

are noble and heroic. Many cases of the kind have come under my own eye—two in my own family—which are as deserving of immortality as were the acts of the brave daughter of the exiles of Siberia.

A. H. D.

A FRIEND IN NEED.

It was close to 3 o'clock in the afternoon when Amos Garner returned from luncheon. He was a busy man, and lunched when he caught the favorable moment. The gates of a great mercantile establishment weighed heavily on his shoulders. He showed the bairn in his seamed and knotted face. He was not reckoned a kindly or a sympathetic man, and his appearance, his sharp glance, his hooked nose and his aggressive chin bore out the popular opinion.

As he entered his private office he brushed by two young men who were seated on a settee near the door. One of the two was a mere boy, of nineteen, perhaps, a plain-faced young fellow who manifestly shrank back as the older youth took him by the arm and led him into Amos Garner's room. The great merchant was hanging up his heavy coat as they entered. He turned quickly and looked at the pair.

"Mr. Garner," said the older youth "we have a little business to transact with you, and will make it as brief as possible." The merchant looked at them sharply, and then seated himself at his desk and drummed nervously on the polished surface before him.

"Business of interest to me?" he asked, with lowered brows. "Yes," replied the older of the two. "Make it brief," said the merchant, and pointed to seats.

The older youth drew his chair close to the desk, the boy sitting in the shadow, a little behind him. "Mr. Garner," said the older youth, "I was on my way to Buffalo last night by boat. I saw this boy in the cabin writing, and his actions, his trembling hands, the tears in his eyes drew me to him. I knew he was in trouble."

The merchant raised his head a little and cast a sharp glance toward the boy. But the latter had drawn back behind his companion, and was quite shielded from view.

"I watched the boy," the speaker proceeded, "and when he had finished his writing and placed the sheets in addressed envelopes and left them lying on the table, I picked them up and hurried after him as he ascended to the deck. I was close behind him when he threw down his hat and clambered on the rail. I drew him back. I did my best to calm him, and presently he told me his story, and I gave him the best advice I could."

The merchant listened for a moment to have a better look at the speaker. "Are you quite sure this interests me?" he said.

"Quite sure," replied the older youth gravely. "One of the letters written by this unfortunate boy is addressed to you; the other was to have been forwarded to his invalid sister. The boy was running away, sir, running away from you; and then, when he saw a faint glimmer of hope, he determined to end his troubles at once and forever. He sees things in a different light now, and the first train from Buffalo brought him back here to tell you."

"That's very thoughtful of him," said the great merchant, grimly. "Here is the letter," said the older youth.

The merchant took the envelope and stared at the address. "It is a very pretty story," he said with a half smile.

"It's a very ugly story," said the older youth. "Of course, I am to understand that this young fellow has been stealing either my money or my stock," the merchant went on.

"The letter will tell you that he has embezzled \$200," said the older youth. "Then it's a case for the police," said the merchant, and his hand reached for the electric button at the side of his desk.

Then he hesitated, his gaze meeting that of the older youth, whose eyes were gentle and yet steady and fearless. He slowly drew back.

"I ought to send for an officer at once," he growled. "But you will not," said the older youth.

The merchant raised his heavy eyebrows and stared at the speaker again. "What's the boy's name?" he asked.

"John Heathcote." "Where was he employed?" "He was assistant in the cashier's department." "What was his salary?" "Ten dollars a week." "And did he do with it?" "Supported himself and an invalid sister. He had bills to collect last week, and he failed to turn in all his collections."

"What did he do with the stolen money?" "It went into a bucket shop. He was turned into it by some of his fellow clerks. He didn't know the danger, and the stories they told him of sudden gains turned his head. He lost from the start, and it was the attempt to retrieve these early losses that swelled the defalcations."

"That's an old story," said the grim merchant. "Painfully told and painfully true," asserted the young man. "There is a proposition, I suppose," growled the merchant.

"There is." "Before the old man could pursue his queries there was a rap at the door. "Come in," said the merchant. A clerk entered. "The gentleman from Atlanta, who desired to see you at 3 o'clock, is here, sir," he said.

"Tell him I'm engaged this afternoon," said the old man. "I will see him at 9 o'clock to-morrow morning." "He wished me to say that he will be obliged to return home to-night, sir."

"If he can't see me at 9, let him write," said the merchant sharply, and the clerk withdrew.

Then the grim old man turned back to the youth. "B'fore we go any further in this matter," he said, "I want to know what interest you have in it."

"An interest that has nothing to do with dollars and cents," said the youth with a little smile.

The old man shook his head doubtfully. "Friend of the sister's, perhaps?" "I have never seen her," he said.

"But why should you stick by the boy?" "Because he needs a friend," said the young man simply, and stretched his arm back and laid his hand on the hand of the boy.

The boy, crouching behind his friend uttered a quick sob. "Stop that," said the old merchant, sharply. "We can't have any disturbance here."

There was a little silence. "What's your proposition?" he abruptly asked.

"It's very simple," replied the man. "We propose that you take back this errand boy, and that you give him the chance to pay back the amount he has taken. Let him pay a part of his salary each week until the delinquency is wiped out. In the meantime you hold that letter as proof of his misdeed."

The old merchant frowned. "That would be establishing a very bad precedent," he growled. "There is one other condition," the young man went on. "The affair is to remain a profound secret, known to no one outside of this room."

The old man opened his eyes. "Are you awake to the fact that I am considered a hard man?" he slowly asked. "Haven't you heard that most of my five hundred employees regard me as a soulless tyrant?"

"I have learned to distrust popular opinion in these personal matters," replied the young man. "My own father has been held up to the world as an example of heartless greed and cunning and villainy, when I know he is the best of men."

But the old merchant did not heed his words. He was looking at the boy's letter. "In the first place," he said, "we might as well destroy this. It could make trouble in the future. And besides the envelope and its contents in fragments. Then he looked up. "Boy," he said, "come here. The lad arose and stepped to the desk. The old man looked him over. "You may go back to your place," he said. "Each Saturday afternoon you will bring me \$2 from your salary. If I find that you are idle and ambitious, you may rest assured that I will recall the fact in a practical way. Should your sister notice that your salary is apparently decreased, you may say to her that you are investing it in a sinking fund by my personal advice. That is all. Return to your work, and tell the cashier that you were detained by me."

"Thank you, sir," said the boy, broadly.

"I fancy your thanks are all due to this smiling Samaritan here," said the old man. "He has saved both your life and your honor, and if you ever forget it, you are—well, certainly not the boy I am willing to aid."

The old man caught the young man's hand and pressed it, and then hurried from the room.

"One moment," said the old merchant, as his visitor arose. "If you are not employed or wish a change, I would be glad to offer you a place."

"Thank you," said the young man, "but I am as well satisfied with my present place as I ever hope to be with any form of labor. I'm a natural idler, you know."

The old man shook his head as though he doubted this, and there was a wistful look in his eyes as he regarded the young man.

"I regret that you cannot come," he said. "I would like to have you near me. You are a very unusual sort of young man. But you'll promise me one thing—you'll come in to see me from time to time, won't you?"

With pleasure, replied the visitor. "It will give me a chance to inquire after my progress. And from what he told me, I think I would like to know more about his invalid sister."

He looked at the old man and smiled. "Perhaps we might do something to make her dull life a little brighter."

The old man nodded as if in answer to an appeal. "I feel sure we can," he said. Then he put out his hand. "Before you go I want to know your name."

"Greer, Dunning Greer," replied the young man. "Greer," repeated the old man. "You said something a moment ago about your father. I didn't quite catch the remark. Is he the railway king?" "He has been called so," Dunning replied.

"Understand me," said the old man, "I don't think any more of you on this account."

"Way should you?" cried Dunning lightly. "At times I have found it positive handicap. A rich man's son gets credit for very little useful behavior in this prejudiced world. It is quite discouraging."

But he laughed as he said it. "Thank God that riches haven't spoiled you," said the old man solemnly.

And their hands met in a warm clasp. That evening Dunning critically stared at himself in the glass in his hotel room.

"Well, Dunning, my boy," he said to his smiling reflection, "you missed an important business engagement in Buffalo, and what is worse, you don't look as though you regretted it in the least. You are quite a hopeless case, old fellow. Good night."—From an Exchange.

Among your good works during the holy season of Lent, don't fail to include a little exertion in behalf of "the perpetual mission."

THE LENTEN SEASON.

The season of fast and prayer has opened and with it comes the awe and suspense which it ever brings. The heart of a Catholic is moved to the depths as he feels the hand of the priest signing his forehead in the form of a cross with blessed ashes and saying those suggestive words, "Remember, man, that thou art dust and into dust thou wilt return." Prayer is to take place of pleasure, and fast and abstinence are to supplant even lawful indulgence, for the world is asked to think of the passion and death of its Saviour who went up to Jerusalem to be crucified.

If we be men of faith we will follow our Lord day by day in spirit for the forty days of this holy season in His suffering which culminated with His crucifixion. Behold Him bearing the cross made heavy by our sins; we see Him consulting the weeping woman of Jerusalem and bidding them weep not for Him, but for their children; we see Him buffeted, struck and spat upon; we see Him crowned with thorns, and finally raised upon the cross, nailed to it and dying upon it. If we have hearts of gratitude we shall thank our Lord every day during this season of recollection and prayer for all His underwent to save us, and we shall try to suffer something for Him in sign of our thankfulness and strive to make effectual to our souls all that He underwent for their redemption. Our Lord appeals to our sympathies in the weakness of poor humanity and says: "O all ye who pass this way look and see if there is sorrow such as is My sorrow."

It is most touching to hear this plaint of our divine Lord, and he who is not moved is simply a man without faith. Such a one may knock compunction in his breast, for his heart is a heart of stone, before he can arise at the appreciation of the awful depths of sin's abyss and the greatness of the love of God and His magnanimity in atoning for sin at the price of the death of His divine Son. It is sad to realize how callous of all feeling one who gives himself up to the corruption of his passions can become.

Lent is God's grace to the sinner, and wise will be if he avails himself of it. It may be his last chance—it must be for many. It is, indeed, the acceptable time, the day of salvation that will never come again for thousands and hundreds of thousands. God is patient, but there must be a limit to His patience. The cup of His wrath is almost filled for the sinner and soon will overflow, unless His mercy be availed of. His justice must prevail, then, who beside the man that falls under His wrath.

It is not only the sinner that must strive to respond to the command of Holy Church to make a good Lent, but all men must enter into its spirit and do what they can by observing it. We are all sinner in the sight of God, and this the holy scriptures declare when they say if any man says "he is without sin, he is a liar and the truth is not in him." We must immerse ourselves against falling into grievous sin by the rigors of fast on our body and the spiritualizing discipline of prayer on our soul if we may hope to successfully beat back the obstacles to our salvation. We are all weak in the presence of temptation and unless the grace of God comes to our assistance we must all sooner or later fall away. But co-operation on our part is necessary. We must do what we can, for, as Augustine says, "God will not create us without ourselves will not redeem us without ourselves." It was that same saint who said there is no sin that another man has committed but what I myself would have committed unless helped and sustained by the grace of God.

We should be glad to do something for our divine Lord who did so much for us. He fasted and prayed for forty days and nights in the desert to teach us that we should fast and pray. He showed the apostles that if they would dislodge evil spirits from the souls of men, it could only be done by fasting, and He bade us pray and pray always. "Pray without ceasing," lest we fall into temptation. It should be our joy to mortify and deny ourselves, to suffer even, for Him who underwent every privation and humiliation for us, even to the death of the cross, and this we should do with the preparation that we do it quietly and unostentatiously without speaking about it, by keeping it as far as possible from the notice of men, for it is not their notice we seek, but the love and the mercy of God.

Fasting is difficult and impracticable for some, but all can and should pray, and prayer is really the best part of penance. It is, as it were, its fruits, and it was in this vein that our Lord said, "Unless ye do penance you all will perish."

Let us, then, from the first days of this holy season nerve ourselves to mortification and recollection. We can all do something and should do something for our souls. We can mortify our senses as well as our appetites. We can pray and attend the public devotions in our churches; we can deny ourselves of luxuries; we can, in a word, do a hundred things to please God and gain His favor and which will be of benefit to our souls.

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prove for us the means of improving our souls and making them strong to fight and to conquer in the struggle we must make for our soul's salvation.— Bishop Colton in Catholic Union and Times.

EFFECT OF CATHOLIC INFLUENCE.

Addressing a recent Inter-American convention on "The Problem of the City," Bishop Walton of Oakland paid the following remarkable tribute to the Catholic Church: "I want to ask you, how we could take care of the millions of foreign born who come to our cities, how our police forces could handle them and control them, were it not for the conservative influence of the Roman Catholic Church? It is to these people a leading factor. In itself it is a great police power. I don't want to challenge you Protestants, but it is a fact that the Roman Catholic Church holds its children closer than any other? And so long as this is so its influence is most important in dealing with the problem of the cities."

The late utterance of Bishop Walton of Oakland, praising the conservative influence of the Catholic Church over the foreign elements in this country, and admitting frankly the ability of the same to come into close touch with her people, has been the subject of comment and the occasion for much favorable criticism. The approval of this church dignitary, who evidently is a man of good judgment and of much zeal, should be taken seriously by the members present at the Inter-American convention. The Bishop's tribute is not the first of the kind that has come from non-Catholic sources. The complaint has gone forth from these pulpits time and again touching on the non-attendance at meetings and religious exercises, and frequently by way of contrast and as a rebuke to non-Catholic indifference the Catholic attendance has been held up as a notable example and exception. The Ministerial associations have puzzled their brains over means and methods, have devised various schemes to attract the general public, and it seems with only spasmodic results. Some have made of their churches theatres, almost club rooms, some dance, and still do, sensational advertising, and carefully selected frequent them in the same spirit as they would a show, and bring of one sort of acrobatics and juggling, reserve their attention for a new bill. When one house does not furnish this variety in church vaudeville they patronize another. This applies to the matter of church attendance.

Religion represents dignity, stability, serenity, and when a man goes to a church it is that he may derive good from it, that he may be set again in the right path, that his soul may feel in the company of the holy, that his dormant spirits may be awakened and seek consolation and strength in the promises of his God. When preachers seek themselves; when their pulpits become a distracting center for local political agitation; when, to attract crowds, instead of becoming teachers cum potestatis habentes, they servilely pander to ephemeral tastes; when, to appear learned, they give up on Sunday their thoughts, furtherings of the work from encyclopedias on science, whether that science be higher criticism, anthropological or geological or social; when, instead of preaching the saving beauty of Christ's doctrine, they, whilst pretending to be Christian, try to smother the very foundations of the edifice—how can they expect the serious world to take them seriously? When Catholics attend Mass on Sundays, they feel it is an obligation. They say, "I must go, for, as our Lord in His House of God, sanctified by His presence in the Eucharist, that the preacher's efforts are only part of a sublime series of religious ceremonies. They do not attend because they expect the latest in the sensational line, but because it is the proper place to find new inspirations for a week of stern duties. If it should happen that the priest, in his address, is more of a Franciscan than an aspirer of Catholic teaching, they overlook him as an idiosyncrasy and a minor attraction in the course of their attendance. The eloquence of the pulpit is as much appreciated by Catholics as by non-Catholics. They feel as much as others that a golden tongue finds the perfection of expression in expounding the Word of God. They also appreciate the solemn and elevating character of the music, the majesty of ceremonies; that of these aspects of the religious chief object is to visit Christ really present in His Sacrament and render Him the homage of adoration. The world thinks more deeply than it is given credit for doing. It will chase after rainbows for a while, and idle away the hours among playthings, but eventually the deep sense of conviction will assert itself and a realization of sterner realities recall it to a study of serious problems from a serious standpoint. Then, if it does not strike them down it turns its back on puppets and do a amount of coaxing and whisking will draw its attention. We do not mean here to make a universal reflection on non-Catholic pulpit oratory, for they have had in this country men of giant world and heroic bearing, serious, zealous, deep thinking men, but we are not afraid to assert also that there is a superficiality, a tendency to self-seeking, to sensationalism, which is a disgrace to religion. These are pygmies, of course, in an intellectual and moral sense, who thus prostitute their art, but when pygmies in a family become too numerous, it is likely to affect the standing of the full grown under the same name.—Intermountain Catholic.

God divides our work; He reckons the hours of the day; He proportions our labor to our strength. The task which He gives us, each morning, is all that it concerns us to know. Why will you look out for and take up, beforehand, the burden which is to be yours to-morrow?

THE CHURCH A CHARACTER BUILDER.

The Catholic Church is, indeed, the mistress and fosterer of the arts and sciences; she has done this, a great work, in refining and civilizing the races of the world. But she possesses a greater power still as the builder of character, the moulder of men's minds on the lines of noble action, of resolute endeavor, and of practical well-being. She teaches men to dare to say no to the tempter and to be willing to curb their appetites and passions according to the laws of God.

This power on her part is very necessary; because a love of beauty, a sense of refinement, a life devoted to the arts and sciences, would, nevertheless, be but failure, if the character, the true character, of the man who wrote, painted, idealized, were a bad or a selfish one, following its own aims with no regard for the commandments of One nobler than himself, the divine and eternal God.

A notable illustration of this power in the Catholic Church to uphold character is to be found in the way her children attend Mass. Over and over again have non-Catholics been impressed by the throngs of worshippers who on a Sunday morning assemble in the cathedral. Still more impressed would these non-Catholics be, if they were, for one Sunday only, to watch what goes on, from five or six in the morning until noon, in these holy places. Again and again does an entering throng meet an outgoing throng; perhaps two Masses are being said, one up-stairs, the other down-stairs; men, women, children, some and go as if on some accustomed, quiet errand. The church is, possibly, not a very attractive one in appearance; or, on the other hand, it may be very beautiful; there may be fine music, or there may be none at all; there may be a sermon, or it may be that the reading of the announcements and the Gospel takes the place of a sermon. But, ask the people why they come, and they will tell you, not to hear a sermon, or to meet their friends, or to listen to the music, but to hear Mass; and to hear Mass is the Church's law, her obligation laid upon them. These people are fulfilling a positive duty; and every positive duty that a man fulfils helps to build up character in that man.

So in regard to fasting and abstinence; one man may like to eat fish and another man may dislike it; that is not the question. The root of the matter is obedience to law, to divine command; we are forbidden to eat meat on fast days and days of abstinence; we may eat fish then, but we are not obliged to do so; but we must not eat meat unless lawfully dispensed for sick men or the like. Why? Because God's Church says "no." She speaks to us now, as God spoke to Adam and Eve in the garden: "Of the fruit of this tree you shall not eat." We can disobey—yes; and we can obey; and by the ob-

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process our strength to do God's will increases, by the other it falls.

So with the Church's laws on marriage and divorce—she speaks out steadily and fearlessly, in order to check and curb the license abroad in our evil world. She believes and teaches that something better romance, passion, money, position, must enter into the marriage tie; and that something is duty, it is law, it is commandment, it is the will of God. She forbids divorce; she safeguards the young; she makes a firm and strong stand against a lawless and unbending world; she upholds character, because she teaches husband and wife to take up life's daily cross and to carry it patiently and steadfastly into the end.

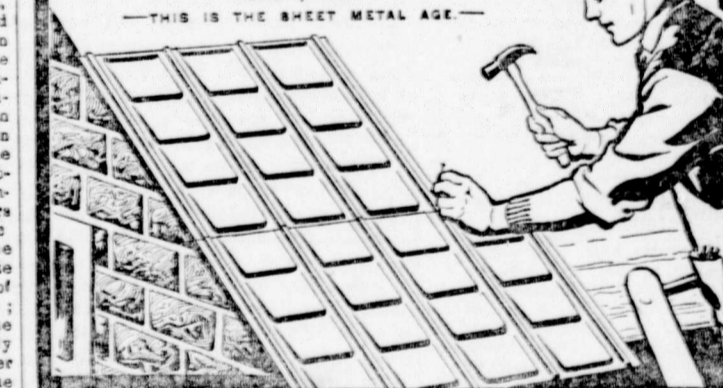
The Church brings her children to confession—to humble themselves, to reveal themselves, to do penance, and to make restitution and promise of amendment. She makes it an obligation to support our Church; not to depend on whim or fancy but to do our duty; and behold, the glorious things that have been done by these weakly nites, the penitents and dimes contributed in answer to the Church's law, and announced at Christmas or Easter, or on other special occasions.

Thus is the Church a character-builder, and she is thus a true mother to the children of God.—Sacred Heart Review.

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