.

"Oh, no, Allston, no," she fell on her knees again beside her old grandmother as if for safety and shelter.

And that vow breathed over the old graves beneath the yew was kept. Here in her own home, Barbara and Allston Leigh took their new life, fearing nothing, hiding nothing.

And kneeling beside her as she bent over her dead, he drew the weary head to his shoulder and kissed the tearful eyes, that, looking up into his own, read within them a love that through any fires of sacrifice would pass unscathed.

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BORROWED FROM THE NIGHT

BY ANNA C. MINOUE

CHAPTER III

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"I know, that you and your friends will be kind to my baby, that you will love her and make her a good, true woman. I have only this request to make of you: that you will watch her. She has a cruel enemy. He caused her mother's death."

"Then realizing that he had thus admitted his belief in his suspicion, he said hastily: "Good-by, Sister."

"But you, following him to the door, to tell me the child's name."

"Teresa Martinez," he said, but without looking back.

TO BE CONTINUED

THE MISSION MAN

Groups of young men chatted together on the seminary campus, discussing hopes and ideals for the future as the days of ordination drew near.

One was to begin his work as a priest in this field; another was to go elsewhere; still others were destined for other vineyards.

"Joseph we have not heard from you," said their disciplinarian, whose old heart was kindled anew year after year by the flames of consecration in fervent young hearts.

The young deacon, whom the disciplinarian addressed, had been sitting with a rapt, far-away expression as the others outlined their plans and dreams.

"My mission probably seems tame and insignificant beside what some of you others are going to do."

"Tell us about it, my son," encouraged Father Thomas, as the young man around him also turned to Joseph Le Blanc with eager interest.

"I am going back to my own people, if my superior gives final consent. It is not nearly so great a field as that on which these others are entering."

"No, he's going to undertake the northern capitalists who have gone down to share King Cotton's profits," observed another.

"Nothing like so pretentious a de-voir as either," demurred Joseph. "I almost hesitate to name my small task after such epic adventures as you have mapped out for me and yourselves."

"I'm just going to try to do a little for the black people of my old home," began Joseph humbly.

"Thought Lincoln gave them a great chance," smiled a young listener born north of the Mason and Dixon line.

"A great chance but not an unmixed blessing," replied Joseph. "Loosened from all discipline, detached from the kindly interest which the better sort of white families gave them, many of the poor things are like so many helpless children, pitiful black sheep left shepherdless."

"You take boarders in your school, Sister, I believe?" he said. And when she replied affirmatively, he continued: "It is true, my daughter is very young, but I am going to the war and I have no place to leave her. Her mother is ill."

"I shall find room for your little one, sir," she said, opening the door and leading the way into the poor convent.

But, however reassuring that persuasion was, he was not long to enjoy his comfort; for, going forth one day in quest of further understanding of his flock, and in particular in quest of a cook, much to his surprise he met another clothed in robes ostentatiously, ambitiously clerical, especially as to a Roman collar.

The two regarded each other a moment with curiosity, but evidently with no professional antagonism; for, soon a genial smile parted the lips of the dark-skinned ecclesiastic, while Father Le Blanc said cordially: "Good morning!"

Courteously responsive, the other greeted the priest with a hearty good morning, accompanied by a quick removal of his weather-worn hat and a respectful bow.

Again bowing and sweeping the air respectfully with his hat as might become one gentleman of the old school accomplishing a self-introduction to another:

"Me, suh? I'se de Mission Man, Jim Brooks."

"Ah, more definitely a rival than at first suspected. However, not to be outdone by the Mission Man's politeness, Father Le Blanc acknowledged with dignified seriousness his rival's self-description.

"Glad to meet you, Jim. The Mission Man, you say, the Mission Man?"

"Yess, suh, I'se de Mission Man," and a dignified but humble self-consciousness passed over the good-natured brow.

"And what is your 'mission'?" inquired Father Le Blanc. "Just what is your work?" If they were, indeed, rival shepherds it might be as well to see how the flock was divided.

"Oh, I jes looks after 'em generally, after dey bodies and sperits. Dey ain't so scartious bad, but dey sho got plenty to do, I kin tell you. I ax 'em to stealin' dat's dey worst vice. Dey sho am lazy, triffin', stealin' niggers, some of 'em."

"The singularity of the situation amused Father Le Blanc greatly. Here certainly was a disposition toward Christian Unity, a willingness for Christian co-operation which might well offer example to regions more sophisticated."

"I give the men work on de plantation and I give the women work in town and round the country."

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knew that one was under way. Poor things—emotional, child-like, they were strangely responsive to the rhythmic beautiful language of the hymns, however the exegesis distorted the words.

The scene would have afforded some men amusement, and occasionally a smile over the impassioned irrational rhetoric, the strange combination of classical and Scriptural language and negro dialect.

Yet for all his wishes and regrets his heart went out to the earnest impassioned exhorter who was certainly doing the best he knew for them. By this time Father Le Blanc had come to recognize Jim's worthiness.

With a little better brain than most of his people Jim had sense enough to know their faults and to wish to help them. He had a groping but a genuinely constructive spirit in his simple heart.

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After the Mass, as Father Le Blanc passed into the rectory, Jim appeared apparently for a word of polite congratulations:

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