

I have loved her more than anyone in the world ever since she was a little child. But the pretty, sweet, gas young girls, they don't care for a man like me—steady, quiet, getting bald. They like the handsome young boys like you, Nickie. So, I want Lucia to be happy, to be comfortable. I want that more than anything—so I give you my store. You see? And you—and Lucia—

Nickie was not laughing now. His face was as serious as Tony's own, as he looked at him with very great respect in his handsome black eyes.

"I see; you think Lucia loves me and we get married, and I have your store, because you—"

Tony nodded. "I want her to be happy—I want that most of all," he said, and added anxiously, "You'll take good care of the business, won't you? It's been hard work to get it started."

Nickie made no direct reply; instead, he held out his hand. "I'd like to shake hands with you, Tony Teatino. You're sure a good fellow," he said heartily.

Tony complied with his request, thinking it an unaccountable one, and after their hands fell apart, Nickie explained frankly, straightforwardly:

"I'd marry Lucia M. tenaro tomorrow, money or no money—we could manage somehow—if she would have me. But she won't. I asked her many a time, and she always laughed at me, and said 'No, of course not.' She did until last week. And then when I asked her again she answered, so sweet and earnest, 'Nickie, I like you. I am your friend, but ever since I was a little girl, nine or ten years old, I've known the one I wanted to marry. I like to have some fun, some gay times, first, but one of these days when he asks me, I'll marry him; I will never marry anyone else. And Tony, I thought she meant you.'"

A smile had dawned in Tony's dark eyes. It grew and spread until his face was fairly radiant with joy.

"She meant you, Tony; I'm almost certain she did," Nickie repeated sadly.

Suddenly Tony rose to go. "It is late; I must go home now," he said. —Florence Gilmore in *The Aye Maria*.

THE STORY OF CHRIST

BY GIOVANNI PAFINI
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GOOD FRIDAY

The sun rose higher in the clear April sky and now it was near to noon. The contest between the flaccid defender and the furious assailants had wasted most of the morning, and there was no time to lose. According to Mosaic law, the bodies of executed criminals could not remain after sunset on the place of punishment, and April days are not as long as June days.

Moreover, Caiaphas, reinforced though he was by so many furiously enraged partisans, could not draw a tranquil breath until the Vagabond's feet were forever halted, fastened with iron nails on the cross. He remembered how, a few days before, Jesus had entered the city surrounded with waving branches and joyful hymns. He was sure of the city itself, but at this period it was full of provincials come from everywhere, who had not the same interests and the same passions as the clientele dependent on the Temple. Those Galileans especially, who had followed Him until now, who loved Him, might make some effort at resistance and put off, even if they did not actually prevent, the real votive offering of that day.

Pilate, too, was in haste to have that troublesome, innocent man taken away. He did not wish to think of Him again. He hoped that he would forget after His death that look, those words and, above all, his own corroding uneasiness, so painfully like remorse. Although he had washed and dried his hands, that man in His silence, it seemed to him, was sentencing him to a penalty worse than death itself. Before that scourged man, at the point of death, he felt himself the guilty one. To vent his uneasiness on those who really caused it, he dictated the wording of the titulus or superscription, which the condemned man was to wear about His neck until it was fastened above His head at the top of the cross, as follows: "Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews." The Scribe wrote these words three times in three languages in clear, red letters on the white wood.

The leaders of the Jews, who had remained there, craning their necks, to hasten the preparations, read this sarcastic inscription and protested. They said to Pilate, "Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews."

But the Procurator cut them short with a dry brevity: "What I have written I have written." These are the last words recorded of him, and the most profound! I am forced to make you a present of the life of this man, but I do not deny what I have said. Jesus is a Nazarene, which means also, saint. And He is your King, the wretched King who fits your wretchedness. I wish all men to know how your ill-born race treats saints and kings. It is for this I have written these words in Latin and Greek as well as in Hebrew. And now be off, for I

have endured you long enough. "Quod Scripsi, scripsi."

In the meantime the soldiers had put back on the King His poor man's garments, and had tied the notice about His neck. Others had brought out from the storerooms three massive crosses of pine, the nails, the hammer and the pincers. The escort was ready. Pilate pronounced the usual formula: "I licitor, expedi cruceum." And the sinister procession moved forward. The Centurion rode at the head, he whom Tacitus calls with terrible brevity, "exactor mortis." Immediately after him came, in the midst of the armed legionaries, Jesus and the two thieves who were to be crucified with Him. Each of them carried a cross on his shoulders, according to the Roman rule. And behind them, the shuffling steps and the uproar of the excited crowd, increased at every step by accomplices and idle sight-seers.

It was Passover, the day of preparations, the last night before the Passover. Thousands of lambs' skins were stretched out on the sunlit roofs; and from every house rose a column of smoke, delicate as a flower-bud, which opened out in the air and then was lost in the clear, festal sky. Old women with malignant faces, mumbling anathemas, emerged from the dark alleyways, dirty-faced little children trotted along with bundles under their arms; bearded men carried on their shoulders a kid or a cask of wine; drovers were dragging along asses with hanging heads; children stared with impudent and melancholy eyes at the foreigners who were walking about circumspically, impeded by this festal bustling. In every home the house-mother was busy, preparing everything needful for the next day, because with the setting of the sun every one was exempt for twenty-four hours from the curse of Adam. The lambs, skinned and quartered, were all ready for the fire; the loaves of unleavened bread were piled up fresh from the oven; men were decanting the wine, and the children to lend a hand somewhere were cleaning the bitter herbs.

There was no one idle, no one whose heart was not rejoicing at the thought of that festal day of repose, when all families would be gathered about the father, when they would eat in peace and drink the wine of Thanksgiving from the same cup; and God would be witness of this cheer because the palms of the grateful would go up to Him from every house. On that day even the poor felt themselves almost rich; and the rich, because of their unusual profits, felt themselves almost generous; and children whose hopes had not yet been dashed by experience of life felt themselves more loving; and women more loved.

Everywhere there was that peaceful confusion, that good-natured tumult, that joyous bustle which goes before a great, popular festal day. An odor of hope and of Spring purified the old filth of the Jewish ant-sep. And the great eastern sun sent down a flood of light upon the four Hills.

SIMON OF CYRENE

Under that festal sky, through that festal crowd, slow as a funeral procession, the sinister column of the bearers of the cross made its way. About them everything spoke of joy and of life, and they were going to burning thirst and to death. About them all men were waiting joyfully to spend the evening with their loved ones, to sit down at the well-garnished table, to drink the bright, genial wine served on feast-days, to stretch themselves out on their beds to wait for the most longed-for Sabbath morning of the year. And the three, cut off forever from those who loved them, would be stretched upon the cross of infamy, would drink only a sip of bitter wine, and, cold in death, would be thrown into the cold earth.

At the sound of the Centurion's horse, people stepped to one side and stopped to look at the wretched men toiling and sweating under their terrible burden. The two thieves seemed more sturdy and callous, but the first, the Man of Sorrows, seemed scarcely able to take another step. Worn out by the terrible night, by His four questionings, by the buffetings, by the beatings, by the flogging, disfigured with blood, sweat, saliva, and with the terrible effort of this last task set Him, He did not seem like the fearless young man who a few days before had scourged the vermin out of the Temple. His fair, shining face was drawn and contracted by the convulsions of pain; His eyes, red with suppressed tears, were sunken in their sockets; on His shoulders, torn by the rods, His clothes clung to the wounds, increasing His sufferings; His legs, more than His other members, felt this terrible weakness, and they bent under His weight and under that of the cross. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.

After the vigil, which had been the beginning of His agony, how many blows had been struck upon that flesh! Judas' kiss, the flight of His friends, the rope on His wrists, the threats of the judges, the blows of the guard, the cowardice of Pilate, the howling demands for His death, the insults of the legionaries, and now this weight of the cross, carried along amid the sneers and scoffing of those whom He loved!

Those who saw Him pass took no notice of Him, or at the most, those who knew how to read tried to make out the inscription which hung

down on His chest. Many, however, knew Him by sight and by name, and pointed Him out to their neighbors with learned and complacent airs. Some of them mingled to enjoy to the end the spectacle, always new, of a man's death; and more would have followed if it had not been a day when there was much to do at home. Those who had begun to hope in Him now despised Him because He had not been stronger, because He had let Himself be taken like any sneak-thief; and to ingratiate themselves with the crowd, Elders mingled with the crowd, they cast out at the false Messiah as He went by some neatly phrased insult. Very few were those who felt any movement of pity to see Him in that situation and among those few were some who did not know who He was, who were moved merely by the natural pity which any crowd feels for condemned men. Some few there were who still felt a little love in their hearts for the Master who had loved the poor, who had healed the sick, who had announced the Kingdom so much more righteous and holy than the kingdoms then in existence and ruining the earth. But these were few, and they were almost ashamed of their secret tenderness for one whom they had believed to be less hated or more powerful. The greater part laughed, satisfied and contented, as if this funeral procession had been a part of the feast-day.

HOW SEPARATIONS WERE BROUGHT ABOUT

The situation complained of was brought about as follows: Previous to quota restriction, immigration to the United States was virtually unlimited. Accordingly, many heads of families came to the new country alone, preferring to establish a home before bringing their wives and children; with no restrictions, they were confident their families could come to them when they had obtained work and were prepared to care for them.

Then came the Act of 1921, with its restrictions, and the Act of 1924 tightening the bars. Many thousands of families were caught temporarily separated. But the latter act made no provision whatever for this emergency; what it, wives and children of men resident in the United States but not yet citizens were given no preference, but were forced to take their turn in the regular quotas.

Many of these quotas, however, were so small—several are only 100 a year—that thousands of separated wives faced, and still face, a wait of as long as five years before rejoining their husbands. Added to the difficulty is the fact that 50 per cent. of such quotas as are allowed is reserved for classes not including the wives and children of residents of the United States who are not citizens.

If a man became a citizen, his wife and children were entitled to non-quota status and their coming was hastened. But it requires five years for a man to become a citizen. Moreover, a majority of the courts in the United States considering such cases have held that an immigrant is barred from becoming a citizen while his family is in Europe. The man's interest and loyalty, and hence his legal residence, are in the land where his wife and family live, say these tribunals.

Thus there is brought about the contradictory situation of a man's citizenship being withheld until his family joins him, and at the same time his family being denied prompt entry to the United States because he is not a citizen.

Without a word the Cyrenian obeyed, perhaps out of goodness of heart, but in any case from necessity, because the Roman soldiers in the countries which they occupied had the right to force any one to help them. "If a soldier gives you some task to do," wrote Arrian, "be careful not to resist him and not to murmur, otherwise you will be beaten."

We know nothing more of the merciful-hearted man who lent his broad shoulders to the astorians to lighten Jesus' load, but we know that his sons, Alexander and Rufus, were Christians, and it is extremely probable that they were converted by their father's telling them of the death of which he was an enforced witness.

Two soldiers helped the fallen man up on His feet, and urged Him forward. The procession took up its way again under the noon-day sun; but the two thieves muttered between their teeth that no one thought of them, and that it was not right that that other man by pretending to fall should be freed of his burden while they still were forced to carry theirs. It was favoritism, nothing less, especially as that fellow, to hear what the priests said about Him, was much more guilty than they. From that moment His two companions in punishment, jealous of Him, began to hate Him, and were to insult Him even when they were nailed at His side on the crosses which they were then carrying on their backs.

TO BE CONTINUED

The Christian faith is a grand cathedral with divinely painted windows. Standing without, you see no glory; not can you imagine it; standing within, each ray of light reveals a harmony of unspeakable splendor.

U. S. IMMIGRATION ACT HAVING SAD RESULTS

Washington.—The iniquitous effect of the Immigration Act of 1924 in separating families of immigrants and promoting immorality and suffering has recently brought to the N. C. W. C. protests and pleas for aid from national agencies in three countries. This does not take into account the numerous individual cases of this nature which the N. C. W. C. Bureau of Immigration is attempting to solve almost daily.

Literally thousands of families are kept separated by the operation of the act of 1924, says the N. C. W. C. Bureau. The cases are numbered in the hundreds in half a dozen nations, and large numbers exist in every quota country. Yet to provide for the admission at once of all separated wives and children, it is pointed out, would produce so little effect on general immigration to the United States that it would be unnoticeable, while at the same time preventing immeasurable social damage.

Some of the pleas received are pitiful, others bewildered. In virtually every instance the European peoples express themselves as unable to understand how the United States reconciles its name for high idealism with the separation of wives and little children from their husbands and fathers.

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