THE CATHOLIC RECORD.

tips of its wings, then offered it to Claudia; in another moment the beauti-

about the promised keepsake, all the

said Fabian, who had been watching

her, almost fancying that Psyche her-self had sent the butterfly to afford him

an opportunity to change the conversa-

gentle old man who came to see if he

own little girl, who was dead, and he said it had been in his family hundreds

of years, ' she went on, " so I think it must have been very precious to him. I want it given back to him with my

ove and thanks, after I go away ; an

" Is it not just possible, dear one

thou mayest be disappointed of thy ex-

pected journey. People often are, even

when most certain of going," he ob-served, with a ring of impatience in his

voice; for it seemed as if Fate with cruel insistence hemmed him in, leav-ing him no escape from his pain; "but

promise, in either case, whatever thou

"Thou art always kind, Fabian

That is all, Fabian, except that

-this man, whose philosophy boasted itself of immunity from all disturbing

motions, who had believed happiness

on earth possible, until now. His heart felt as heavy as lead, and had he opened

his lips, all the bitterness of his sorrow

would have found vent. He thrust the

things she had given him into the bosom of his tunic, and walked away a

short distance, when, having mastered emotions, he plucked a tall, snow-

white lily, and, going back, placed it in

one ; but I take comfort in the fact that

tell him, Fabian, I prized it very

and took great pleasure in it.

could cure my eyes.

wilt.

hefor

so I think i

much,

more because no one has ever befo valued me sufficiently to give me one

PALMS

2

ANNA HANSON DORSEY,

AUTHOR OF "COAINA," "FLEMMINGS," "TANGLED FATHS," "MAY BROOKE," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XVIII.-CONTINUED. IN THE SHADOW OF THE PALMS.

"The Eastern physician is as great thaumaturgist as the famous Naza-rene," she said, with a sneer lurking under her soft smile, and a deep mea

ing in her eyes and voice. "So it is thought by some," was Fabian's tracquil answer; "but to me it is a one-sided proposition, as I am acquainted with only one of the parties."

Then, with his most delusive and irresistible smile, and that deferential, delicate manner which takes captive womankind in all ages, he added: "I can speak only of such spells as I know, beautiful sorceress, with anything like certainty. Let me ask, in turn, the certainty. Let me ask, in turn, the fate of thy latest conquest, the young Syrian prince." Laodice was too vain a woman not to

fall into the trap, and yielded herself unresistingly to Fabian's elegant, subtle flatteries ; and in the war of w subtle flatteries; and in the war of wit and repartee that thereafter ensued between them, she gave herself up to the fascination of the hour, knowing that she could bide her time for the gratification of her revenge.

But under it all the thought of the peril impending over Nemesius and his child was like a thorn in Fabian's heart; no protean mask that he might assume could disguise the painful fact from himself. And no sooner had he left Laodice, wearing his usual smile, speaking gay, sharp, with words to those of his acquaintances he met on his way out, and found himself alone with the night, than a stern expression of dread and sorrow clouded his face, and he drew the hood of his light cloak low over it, so that neither friend nor foe might observe him too closely as he d homeward.

"How did Laodice discover that Claudia is no longer blind ?" he asked himself as he hastened along; "and how far does her knowledge of the event extend? Have I baffled her by my evasions and transposition of facts?" He could not tell; he only knew that she was as artful as Circe, and was convinced that some fresh disappointment to her hopes had risen to kindle her hatred against Nemesius and his innocent child, and that her revenge would follow them to the bitter end.

Fabian sought his couch as usual, but the tumult of his thoughts ferbade sleep. Once, towards day-dawn, he lost himself; but a vivid, frightful dream, in which he found himself struggling to release Nemesius and Claudia from the deadly coils of a python with a beautiful human face, which wrapping itself closer and tighter around them, aroused him, and with the horror of the dream upon him, he sprang to the floor, every sinew strained by the desperate contest, and his face covered with a cold sweat.

Such a dream was not unnatural in the over-strained condition of his mind and nerves; but he would not court sleep again, if such horrible visions lay him beyond its portals. He lighted his lamp, looked at the clepsy-dra, took up a volume of the Satires of Juvenal, and found in their bitterness a mental tonic, which, although refreshing, failed to bring forgetfulness of the vague unrest that haunted him.

repast After the light morning repast, Fabian resolved to drive to the villa on the Aventine; he was uncertain what he should find there, but concluded that to know even the worst would be better than this incubus of dread brooding continually over him. As he passed through the great bronze gates, and up the broad avenne, where every leaf and blade of grass held its glistening dew-gem-where the birds sang, and the sweetness of flowers pervaded the radiant atmosphere, he al-most imagined that his old fever had eles with his brain.

golden hair flying in the wind, her face bright and glowing, her hand face bright and glowing, let manus clasping a small package. "Wilt thou come with me to the cascade, Fabian? It is a long time since we were there," she said; then to Zilla with a caress: "Thou wilt care for the little ones while I am away And they walked away together, the gazelle, which would not be left behind, followed close by the side of its gentle

mistress, content to feel her soft hand upon its head, and occasionally rub its from the subject, and lapse once mor into transient pretence of forgetfulnes ose in her rosy palm. Fabian involuntarily paused a mo of the grim realities, only veiled maybe by a day, or perchance an hour. Just then a great, rose-colored butter-fly fanned Fabian's hair, and fluttered ment at the Fountain of Diana, arrested ment at the Fountain of Diana, arrested by the view of the magnificent city out-spread far below; its fanes, palaces, columns, and triumphal arches, draped as with tissues of gold by the Roman sunshine, which was so intensely bright down against his cheek, made fearless by his perfect repose and silence. He lifted his hand and caught it by the

that the shadows of their graceful projections lay blue along the flawless marble. He could even distinguish, by its sharper gleam, the great statue of Jupiter that surmounted temple erected in his honor. A throt of pride dilated his Roman heart as his eyes swept over the glorious spectacle, and he could but exult over its preeminence as the queen of the nation But far different were Claudia's thoughts ; for it reminded her of that

Celestial City, with gates of jasper and pearl, the lights of which is He that was slain, the splendor of His Father, the Son of Mary, the joy of angels The ecstatic reflection filled her hear and irradiated her countenance. Fabian caught its gleam as he turned

tion without abruptness. "I had not forgotten," she said, away. "Aha!" he exclaimed, well pleased gently; then untied, one by one, the silken cords that confined the package. "thou art a true Roman ; yet how could it be otherwise, with the blood of a which contained two parcels of unequal asar in thy veins ?" size, both sealed. "This," she said, taking up the larger one, "is the music-bird that was given to me a *lustrum* ago, by that

He judged her by himself, nor areamed that it was the thought of a "city not made with hands," that, like a lamp in a vase of alabaster, shon from her glad soul, and illumined her fair countenance with heavenly graces. Through the rose-blooms and orang

flowers, under the palms, and along broad walks shaded by lime and sweet olive trees-through alleys where the jasmine trailed its snow-white stars, filling the air with sweetness, they their way to the cascade, which sprang flashing and sparkling from the rocks above. A grape-vine trailed from a crevice in the rock, where it had taken root, and with wanton grace flung red, ripening clusters to the sun, out of reach of all except birds and bees. reach of all except birds and bees. Claudia held her hand in the crystal water; the gazelle lapped it daintily as it trickled over the marge of the basin; and Fabian, delighted in every fibre of his æsthetic nature by the ex-quisite picture, stood watching the There was that in her which hild. puzzled him-a strange womanliness, without loss of her old, sweet, childish

This," she said, giving him the smaller package, "is thy keepsake. It is a rich jewel, and entirely my own to do simplicity ; an air of absolute happiness tempered by a soft seriousness, which cast no shadow over eye or lip. The with as I please, and I have worn it. pagan mind of him Do not open it until-I am no long Drying her hands on the moss, she here. That is all, Fabian, out over and I would thank thee for all thy love and hank seated herself on a low grassy kindness." He bowed his head over the little overgrown with vetches, in front of the He bowed his head over the little hand that presented the gift, and touched it with his lips, with a feeling of reverence such as he had never felt towards the gods; but he did not speak

rustic stone bench on which Fabian, at a sign from her, flung himself with an indolent air. The sunshine and leaf-shadows flickered and danced over them. Claudia's package, on which her hand lightly rested, lay beside her, and the soft-eyed gazelle crouched at her feet.

her feet. ' And now, my Psyche, I am at thy bidding, whether to slay a pythion or go in search of a pigmy to add to thy family of pets,' he said, in his old gay

"No, oh ! no !" she answered, with a little laugh : " it is nothing like that. I have something to say which no one else must know-yet." He grew instantly intent, and a vague

her hands, saying: "Thy words have pained me, little dread chilled his veins, as, fixing her grave, sweet eyes on his, she began:

grave, sweet eyes on his, she began: "Fabian, I am going away soon—" "Mercury speed thy journey, sweet one !" he interrupted, as a wild hope sprang up in his heart that Nemesius had, on second thought, changed his mind and would fly with her to a place

do would make me deny Him Who suf

fered death for me. I would be glad to suffer and die for the love of Him.

"I might go on a worse journey,

ot give sight to my blind eyes ;

thee with us!

hristus.

father and me-at any

seen strained too far at a moment and say words out of his pain that would distress her, or ruffle the exaltation of ander circumstances which greater de-liberation would have made it impossiher enthusiasm, dementia, or whatever it might be; she called it faith, but it ole for him to accept. There was ar of a mistake: it was all plain to was faith of a quality he could not com fear of a mistake: it was all plain to him; and, though the situation was anomolous, he pledged himself to hold as his own, according to the written be-quest, and as the heir of Nemesius, the prehend because its animus was far be-yond the level of human philosophy, and exalted her—a simple child—above its widest scope. He was inclined t believe that the accursed Chimaera ha was inclined to old palace with all it contained, and the villa and estate on the Aventine, woven spells around both father and child, to their own undoing. He re-mained silent; he wished to get away

until such time as by the latter's ver-bal wish they could be safely the safely the saferred to the Christian Church, to be applied to her needs at the discretion of her reigning Pontiff.

ol her reigning Pontiff. The pagan gentleman made no diffi-culty about holding in trust a heritage for the Christians; he would have done more for the sake of the man he loved, but that was all that was required, but but that was all that was required, but not all that he afterwards, with splen-did generosity and noble unselfishness, offered to do. Nemesius had already liberated his

Claudia; in another moment the beauti-tul frightened captive trembled on her palm, where it slowly waved its wings once or twice, to assure itself that it was indeed at liberty; she brushed them with a kiss, then tossed it into the air, and watched it drifting and quivering farther and farther. until it numerous slaves, giving a provision to all, to enable them to tide over their first days of freedom, until they should and self-support; he had turned his gold and silver and jewels into the the air, and watched it drifting and quivering farther and farther, until it disappeared in the golden haze. "Now I wait the reward of my patience; I am consumed with curiosity reasury of the persecuted church, for the use of the poor; and now, like an athlete divested of all that might impede his victory, he waited for the final combat. It had cost him nothing to give up his earthly possessions, but there was a something more precious than all yet to be offered before his sacrifice was perfect, which would strain every fibre of his being, and rend his nature with an arguish which no material implement of torture, however savage-which no death, however cruel,

savage—which no death, however cruel, could inflict. But he knew in whom he trusted ; he remembered Gethsemane, and that moment of supreme desolation on the Cross that crowned Christ's holy Despice. Passion. In Him he hoped, waiting His holy will, strong in faith, and will-ing to suffer all things in testimony thereof.

TO BE CONTINUED.

"The physician Ben Asa," replied Fabian. "I remember." "It had been the plaything of his IS THERE A SANTA CLAUS ? Jacob A. Rils in December Ladies' Hon

Journal "Dear Mr. Riis :-- "A little chap of six on the Western frontier writes to Will you please tell me if there

a Santa Claus ? Papa says not.' "Won't you answer him ?" That was the message that came t

one last December just as I was going on a journey. Why the editor of The Ladies Home Journal sent it to me I don't know. Perhaps it was because when I was a little chap, my home wa way up toward that white north where even the little boys ride in sleds behind reindeer, as they are the only horses they have. Perhaps it was because when I was a young lad I knew Hans Christian Andersen, who surely ought to know, and spoke his tongue Perhaps it was both. I will ask editor when I see him. Meanwhile, here was his letter, with Christmas right at the door, and, as I said, I was

going on a journey. I buttoned it up in my great coat along with a lot of others I didn't have time to read, and I thought as I went o the depot what a pity it was that my little friend's papa should have for-gotten about Santa Claus. We big peeple do forget the strangest way, We big and then we haven't got a bit of a good time any more.

No Santa Claus ! If you had asked that car full of people I would have liked to hear the answers they would have given you. No Sauta Claus ! Why, there was scarce a man in the lot who didn't carry a bundle that looked as if it had just tumbled out of his sleigh. I felt of one slyly, and it was a boy's sled—a "flexible flyer," I know, because he left one at our house

the Christmas before ; and I distinctly heard the rattling of a pair of skates in that box in the next seat. They were all good-natured, every one, though the train was behind time—that is a sure sign of Christmas. The brakeman wore a piece of mistletoe in his cap and

under the great stormy sea to the far-away country where the day was shad-ing into evening already though the sin was scarce two hours high in Washpunched you, or Jim who was mean to you. ington:

The White House. Mrs. Riis, Ribe, Denmark :

Your son is breakfasting with us. We send you our love and sympathy. THEODORE AND EDITH ROOSEVELT.

For, you see, the house with the holly in the hall was the White House, and my host was the President of the United States. I have to tell it to you, or you might easily fall into the or you might easily fall into the same error I came near falling into. I had to pinch myself to make sure the President was not Santa Claus himself. I felt that he had Claus nimisel. I felt that he had in that moment given me the very greatest Christmas gift any man ever received: my little mother's life. For really what alls her is that she is very old, and I know that when she got President's dispatch she must have be-come immediately ten years younger and got right out of bed. Don't you know mothers are that way when any one makes much of their boys? think Santa Claus must have brought them all in the beginning-the mothers,

mean. I would just give anything to see what happened in that old town that is full of blessed memories to me when the telegraph ticked off that message. will warrant the town hurried burgomaster, bishop and all, to do honor to my gentle old mother. No Santa Claus, ch? What was that, then that spanned two oceans with a breath of love and cheer, I should like to know. Tell me that !

After the coffee we sat together in the President's office for a little while while he signed commissions, each and while he signed commissions, each and every one of which was just Santa Claus's gifts to a grown-up boy who had been good in the year that was going : and before we parted the Pres-ident had lifted with so many strokes of his pen clouds of sorrow and want that weighed heavily on homes I knew of to which Santa Claus had had hard work finding his way that Christmas. It seemed to me as I went out of the door, where the big policeman touched his hat and wished me a Merry Christmas, that the sun never shone so brightly in May as it did then. quite expected to see the crocuses and the jonquils that make the White House garden so pretty, out in full bloom. They were not, I suppose, only because they are official flowers and have a proper respect for the calender that runs Congress and the Executive

Department, too. I stopped on the way down the avenue at Uncle Sam's paymaster's to see what he thought of it. And there he was, busy as could be, making ready for the coming of Santa Claus. No need of my asking any questions here. Men stood in line with banknotes in their hands asking for gold-new gold-pieces, they sking for gold-new gold pieces, they said, most every one. The paymaster, who had a sprig of Christmas green fixed in his desk just like any other man, laughed and shook his head and said "Santa Claus?" and the men in the line laughed too and nodded and

went away with their gold. One man who went out just ahead of me I saw stoop over a poor woman on the corner and thrust something into the corner and thrust her hand, and then walk hastily away It was I who caught the light in the woman's eye and the blessing upon her poor wan lips, and the grass seemed greener in the Treasury dooryard, and the sky bluer than it had been before. even on that bright day. Perhapseven on that bright day. Tenaps well, never mind ! if any one says any-thing to you about principles and giv-ing alms, you tell him that Santa Claus takes care of the principles at Christ-takes care to the offend As for him mas, and not to be afraid. As for him, if you want to know, just ask the old

woman on the Treasury corner. And so, walking down that Avenue of Good-will, I came to my train again and went home. And when I had time to think it all over I remembered the letters in my pocket which I had not opened. I took them out and read them, and among them were two sent to me in anta Clause himself which

DECEMBER 19, 19

IN AND ABOUT JER NOTABLE CATHOLIC P

upon the sacred scenes when Christ the Savio

With more than usual

will your readers be v something of the Bethlehe

something of the Bethleh Some tew weeks sinc announced the passing Rev. Anthony Belloni, pilgrims to the Grotto

vill remember as the

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While thus engaged in recipient of a consist money from the hand guished English Cath-with which he was al property about twel Jerusalem, upon which

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caner he was the harde you, The meaner he was the harder do you resolve to make it up : not to bear him a grudge. That is the stamp for the letter to Santa. Nobody can stop it, even a cross draught in the chimney, Philadelphia Catholic Stand The season is drawing i thoughts of all Christians hen it has that on.

Because-don't you know, Santa Claus is the Spirit of Christmas ; and ever and ever so many years ago when the dear little Baby was born after shom we call Christmas, and was crad. led in a manger out in the stable cause there was not room in the inn. cause there was not rotat in the and that Spirit came into the world to soften the hearts of men and make them love one another. Therefore, them love one another. Therefore, that is the mark of the Spirit of this day. Don't let anybody or anything rub it out, Then the rest don't mat-ter.• Let them tear Santa's white beard off at the Sunday-school festival and growl in his bearskin coat. Thes are only his disguises. The steps of the real Santa Claus you can truce all steps of the real sand chars you can be done through the world as you have done here with me, and when you stand in the last of his tracks you will find the blessed Babe of Bethlehem smilling welcome to you. For then you will be home.

HARBINGERS OF THE GLAD FEAST.

The closing week of Advent is an allimportant one in the theological semin-aries, for on the Ember days that come occur the the third Sunday after the third Sunday occur the Christmastide ordinations, which are generally participated in by large numbers of the seminarians, and are always imposing ceremonies. This last of the season is passed by the candidates in prayer and retreat, and the day which is usually chosen for the and ceremony is the Saturday before the fourth Sunday of Advent, a day that may come when Advent begins on November 27, as early as December 17, or fall as late as December 23. As most of the newly-ordained priests desire to return home, in order to celebrate their Christmas Masses in their own parish churches, and in the presence of their kin and friends, they dislike to see the day of their ordination come as close to Christmas as December 23, es-pecially if the seminary in which they orders be far removed from eceive

In olden times it was the custom in many Catholic lands to celebrate the closing days of Advent with popular closing days of Arterio with population rejoicing and gladness, in anticipation of the great joy which the world would experience on Christmas morning by the birth of the Redeemer. A pretty practice then was that which prompted ands of minstrels to visit the shrines of the Blessed Virgin and chant carols in her honor and in praise of her expected Son. These carols always breathed the tenderest affection and were permeated with a spirit of profound piety and reverence. As an intheir character may dication of one of cited the following stanza of one of them, which has a beauty of its own that is often lacking in more modern hymns;

"As Joseph was walking, He heard an angel sing— This night shall be born Our beavenly Kinz. He neither shall be born In house nor in ball, Nor in the place of Paradise, But in an cx's stall."

Nowadays no inconsiderable portion of these Advent days is, perforce, given over by most people to the pur-chasing of their Christmas presents for For these their friends and relatives. be the days when the shops make the most tempting display of their wares and are thronged by buyers, all anxious to select their gifts, but puzzled what to choose for this or that one whom they desire to remember. This holiday shopping is often as much of a penance, in consequence of the crowds which

shopping is other as much of a permut-in consequence of the crowds which jostle and incommode one, as a pleas-ure; so that it can hardly be said to contravene the spirit wherein the Church would have us keep the Advent season, a spirit of blended joy and sadness, as shown by the fact that although she omits the Gloria in Advent Mass, she says the Allelulia, in anticipation of the great gladness that will come to the world when the days of Advent end with the coming of Christmas morning.

were to be trained showed more than agricultural studies readers who have eve Land or who may de will forget the site o mizan, situated on from which the Crus many journeyings a caught their first gli City. The inhabitar the country have no on but a few vines as ing to neglect of ag the misrule of the O soil had taken upon ance of a desert, bu these poor people Belloni's death shi cognized that he it their children to g beauty and fruitful days. His work brought lood and co of this historic spot large numbers of s Church. Another zeal of the canon e Church of th the Church of the Jesus at a distance from the cave in Infant was born church come sever day the little ones orphan asylum, w its existence to th of God and over w many years. Not and hard sacrifices was filled, we fee pense was his eve died surrounded h a stone's throw of vrapped Him in s placed Him in a m OUR CHIEF The following Catholic establis Jerusalem may h readers, showing

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DECEMBER 19, 1908.

filling it with illusions, and that he was

just awake. Slaves ran to lead his chariot away as soon as he alighted. Standing tent, he cast a glance over the beaubound to be a stand almost the first object that attracted his eye was Claudia, on a marble bench, under the great trees, her gazelle frisking near while some of her little pensioners, now grown strong and active, were riding Grillo by turns. Zilla sat apart, her pale face bent over a piece of rich embroidery, into which she was working threads of gold. And the sunshine through the leaves fell like a spray of gold over them all.

Claudia rose and half advanced to meet Fabian as he approached, waving his hand with a graceful gesture of salutation; then she stopped, while a her hand. delicate glow overspread her face, for to her eyes he was still only a noblelittle one; but the conditions are im-possible; for how can I deny that which I never affirmed? The Christus stranger, from whose presence oking she shrank with instinctive and modest is nothing to me. It is possible to be happy under the mild sway of the gods, reserve, until he greeted her in the old familiar voice of her blind days; then she smiled and welcomed him. "I salute thee, fairest! Methought

but it is like a reign of the Furies under thy Christus," said Fabian, his under thy Christus," said Fabian, his grief more bitter than his scorn. "There are no gods, Fabian ; those we worshipped as gods are devils. Aurora had chosen to disport herself Aurora had chosen to disport herself among the flowers, to receive the hom-age of fauns and naiads; while Zilla— health to thee, Zilla!—like the pale moon, hovered near," he said, gaily; for so far from these peaceful, lovely There is only One Supreme God, Who made all creatures. The gods can neither give nor restore life; they but He in one instant opened my eyes, and gave faith to my soul, that I might scenes appeared all thought of violence and danger, that he resolutely turned his back on the latter, and his face to believe His word, and have eternal life," she said, her voice exultant and the sunshine, temporary though it prove to be. sweet. migh

Claudia smiled at his nonsense, and "Thy logic is weak, my little dialeche thought he could never tire of the tician," he replied. sweet, pure outlook of her radiant "I do not understand words of the learned, Fabian ; but I do know what it

eyes. "I have been wishing to see thee, oh! so much, Fabian! I have a keep-sake for thee. Wait here until I run and bring it," she said. means to be a Christian, which I am, come life or death," she said, clasping her hands, and raising her eyes towards

"Let me go for it, dear one!" exclaimed Zilla, raising. "No! no! do thou rest here—I will

her hands, and raising her eyes towards heaven, with an expression so holy and radiant that he remembered it to his dying day; then, "I will ask Advocata nostra to intercede for thee, Fabian, and lead thee to Her divine Son; and, if I may, when I go to Them I will rest not from praying that thou wilt at last be back in a moment," she answered over her shoulder, as she sped away across the grassy, flower-dappled ex-panse that stretched between them and panse that stretched between them and the villa. In a few moments she ap-peared, running towards them, her

mind and would fly with her to a place of safety. "When wilt thou start? dream. Tell me, that I may not be left be-

"Thou shalt have thy choice of them all," she said, with a smile, as she rufiled her dainty, dimpled hand through "Oh! what joy it would be to have them ; "Zilla shall cut one for thee as soon as we get back.

what is in thy thoughts, Fabian. I will tell thee. There are cruel men who kill 'Let us hurry, then; the sun grows hot, and fever lurks in those soft winds all who will not deny and curse the divine now drifting to us over the Pontine marshes. We have loitered here too They may come for us-my hour of the da long," he added. or night, as soon as they find out that we are Christians ; but not all they can

When they got back, expecting to find Zilla in the same place, she and the children, with Grillo, had disappeared; but the noble lady Camilla, had just And, O Fabiant is it not joyous to know that we—my father and I—shall not be separated? Wilt thou come and Fabian, after an interchange of salwith us now ?" she asked, holding out ntations and pleasant words, went away the golden tress, which not without until a later day came into his possess

> That night, feeling that solitude best suited his present mood, he sat alone, trying to concentrate his attention on favorite comedy, and find his usual enjoyment in its pungent, satirical wit; but the flavor was wanting; the zest was gone; even the rustle of the vellum on which it was written irritated him, and made him start. A voice that he recognized, and approaching footsteps. made him turn expectant towards the entrance of his cabinet; the curtain was drawn aside, and Nemesius was ushered in. Their hand-clasp was as Nemesius was

after. friendly as ever, though distinguished by a gravity different from their former after. "The coffee is waiting." And he beamed upon the table with the veriest intercourse; nor was the visit one for the purpose of social enjoyment, as Nemesius presently explained. He Nemesius presently explained. He brought with him certain legal papers, drawn according to the strictest inter Claus ! pretation and formula of the Roman law, whice he asked Fabian, in the name of their life-long friendship, to preserve until such time as the bequests therein indicated could be disposed of, first by the written, and later by his

verbal instructions. He went over them carefully, word

No Santa Claus, is there? You just ask him ! And then the train rolled into the

city under the big gray dome to which George Washington gave his name, and by and by I went through a doorway which all American boys would rather see than go to school a whole though they love their teacher dearly. It is true that last winter my own little lad told the kind man whose bouse it is that he would rather ride up and down in the elevator at the hotel, but that was because he was so very little at the time and didn't know things rightly, and besides, it was his first experience

with an elevator. As I was saying, I went through the door into a beautiful white hall with loftly pillars, between which there were regular banks of holly with the red

berries shining through, just as if it were out in the woods! And from behind one of them there came the merriest laugh you could ever think of. Do you think, now, it was that letter in ny pocket that gave that guilty little throb against my heart when I heard it, or what could it have been? I hadn't for there stood my host all framed in holly, and with the heartiest hand-

clasp. "Come in," he said, and drew me

Christmas face as he poured it out him-self, one cup for his dear wife and one for me. The children—ah! you should have asked them if there were a Santa

And so we sat and talked, and I told my kind friends that my own dear old mother, whom I have not seen for years, was very, very sick in far-away Den-mark and longing for her boy, and a mist came into my hostess' gentle eyes and she said, "Let us cable over and tell her how much we think of her,"

"Merry Christmas" in a way to make a man feel good all the rest of the day. sage until I got the daw rubbed off my spectacles. One was from a great banker, and it contained a check for a

\$1,000 to help buy a home for some poor children of the East Side tenements in New York, where the chimneys are so small and mean that scarce even a letter will go up through them, so that ever so many litte ones over there never get on Santa Claus's books at all.

The other letter was from a lonely old widow, almost as old as my dear mother in Denmark, and it contained a \$2 bill. For years, she wrote, she had saved and saved, hoping some time to have \$5, and then she would go with me to the homes of the very poor and be Santa Claus herself. "And where-

ever you decided it was right to leave a trifle, that should be the place where a triffe, that should be the place where it would be left," read the letter. But now she was so old that she could no longer think of such a trip and so she sent the money she had saved. And I thought of a family in one of those tenements where father and mother are tenements where father and mother are both lying ill, with a boy, who ought to be in school, fighting all alone to keep the wolf from the door, and win-ning the fight. I guess he has been too busy to send any message up the chimney, if indeed there is one in his house; but you ask him, right now, whether he thinks there is a Santa

Claus or not. No Santa Claus? Yes, my little man, there is a Santa Claus, thank God ! Your father had just forgotten. The world would indeed be poor without one. It is true that he does not always wear a white beard and drive a rein deer team-not always, you know-but what does it matter? He is Santa

Claus with the big, loving, Christmas heart, for all that; Santa Claus with the kind thoughts for every one that the kind thoughts for every out and make children and grown-up people beam with happiness all day leng. And shall I tell you a secret which I did not learn at the post office, but it is true all the same—of how you can always be if I may, when I go to Them I will rest not from praying that thou wilt at last come." He loved the maid too tenderly to

CATHOLIC PLAYERS.

It is gratifying to read, in an article by Rev. John Talbot Smith, of the number of leading actors and actresses on the American stage who are Catholics, and who follow their duties as Catholics in spite of the many difficulties that beset their paths during the season. Margaret Anglin, who came into prominence in Richard Mansfield's production of "Cyrano de Bergerac," and now leading lady of the Empire Theatre forces: Grace George, star-ring under the management of her hus-band, W. A. Brady ; Ethel Barrymore, the charming young actress, now play-ing in "Sister Kate"-the gifted daughter of a gifted mother. Blanche danghter of a gitted model. Danche Walsh, who first made a name for her-self in Marie Wainwright's company, and now touring as an independent star. Madame Modjeska, whom we know and love so well for her splendid know and love so well for her splendid delineations. Then there are James O'Neil, Frederick Paulding, in stock work; Wilton Lackaye, Fritz Wil-iams, Brandon Tynan, Edward Har-rigan, John T. Kelly, Dan Sully and Joseph Murphy, not to enumerate a number of others who are playing here, there and everywhere with our stock companies. companies.

Humility and Courage.

God cares nothing for your miserable little failings; He can blow them all away; but He does care for the hu-mility which can see them, and be sorry for them, and the courage which rises up and goes to Him after all. If commit the same fault 50 times in all. If you day, and 50 times you rise up and go to Him with confidence, that will give God real glory.

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