

Dillon you fired ten years ago do you? Well, that's me."

Jim Devine never flinched. This was not the first time he had faced such a situation. Dillon started toward him. But like a flash Devine shipped something from his pocket and the next moment the enraged Tom was looking into the blue-steel barrel of a "Forty-five."

In an even tone Devine said: "Now, Dillon, drop that knife and march along to the cashier's office and I'll fire you the second time in ten years."

And Dillon marched until they reached the cashier's office where Devine turned him over to one of the many guards around the shops. As the burly guard was ushering him out of the room Tom heard Devine's voice. "So she's finished. We'll have steam up, and tell the dispatcher to have the tracks to Tarrytown clear. I'll leave the yards about four-thirty."

Tom Dillon started to pace the streets. His anger crazed brain was intoxicated with that one passion—to get Devine. To obtain dynamite he knew was impossible at this time of night. But that moment his fingers encountered something within his pocket. He drew the object forth. A switch key! Devine in his coolness had forgotten something. Suddenly his mind began to work rapidly. Devine had said he was going to take 5960 to Tarrytown at four-thirty. He wanted a clear track. That meant a throttle wide open. He stopped short. If 5960 should hit the open switch—But what switch? He pondered industriously. How about the old quarry siding on the other side of Southport? Just the one. The quarry, long abandoned, the railroad company had allowed the siding that dipped down into the pit to go unrepaired. If a heavy engine running at full speed should hit such a dilapidated bit of track and on such a steep grade death and destruction would be the result.

Somewhere a clock tolled the hour of three. Dillon started through the deserted streets, for the quarry was a good mile away. As he hurried through the still, cold darkness of that early spring morning his mind evolved with surprising rapidity the unfinished details of the sinister plan. His familiarity with the surrounding country stood him in good hand. There were no bridges near by, consequently no guards would hamper him. Everything seemed set. And then he remembered—the block signal. Every time a switch is thrown the signal automatically drops, thus warning approaching trains of the danger. How could he eliminate this barrier? He pondered for some time before he reached a solution. The block he must guard against was about a hundred yards north of a sharp curve around which a southbound train must travel. South of this curve was the quarry switch. He would wait until he heard the engine rounding that curve before throwing the switch.

Thus Devine would approach his fate without warning and with his only avenue of escape closed. He was approaching the edge of the city. It must have been about four o'clock. Already there were traces of gray around night's sable cloak. In a half hour Jim Devine would leave the shop yards of Southport for the last time. Dillon pictured to himself the giant steel monster rounding the curve and a moment later swerving sharply and plunging downward on the inner tain track. He could hear the hiss and roar of escaping steam mingled with the frantic cries of his victim.

But what was this? A building dimly lighted at this hour. St. Paul's Church! The good nuns from the nearby convent were at their morning devotions. Through the half open window floated the murmur of voices, sweet and low. "Out of the depths, have I cried O Thee, O Lord."

The man in the street stopped. Something seemed to paralyze his limbs. What was this strange power? Dillon cursed, called himself a chicken hearted fool, but to no avail. A clock in the tower chimed four. It was growing lighter. He must be on his way. "For with thee there is merciful forgiveness."

What was that? "Merciful forgiveness?" For the first time since his mother's death he was listening to a prayer. His mother! He dismissed her memory. He must go. He must. It was growing lighter and his was a deed that needed the cover of darkness.

He walked swiftly but not swiftly enough to evade the voice of the nuns and his mother's face. Those words rang in his ears until he thought his head would burst. Merciful forgiveness! Bah! He tried to console himself by arguing it out of existence. Foolishness!

He had reached the foot of the embankment. A few moments later he stood above surveying the tracks. Yes, there was a signal block to the north and to the south was the curve. Around that curve lay the switch and—

As he rounded the curve something in the distance caused him to stop short. Figures dimly visible ahead of him! Instinctively he dodged into the underbrush on the side of the roadbed. Thanks to the early morning gloom and his carefulness, Dillon succeeded in advancing within twenty or thirty yards of the men.

There were four of them. Guards? No. They were doing something to the rail. He peered intently

through the dawn. Ah! they were removing a rail. Strikers evidently. Someone else was seeking revenge on Devine. Dillon noticed that he was not the only one who had calculated on felling the block signal. For though the men had moved the rail towards the center of the track they had not severed the wires that connected the block.

Then like a flash the truth dawned upon him. These men had removed that rail with the intention of wrecking the "Express." Ignorant however, were they that the "Express" was late and that Jim Devine would be their victim. A cruel grin overspread his features. What a joke! And perhaps some of those fellows are Devine's own friends.

He might as well go now. There was no need of him remaining here. The quarry switch would not be thrown this morning. Cautiously he began edging away. At last far enough from the scene he stood upright and viewed the city as it lay shrouded in the late dawn of a new day. A faint peal reached his ears. Four thirty. In ten minutes engine 5960 would be a mass of bent and distorted steel and Jim Devine—

Something had caught his eye. From his point of vantage he could see a little white cottage. The home of his mother. Mother! He saw her face before him. She was smiling in her eyes that reproved him. Again the nun's voices in his ears. His mother! Father John! He could not escape. He fled blindly down the embankment. What a ceaseless monitor is conscience!

He saw a group of sobbing children around a swooning mother. Jim Devine's family. Faintly he heard the blast of a whistle. But he had not done anything. Those children!—He must stop that engine.

Up he stumbled. His feet slipped and the undergrowth sought to impede his progress. He would never stop 5960. He must though. He must.

Nearer and nearer came the sound of the approaching locomotive. He was on top now running towards the curve. A shaft of light proclaimed the approach of the engine. Around the curve he ran and there he saw coming towards him, at a terrific rate, the monster.

Frantically he waved his arms at the oncoming engine. It seemed that he would not be seen? Surely Devine must see him. Why did he heed the warning. Still, never slackening its terrific pace, the giant steed rushed toward him. In a fraction of a moment it would be on him. He was beginning to despair. A whistle. Saved!

Then came the swish and hiss of hastily applied air. The momentum caused by the ponderous heap of steel was terrific. The brakes shrieked defiantly. Around the curve swept the engine. Would Devine succeed in bringing it to a standstill in time?

Sixty yards—fifty—forty—thirty. "O God, help him," prayed Dillon. Still the engine moved on. Twenty yards remained. Fifteen. A final triumphant gasp and the wheezing monster stood still not a half a rail length from the gap in the track.

Jim Devine face white and forehead beaded with cold sweat wondered who his deliverer could have been. He was gone now. But a casual observer might have seen him hurrying up the steps of old St. Paul's. The nuns' prayers and Mary Dillon's memory had not only saved Jim Devine from death but had delivered Tom Dillon "out of the depths."—The Pilot.

THE STORY OF CHRIST
BY GIOVANNI PAPINI
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THE BANQUET
Only the clean of heart can enter into the Kingdom. The Kingdom is an eternal feast, and only those dressed for a feast can go there. There was a King who celebrated his son's wedding, and those whom he invited did not come. Then the King called in the common people, the passers-by, the beggars, every one; but when the King came into the banquet hall and saw one of the guests all filthy with grease and mud, he had him cast outside the door, to gnash his teeth in the coldness of night.

At the banquet of the Kingdom if the first called do not come, all are accepted; even the wretched and the sinners. The King had invited first the chosen people; but one had bought a piece of ground, another five yoke of oxen, a third had taken a wife that day. They were all deep in their affairs, and some did not even trouble to send an excuse. Then the King sent his servants to pick up out of the streets the blind, the poor, the maimed and the halt, the lowest of the rabble; and still there was room. Then he commanded that those who passed in front of his palace should be forced to come in, whoever they might be; and the banquet began. It was a royal banquet, a rich and magnificent feast; but after all, it consisted in enjoying lamb and fish, in getting drunk on wine and cider. At the break of day the bonfire was burned out, the tables were cleared, every one had to return to his home and to his poverty. If some of those whom the King first invited preferred another material pleasure to this material pleasure it was pardonable.

But the invitation to the banquet of the Kingdom is a promise of spiritual happiness, absolute, satisfying, perpetual. Something else than the passing amusements of terrestrial life: nauseating drunkenness, fool that distends the stomach, sensual pleasures that leave a man bone-weary and defiled. And yet the men whom Jesus chose among all other men, and called first of all to the divine feast of the reborn, did not respond. They made wry faces, complained, slipped away and continued their habitual low actions. They preferred the rubbish of carnal goods to the splendor of high hope which is the only reasonable reason for living.

Then all the others were called in their place: beggars instead of the rich, sinners instead of Pharisees, women of the streets instead of fine ladies, the sick and sorrowing instead of the strong and happy.

Even the latest arrivals if they come in time will be admitted to the feast. The master of the vineyard saw in the market-place certain laborers who were waiting for work, sent them out to prune his vines, and agreed on their wages. Later at noon-day he saw others without work and sent also those; and still later more again, and he sent them all. And they all worked, some at pruning and some at hoeing, and when the evening came the master gave the same pay to all. But those who had begun in the morning early, murmured, "Why do those who have worked less than we receive the same payment?" But the master answered one of them and said "Didst not thou agree with me for a penny; when then dost thou lament? If it is my pleasure to give the same to the working men of the last hour, is that robbing you others?"

The apparent injustice of the master is only a more generous justice. To all he gives what he has promised, and he who arrived last but works with equal hope has the same right as the others to enjoy that Kingdom for which he has labored until the night.

Woe to him who comes too late! No one knows the exact day, but after that hour he who has not got in will knock at the door, and it will not be opened to him, and he will mourn in outer darkness.

The master has gone to the wedding, and the servants do not know when he will come back. Fortunate are those who have waited for him and whom he will find awake. The master himself will seat them at the table and will serve them. But if he find them sleeping, if no one is ready to receive him, if they make him knock at the door before opening it, if they come to meet him disheveled, tumbled, half-clad, and if he finds in the house no lamp lighted, no water warmed, he will take the servants by the arm and drive them out without pity.

Every one should be ready because the Son of Man is like a thief in the night who sends no word beforehand when he will come. Or like a bridegroom who has been detained by some one in the street. In the house of the bride there are ten virgins who are waiting to go to meet him with the light of the procession. Five, the wise virgins, take oil for their lamps, and wait to hear the voice and the steps of the approaching bridegroom. The other five, the foolish, do not think of the oil, and, tired of waiting, fall asleep. And suddenly there is the sound of the nuptial procession arriving. The five wise virgins

light their lamps and run out into the street joyfully to welcome the bridegroom. The other five wake up with a start and ask their companions to give them a little oil. But the others say, "Why did you not provide for that sooner? Go and buy some." And the foolish run from one house to another to get a little oil; but everybody is asleep, and nobody answers them, and the shops are closed and the roaming dogs bark at their heels. They go back to the house of the wedding, but now the door is closed. The five wise virgins are already there and feasting with the bridegroom. The five foolish virgins knock and beg and cry out, but no one comes to open for them. Through the cracks in the window casings they see the glowing lights of the supper. They hear the clatter of the dishes, the clinking of the cups, the songs of the young men, the sound of the musical instruments; but they cannot enter. They must stay there until morning, in the dark, and the wind. Shut out from the pleasures of the evening festival, they tremble and shake in terror.

TO BE CONTINUED
He who lives but for God is never sad, save at having offended God.



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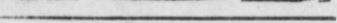
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He who lives but for God is never sad, save at having offended God.

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