

### Three Prayers.

"Now you can see just how much we have to eat," said Arnold sullenly and morosely to his wife and sons, sturdy boys of seventeen and eighteen, as the family were gathering for the evening meal a few days before Christmas.

It was a gloomy household, for the three strong, able-bodied men were out of employment.

"None of you were dismissed from your positions," said the wife gently.

"No, not dismissed, but for a fortnight we have had no work and here are eight persons to feed, and we have hardly a piece of money in the house. The doctor, the apothecary, and the undertaker took the last of our savings at the time of grandmother's sickness and death."

"Do not scold, George," comforted the wife. "It is God's will. Be submissive. 'The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away,' and surely He will not forsake those that minister to their parents with their last pennig."

"But here are three of us out of work because the factory shut down. That could not be avoided, perhaps, but in another fortnight we will be starving, for the little we have will barely last two days, and in midwinter it is impossible to get work."

"It is not winter yet," said the wife cheerily. "It is so mild that we need very little fire. Be glad that it is not cold; that is at least something to us in our troubles."

"Yes, but there is no work and no profit," muttered George under his breath.

"Do not fret, father," said one of the boys, "the dear God does not desert those, who do not desert Him. I will go up and down the streets to-morrow begging for work."

"And I, too, father," cried a ten-year old girl. "And I." "And I," "And I," came in chorus from three smaller maidens.

"God bless you, my children, you are my comfort, my joy," said the father, "and the more there are of you, the dearer you are to me. Now pray that God will send your father work this day."

"Yes, father, we will," was the answer, and immediately they began loudly to pray:

"In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost."

"How many. Our Fathers shall we say, Papa?"

"Seven," replied the mother earnestly. "For the seven Dolours of Mary and five for the five wounds of Christ." The prayers of mother and children floated softly heavenward and the father and two sons knelt down with them.

This happened in a poor little street in one of the great capitals of Europe.

At this same time Hunter Braff sat eating his evening meal, his eyes wandering anxiously to the bed in the adjoining room on which lay his young daughter. Pale and emaciated, which the expression of angelic purity and serenity that marks those to whom death is no stranger, she awaited the beckoning call of God.

"Papa, are the gentlemen going hunting to-morrow?" came softly from the lips of the sufferer.

"Yes, child, and unfortunately to-night I must go to prepare for their sport, then I must be up early to-morrow to direct the gentlemen where to find the game, and the hunt will last for three or four days."

"Oh, father, your being a poacher is the hardest of all for me. There are no men that—" she shuddered and did not finish.

"Cloudy, misty weather like this is unfavorable for shooting for it is hard to see the game at a distance. However, it is so warm one can re-

mainly out-of-doors for a long time without suffering. Game is fat and plentiful and it will be wonderful if they do not get a great deal."

"O father, these men! I do not want you to go. I do not want to be alone."

"Hush, hush! be quiet, my child. During two or three days I'll have little rest, but I'll earn much gold."

"And the poor beasts out in the forest!" added the invalid. "I pity the poor does."

"And won't you think of me and pity me, Agnes?" sighed the father.

"O papa, yes, of course. But, do you know, when you come back from the chase, I'll be in heaven, or in purgatory at least."

"My child, do not say such things," cried the father.

"No, dear, dear papa, I know surely that when I die you will be with me. It never takes long, that I've been told lots of times, and I feel that it is so. Can you not stay with me to-morrow?"

"My darling child, when gentlemen wish to go hunting the good Lord himself would hardly be able to prevent them. I must go."

Poacher Braff arose from the table, went to the bed of his daughter, smoothed her pillow, raised it a little higher, gave her his hand and said:

"As soon as I can, I will return and do not be frightened when you hear me. Good night, my Agnes!"

He went out and the maiden raised her thin hands towards the picture of the Blessed Virgin that hung near the bed and prayed:

"Remember me, O sweetest Virgin."

This happened in the south of Germany in a poacher's hut not far from a great wood.

Two boys knelt in a poor little chamber besides their bed and said their prayers while the moon, scarcely peeping out from behind the cloud, shone dimly through the roof-window. They prayed that their father might not be obliged to go to work on the day after the morrow because there was to be a Christmas entertainment and they were to sing and wished to have their father present.

The mother sat sewing and patching, weeping and praying between times that her husband might be able to go to mass on Christmas night. If he could only go to church in the forenoon of the day before Christmas she would willingly give up the idea of his going on Holy Night.

Who was her husband?

A railroad conductor named Werner. Day or night he had little rest and was unable to go to church often. The loving wife prayed with her children that her husband might go with them to enjoy the Christmas festivities. The husband was assigned extra work and sadly and disappointedly he said: "My fate is sealed for Christmas. I get extra duty."

This scene took place in the home of the railroad conductor Werner in a city in southern Germany.

The dear God looked down on his suppliant children on this evening, well pleased.

With His all-seeing glance He gazed upon the clouds moving restlessly above the earth and by that glance of love suddenly they were imbued with new life. The millions of water drops in them began to freeze and fell upon the earth in tiny snowflakes until it was covered with a thick mantle of white. The drizzling rain that had been coming down for so long within a half hour changed to snow.

People at first scarcely noticed the change for the countless flakes melted in the mud and water, and silently the earth became whiter and whiter until the snow was master. The world slept and dreamed to awake to the beautiful scene.

At eight o'clock one of the sons of the factory worker went out into the town and found at the nearest sign-post a notice put up by the police authorities, saying: "Men wanted to remove snow from the streets. Pay, thirty pfennig per hour."

Within a half hour father and sons were at police headquarters and received employment, which lasted from eight to ten days, and brought them daily from seven to nine mark.

"Dear husband," said the wife, "do you not see that God has sent work to you from out the sky?"

Next morning early when poacher Braff went to meet the hunters it was very evident that hunting was impossible for the snow was a meter deep in places and great branches had broken and fallen to earth under their burden of snow.

The disappointed gentlemen returned home for not even a poacher could think of venturing out.

The poacher's daughter said: "See, father, the dear God has taken the gun from the worthy as well as from the unworthy hunter. Now you can stay with me till I die."

Two days after this she died, and with a virginal wreath upon her white coffin was laid to rest under the snow.

Early that morning conductor Werner's train started out from the station but was compelled to return on account of the snow blockade, so the workmen were dismissed until afternoon. Mr. Werner went to church in the morning and as conditions were unaltered in the afternoon, he was able to attend the entertainment and heard his children sing as shepherd boys.

The great snow-fall was the answer to three prayers, and angels and saints joined in singing "Ice and snow praise the Lord in all eternity."

### Fifteen Years Ago

From No. 45 of St. Peters Bote

Muenster reports that on the feast of the Immaculate Conception, a Solemn High Mass was celebrated in the log church. About 100 persons assisted at these services.—St. Peter's Monastery has made application to purchase an island in Lake Lenore which is about half a mile from the shore. It is covered with trees, but the best ones have already been removed by settlers for building purposes.—Father Dominic, O. S. B., of Annaheim paid his confreres at the Monastery a most welcome visit. After Christmas he intends to take a business trip to the States.—Kreizenbeck of St. Bernard's Mission (Schaeffer's) is confined to the house with quinsy. Father Chrysostom visited him recently, reading Holy Mass in the house and giving him Holy Communion. One of George Nenzel's children is suffering from sore eyes, and one of Albert Nenzel's has tonsillitis. Frederic Epper in T.36, R.22 is confined to his bed by an attack of rheumatism.

Last month 2654 homestead entries were made in Canada as against only 2419 of last year during the same month.

The expenses of the coming fiscal year for the Canadian Militia are estimated at about \$3,750,000.

This year \$770,000 worth of new buildings were erected in Regina.

France's acquisitions of iron ore supplies by the Peace Treaty are so enormous, according to the British Board of Trade Journal, that whereas in 1913 her production of ore was 21,000,000 tons against Germany's 27,000,000, now France will be able to produce 42,000,000 tons compared with Germany's 7,000,000.

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