

LUKE DELMEGE

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CHAPTER XVI.—CONTINUED.

"Ah! but my dear Mr. Delmege, you quite forget that all this took place in Syria and in the close of the ancient cycle. This is England and the nineteenth century."

"Quite so," said Luke, appealing to a Canon, "but what says the Scripture—'The poor you shall always have with you.'"

"What, then, becomes of the evolution of religion?" shrieked a lady. "If there is to be no progress, where comes in your Christianity?"

"I think," said the senior Canon, "that Mr. Delmege is right and wrong—right in his interpretation; wrong in his application. The text he has quoted means: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.'"

"Of course. And that embraces us all," said Olivette. "I'm sure, now, that sometimes I feel quite embarrased by these accessories of civilization. Can we not do, I say sometimes to myself, with less? Are not these ornaments of life unnecessary and a burden? I sometimes feel, that like dear St. Francis, I should like to go abroad and—see the world."

"How could you get on without your escel and brushes and palates?" said Clotilde. Olivette was the artist of the family.

"Oh! I should hire a little Italian boy to take them for me, and we could spend days on the Umbrian Mountains, and paint, oh! such delicious bits of scenery, and eat nothing but olives and grapes, and drink only water—snow-water from the fountain-peaks of the Apennines, and—ah—a little Falernian."

"And then, dear, said Clotilde, 'you could go down into the convents, and copy those dear crucifixions of Angelico, and the sweet 'Ecce Homo's; and oh! Olive, if you could bring me back one—only one copy of that divine 'Scourging,' by Corri!'"

Olivette shuddered, and said coldly: "No! not our Helme has stodd all that. No more painful realism, like the visions of Elmerich; but sweet-faced Agnes and Cecilia, and pearls, and now and again, a divine Juno, or the flower-face of an Oread."

So Luke's little observation drew down this admirable discussion on Scripture, political economy, art, etc., and Luke felt not a little elated as the giver of inspiration and the originator of ideas. Dear me! to think that he, the child of a member, but even a leader, in this select coterie in the centre of British civilization! And Carlyle took years to make the British public forget that he was the son of a Scotch mason! Luke was floating on the enchanted river.

He was accompanied to the door by the sisters.

"I really think I shall paint your pietessene beggar," said Olivette.

"No, no, dear, don't spoil your art-fancies," said Clotilde. "What would the 'Master' say?"

"Luke felt half-jealous of that 'Master.'"

"If you could spare time, he said, 'I should like much to have a picture of that ship in the 'Ancient Mariner,' the sea smooth as glass, the sky setting, and her skeleton spar-funnels a scaffolding against the daffodil sky!'"

"You shall have it," said Olivette.

"Good-night, brother! Don't forget the 'Atta Troll!'"

"Good-night, brother!"

"Brother, good-night! The Lutes for Thursday!"

"Bah," said Luke; "there's only a sheet of tissue-paper between the races; but politicians and pamphleteers have daubed it all over with ghouls and demons on both sides. When will the valiant knight come and drive his lance through it, and let the races see each other as they are?"

from Ireland, called here to-day to inquire for you. She said you were deeply interested in her brother, Louis, a young medical student, at St. Thomas's. She had not heard of your removal to Aylesburgh, and seemed disappointed. She has come over to act as housekeeper and guardian angel to her brother. From a brief conversation I could gather that she is eminently qualified for both offices. I don't despair of the Island of Saints yet. I think there's one left. She wished that I should enclose to you her address."

The second letter ran: "My dear Luke—We expect you over without fail for your sister's wedding. Your protracted exile is causing some anxiety here. It is probable, as you have already heard, that Margery will enter in Limerick. You know that poor Father Tim has gone to meet his brother, Ecclesiastes, in heaven. He left you his Breviaries and a parting word—to hold your head fast."

"MARTIN HUGHES, P. P. 'Seaview Cottage, Knockmany.'"

Luke took up the Breviaries rather gingerly. The cover had been originally of red morocco; but the years had wrought havoc with red and gold. They were black, grimy, clammy, from constant use; for then, as now, the Breviary is the poetical anthology, the manual of philosophy, the compendium of theology and patrology to the Irish priest. Luke put down the volumes with a shudder, and then washed his hands.

CHAPTER XVII.

A LAST APHORISM.

'Twas true, indeed. Father Tim was dead. He had carried his little stock of wisdom, and merged it in the great unperishable Wisdom that guides, oh! so unerringly, yet imperceptibly, the little currents of our lives. There never was a man so proud of his philosophy as Father Tim; never a man who knew so little of the world. His happy consciousness of the former faculty, his happy unconsciousness of the latter defect, or blessing, made him a most lovable man.

During this spring the influenza, then quite an unappreciated novelty, was raging in his parish; and night and day he swept the mountains from cabin to cabin on his little cob. Then when the epidemic had ceased and the flock was saved, the pastor was struck down, and fatally.

Father Martin was beside himself with grief. Father Pat was too scientific to be over-solicitous about his friend. But he did all that a scientist could do; and wonderful were the pharmaceutical remedies that he prescribed. Alas! Father Tim was a fatalist.

"When a man's time comes, where's the use in putting back the hands on the clock?" he said. There was no possible reply to this.

And so, one evening in March of this sad year, Father Martin made up his mind to discharge conscientiously his duty as a friend and brother priest, and warn his good neighbor that the sands were running fast, and it was high time to prepare for the last great journey.

"Of course, Martin," said the poor patient, feebly, "it is a long road, and there's no turning back when you start. But there are no cross roads either, Martin, where a man could lose his way."

"That's true," said Father Martin. "Now we'll see about the spiritual first, and then the temporal."

The ceremony did not take long, and then he made his profession of faith.

"It isn't faith, Martin," he sobbed, "with me, bision, thank God."

"That's true, Tim," said Martin, deeply affected. "I'm sure the Blessed Virgin herself will come for you."

"Ha! ha!" said the dying man, "no wonder she should—no wonder she should! She'll be very ungrateful, and that's not her way, you know, if she doesn't be standing there at the foot of the bed when the light is going out."

"And you're quite sure you're not afraid to die?"

"Afraid? Afraid of what, said I; and it is something to go before God with your senses about you."

"That's true," said Martin, gravely. "Now, about your will. Where is it?"

"There in the cupboard, such as it is," said the patient.

Father Martin went over, and after some careful searching amongst old receipts and rubbish, he found the will. It was written on a sheet of notepaper, and ran thus:

"In the name of God, Amen. I, Timothy Hurley, make my last will and testament. I leave my dear friends, Father Martin Hughes and Father Pat Casey, £50 each for Masses for my soul, to be said at once. *Bisidat qui citodit.* I leave my successor £50 for the poor of the parish. *Dispersit, dedit pauperibus.* I leave the Reverend Mother of the Presentation convent, Limerick, £100 for the children of the convent schools. *Sintra parvulis ad me centro.* I leave the Superiors of the Good Shepherd, Limerick, £100 for her poor penitents. *Erravit sicut ovis qui perit.* I leave my parish, with the Bishop's consent, to Father Pat Casey, because he's a silent man, and knows how to consume his own smoke. And my Breviary I leave to Father Luke Delmege, with the parting advice: Hold your head high, and always put a good valuation on yourself! My soul I leave to Almighty God and His Blessed Mother, for they have the best right to it. Signed: 'TIMOTHY HURLEY, 'Parish Priest of Gortagoshel.'"

Father Martin read the document without a smile. Then—

"There are a good many legacies here, Tim. Now, where's all the wealth lodged?"

thing, as I suspected."

"But did the Bishop order us, under pain of suspension, to make our wills in three months from the retreat?" said Father Tim, struggling with the fading breath.

"Of course. But that supposed you had something to leave. You have been very generous with nothing, Tim."

"Well, I thought sure that a full measure is better than an empty sack. And sure, if there's nothing there, they can get nothing."

"Pat and I will take care of the the Masses, whatever," said Father Martin.

"God bless you, Martin. I knew you would."

"I'm afraid, Tim, the Bishop will hardly admit that you have the right of presentation to your parish."

"Well, to tell you the truth, Martin, I never thought he would. But he's fond of a joke; and I said to myself: 'Well, now, Tim, when His Lordship hears this, he'll clap his hands and say, that's a good joke, and I won't balk him.'"

"Ah! but the preaching," said Martin.

"Look here, now, Martin, there's too much preaching altogether. If there's anything I'm sorry for, it is that I talked too much. Sure, 'tisn't the water that runs down the river that turns the mill, but the water that's caught in the mill race."

"That's true, Tim," said Martin; "but Bishops want men to preach, and if you remember your Selva, you know that it is laid down as the first duty of a parish priest."

"And you think the Bishop won't heed the joke?" said Father Tim, faintly.

"I fear not," said Father Martin. "He has been very hard on poor Pat for that same thing."

There was a long pause, during which the breath of the dying priest came only in gasps and sobs. Then for a moment it became easier.

"Yes, Tim."

"Mart! I'd go to leave you something, but the poor priest, with a sob, 'I wouldn't doubt you, Tim,' said Father Martin.

"Mart! we were always good friends."

"Always, Tim."

"Mart! I'm glad to see you some-thing, but the poor priest, with a sob, 'I wouldn't doubt you, Tim,' said Father Martin.

"Here Martin became quite as affected as his friend.

"I won't take her, but on one condition," he said.

"What is it, Mart?"

"That you throw Tony into the bargain."

"God bless you, Mart! I knew I could depend on you."

Here it may be remarked that Tiny and Tony had been baptized in a Christian manner and with Christian names. They were the children of a young medical doctor who had come down to Gortagoshel, and after a desperate fight had secured a dispensary worth £100 a year. When he had secured this prize, and at the cost of his life, he was himself another prize, this time a real one, in the shape of a young wife, brought up in a Dublin hot-house of luxury and ease, and suddenly transferred to this Libya of the seashore. But they were very happy together, and very much happier when Christina was baptized on Christmas Day; and a year later when Anthony was placed under the direct patronage of his mother's favourite saint.

For she had a great devotion to St. Anthony, and always sealed her dainty letters with the mysterious S. A. G. Then one day the cloud came down. The young doctor took typhus fever in a mountain cabin and died. And the young mother could not be kept back from him even by the exceeding love she bore her children; but she, too, sickened and died. And she was straining between God and her bairns, it was Father Tim that took loose that sweet spirit for God by taking on himself the duty of father and protector of the motherless ones.

"Sure 'tis as easy to fill two mouths as one," he said; and they came home with him and grew into his soft and affectionate heart.

"I'm afraid not. He generally leads, you know."

"If I hear him yelling, Martin, and if I see him twisting his head around to see are the people admiring him, 'Never mind him, Tim. He won't trouble you, I'll promise you.'"

"Martin."

"Would you read one of the psalms for me?"

"Which, Tim?"

"The *Benedic*—Martin. 'Twas you introduced me to it."

Father Martin took up the time-stained Breviary, and read that glorious psalm. He was murmuring along verse after verse, until he came to 'Quoniam miseratur pater florum, miseratus est Dominus timentibus se; quoniam ipse cognovit figmentum nostrum. Recordatus est quoniam pulvis sumus; homo, sicut loann, dies ejus; tanquam flos agris, sic efflorebit.'"

"Martin."

"My mind was wandering when I spoke about Daly. Give me another absolution."

Martin imparted the Sacrament again. Then, after a pause, Father Tim said:

"Martin."

"Yes, Tim."

"Are you here?"

"Yes, Tim."

"My sight—is leaving me. But—didn't I—tell you, Martin?"

"What?"

"That the—Blessed Virgin—would come for me?"

"You did, Tim."

"There—she—is, Martin!"

"Where?" said Father Martin, staring wildly.

"Look—there—over her—picture. Yes," he said, speaking to the invisible, "I'm ready. Never—refuse—a good—friend."

And Martin was alone in the room.

There was a vast gathering at the obsequies of Father Daly did chant the *Antiphona*; and the most magnificent music of the Catholic ritual service; and I am afraid he did twist his head around sometimes to see the effect on his audience, but the silent sinner made no sign. These things were of no concern to him now or forevermore.

When the white ring of the ascetic's grave after the singing of the *Benedic* was all assembled only the dead priest and Father Martin remained, and the people closed around the coffin.

And then a great weeping; the men stood silently weeping; the women were demonstrative in their outbursts of sorrow. Some knelt and beat the earth with their open palms; some lifted hands to heaven; all cried: "God be with him that is gone!" And you could hear strange stories narrated of his goodness and self-sacrifice; and his wisdom had passed into a proverb amongst a proverb-loving people.

"Many's the time he said to me: 'God is good; and He said He would.'"

"Ay, indeed, 'A stout heart for a long road,' 'I used to say, 'Darby, we wanted the pleasant work for our spirits up.'"

"Well, uncle, much as I should like to be your companion, and the quiet country life would have many attractions for me, I am called elsewhere."

"Mother can manage without you now, my dear child," he said. "And suppose you were to form a respectable alliance by marriage, she would have to dispense with your services."

"It is not mother that needs me, but uncle," she said, weeping softly, "but poor Louis."

"Then you have heard something to cause great apprehension?" said the Canon. "I thought that Louis was promising to have a most respectable—"

He did not finish the diplomatic phrase. It hurt his conscience.

"I don't know," said Barbara; "but I have presentiments, and I am anxious."

"You don't think he has any tendency now towards—ah—well, evil companionship?"

"I don't know," she murmured. "London is a dangerous place."

"You would not suspect that he had any leaning towards—ah—I can hardly express myself," said the Canon, blandly, "towards—well—intoxicating drinks?"

"I hardly dare think on the subject," she said.

"And, of course," said the Canon, with that consummate diplomacy in which he considered himself past master, "it never entered into your mind that—that—ah—he might have—it is only a—suppositious case, you know—ah—contemplated self-destruction?"

"Oh! uncle! uncle!" cried Barbara, in a paroxysm of grief, "why did you not tell me sooner? Oh! Louis, Louis! I shall never forgive myself."

The Canon was greatly troubled. He hated scenes. They disturbed his equanimity, and left his nerves tingling for hours after. And he felt how unreasonable it was of Barbara not to have accepted his diplomatic suggestions in a diplomatic manner. Women are so unreasonable; their intuitions and instincts rush so far ahead of reason.

Now, Barbara, this is unreasonable, and not at all—ah—what I expected from you. A young lady brought up as you have been should have acquired—ah—more composure of manner."

"But, uncle dear, if what you have hinted at were only remotely possible it would be dreadful beyond endurance. Poor Louis! we have not treated him well!"

"Now, now, Barbara, please let us not continue the painful subject. I am not well. I am depressed, and—ah—these harrowing subjects are really—well—embarrassing."

"I'm sure I'm so sorry, uncle; but when could I go?"

"Well, dear," the Canon said, his natural benevolence conquering, "I think you are right. Indeed, I must say now that I suggested to your—ah—excellent mother months ago that Louis—ah—needed a protecting hand."

"Mother never told me—Oh! dear! Oh! dear!" sobbed Barbara, in her agony.

"Well I never mind, child; there is no harm done. You can make preparations at once; and leave for London as soon as—ah—you are able."

"Oh! thanks, dear uncle," said Barbara, "I shall leave to-night, with your permission. And you mustn't think me ungrateful, dear uncle, to leave you until you are quite beyond convalescence. But, you know—"

"Quite enough, Barbara," he said. "I understand you my child. I shall give you money for your journey; and there is a most estimable young—friend—or—rather parishioner of mine in London—a young priest—I think, by the way, you met him here at one time."

"You mean Father Delmege, uncle," she exclaimed. "Oh, yes, he has been very kind to Louis—that is, I mean, I think he has been—"

"Well, I shall give you a letter to that estimable young clergyman, and ask him to help you in the—ah—exceedingly arduous task you have undertaken."

There was silence for a few minutes.

"And, Barbara!" exclaimed the Canon.

"Yes, uncle dear."

"If you thought well of it, perhaps you might deem it—ah—prudent to bring Louis back to Ireland—"

other lodgers a few days later that "he hanged had come half the way from Hiredland to the purring gentleman," and that her honest conscience was at rest. And Barbara was very happy, for things were not altogether so bad as she had dreaded; and she knew that she had a great friend in London—the Rev. Luke Delmege.

And the Canon had a letter from his Bishop to the effect that his Lordship was promoting his curate, the Rev. Patrick Casey, to a parish in a far part of the diocese; and that he was sending him another curate. Who will say that a Bishop cannot enjoy a joke? Well, half-way! For Father Pat did not succeed to Gortagoshel, as his good friend wished; yet he got his incumbency at last, and he owes his benefice to that stray joke that found its way into the most absurd and informal will that even a Lord Chancellor could devise.

TO BE CONTINUED.

LITTLE KATIE O'CONNOR.

"Your sister will have to be removed to the hospital to-morrow," said Dr. Lawton, drawing on his gloves and glancing sympathetically at the pale-faced young man in the invalid chair, whom he was addressing.

"I know it will be rather hard on you," continued the physician, "when you cannot be near her all the time to know every minute just how the case progresses. But this is a very slow malady she is booked for, and the changes come at lengthy intervals, so you can be kept informed by telephone exactly as well as if you were at her bedside. She has typhoid fever, with the serious complication of a sort of nervous breakdown, and the hospital is the only place where she can have really proper treatment and anything like hope of ultimate recovery can be assured. If she were to remain here, it would be necessary to have a trained nurse and relief in constant attendance, and even then conditions would not be nearly so favorable as in a situation where ventilation, temperature and everything else is regulated—can be regulated on an exacting program. But cheer up, Mr. Hathaway, the young lady has a good constitution, and is just the age to be able to hold her own almost against any odds. With proper care, you may expect to have her home with you in from six weeks to two months more."

The youth who listened to the pronouncement sat alone a few minutes later gazing out through the gathering shadows of an early spring evening over a very dreary scene. The view within his range of vision was chiefly dingy house-tops, near at hand ill-kept back yards and alleys, with huge rubbish heaps here and there, and no break in the dismal monotony.

But dreary as the scene was without, in the perspective of the observer's mental view there were discomfort and gloom yet more disheartening. His wife, a cripple, had been thus for now five years, was entirely dependent on his cheerful, robust sister, Margaret, who was four years his senior. At fourteen this only brother had, by an accident, been thrown helpless on the girl's hands. But she was equal to the occasion. At the time she was just completing a course in a business college, and obtaining employment at a fair salary, she had been able to maintain a respectable and even cozy home for the two ever since.

But the girl's income, with the tax upon it constantly, never permitted any attempt at saving, so that when she was now stricken with grave illness there were no funds on hand and no means in prospect to provide the necessities required. "Margaret must go to the hospital," the doctor had said. "Yes, as a charity patient," the brother, with tears in his eyes, reflected. And he left alone! What was he to do? Where was the rent for their little flat to come from, not to speak of the food and assistance in various ways which he would of course daily require?

He could hear his sister in the adjoining room tossing about restlessly and muttering at intervals the fever grew in her opening eyes. The darkness gathered like a mantle about him in the room where he sat, but, ah, it was a cold, comfortless garment, yes, a shroud. Yet he would accept that gladly if it only meant release from the torture he was suffering. But, no, this was an appareling for a living death. Oh, why was he so helpless? Why was he, a man, almost twenty years of age, helpless than a young child? He beat his head with his clenched hands, wept and moaned in intense misery.

Suddenly a movement at the door attracted his attention. It was a stealthy movement, and almost noiselessly the knob was turned, the door pushed gently inward and a little girl's head thrust through the opening.

"Oh, you are in the dark, Mr. Hatway," said a little voice. "Shall I come in and make a light for you? I can make a light, Mr. Hatway. I can light the gas and a lamp, too. You needn't be afraid; I will take care of the match. Mamma often lets me; she says I do it just as rice as can be. Mamma sent me up to see if Miss Maggie wants anything. She will be up herself by and by, mamma will say to you, 'but I don't need a light just yet. Come in, little one, and see if you can see Margaret. Perhaps she is awake and may have a message to send your mother. If she is asleep, don't disturb her.' In a few minutes the little girl, a child of about eight years, tiptoed out of the bedroom."

"She is asleep," she said, "and she didn't speak to me. Oh, you sick, too, Mr. Hatway? You look just as though you were crying." "Well, that is very silly, I suppose, for a big man like me. Your mamma will soon be coming up here, will she not, dear? When she comes, if she finds me asleep, tell her not to mind me; I guess I will get along all right to-night somehow."

Little Katie O'Connor, daughter of the kind-hearted janitress of the building, went down to her basement home,

anxious to secure to her mother in a great her busy mind was

"Oh, mamma, I know, I believe, Mr. and I want you to be supported. He says he has been crying, I must be hungry, I think?"

"Well, he might O'Connor, smiling at this time of day about a thing like doctoring his sister's sickness. He will fix him up a little bit of tea and to him, one thing at a time, he will not seem. He will find of tea all right, any of So in a very little good fairy Katie had visting repast spread table beside the girl. To satisfy the child's awakened appetite the food, he ate and

"Now, I hope you, Mr. Hatway," said ant, as she removed am going to ask Miss Margaret in row, and will be too, if you want me. "In the prayer young man. "Why dear? I am afraid stand."

"Why, you see, in her tidying performance when we know any body tells Sister A's prayers; these were together—and, of course, or have something of something awful been expecting."

"Why, that is Lester Hathaway momentarily light countenance. "I Margaret and me, too, if you do get well and I happen."

"You are sure want if you stay later, too, Sister says, again, arrested. "Mamma told me Catholic and the prayers like ours, catechism you, Mary and say it is. It is real short, sure to get what you"

"Certainly, dear man. "By all means book with the priest and say it can be sure, if it will good you promise heart would be best."

So Katie O'Connor thumbed catechism spread it on the chair, pointing out the subject of study the young man, body and heart, client afforded sufficient diversion of his benefit.

"That night the confidential janitress, when tiptoed up to see what and his fever-racked, to rest. The interview was a pro-nor's part to the doctor with the two invalids, and can know what the sick girl's under the circumstances. When the doctor the recital of different aspects cheerily told anxious brother able to find good care for the girl; for her one endowed refuge which nearly ever."

All day long the young man, who occupied the room, ministering to whose requirements very light indeed with apprehension, developed future joy the great pressure. He was five needed, wanting the kind hand of charity from the touch blow."

From time to time took up little and dog-eared, tions and answers he did this himself by and to the extent of chapters, saying declare, if I would more about the doctrines it treated. As he had fraters, he grasped she pro read it over then repeated and devotion in his depression. "Holy Mary, us sinners now—in this