

ful and almost sympathetic silence.

"Bishop," he said, with clear precision, "in days gone by your Church used means to further its ends which would hardly be countenanced by that Church to-day, and, it may be, that in the course of time my actions will be subject to the same condemnation. All this has been considered. Your ecclesiastical fathers were sincere in their belief. I am equally sincere to-day. You assert to the faithful, their minds being hypnotized by your eloquence, the existence of something inconceivable, and in the next breath tell them that these things are too deep to be fathomed by mortal mind. You promise them, that which neither you nor any other man has proved. Believe me, Bishop, when I close your mouth, as it will be closed, your silence will speak louder than all your or my arguments, and I," here the speaker's eyes flashed, "will have taken the first step toward the dawn of the reign of Reason. I take away the intangible and the indefinite to bestow the actual and visible. Can you do better?"

These extraordinary words seemed hammers of mathematical precision, each driving home the conviction that this man's mind, however distorted, was made up to a course of action, which would be carried out to the letter, and this conviction was deepened by the passionless exactitude with which he had formulated his purpose.

The Bishop's hands fell to his side, and he racked his brain to put forward some plea for threat which might move this seemingly inflexible being.

As though reading his soul, the Master's quiet voice sounded again, like the voice of Fate—small, thin, distant, but not to be put away.

"At ten o'clock on Monday, Bishop, you will be at liberty. By that time the world will have learned of your discovery. The regret of your old friends will be lost in the welcome of the new ones you will find. I wish you good evening," and the two disappeared together.

With all this burdening his overtaxed mind, he mechanically said "Come in," and the brother re-entered with a sheaf of typewritten manuscript.

"The Master thought you might be interested in the sermon," he said, laying it on the table, and added, "I regret we shall not meet again at present, as our plans are to leave town to-morrow afternoon. We have, however, made arrangements for your comfort and your carriage has been ordered for 10 o'clock on Monday. I wish you good-bye, sir."

The Bishop did not move till he was alone, and then glanced at the manuscript. In spite of himself he read on and on as the diabolical cleverness of the thing unfolded itself. Here was life, slowly stripped not of its charm and beauty, but of its moral purpose and responsibility, an argument dangerously simple and as dangerously attractive. The development of mentality, the cutting away of mythical deadwood, the spur of material interests, all were put forward and garbed in a diction of masterly persuasiveness. His own mental processes, as evidenced in his sermons, had all been dissected and analyzed with microscopic fidelity, and all led up with apparent reason to this episcopal volte-face.

He hurled the address into the fire and was blankly watching its flames, when he recognized the boy's knock and into this world of despair came Laddie.

The blue eyes softened with quick sympathy for the bent figure in the big chair, and he climbed lovingly to his knee.

"What is it, Bishop? Why are you so sad? Has anyone hurt you?"

"Yes, boy, someone has hurt me."

"Who is it? Why did he do it?"

Did he mean to do it?"

"Yes, he meant to do it," said the Bishop, slowly. "He thinks he can do other people good, but I know he cannot, and that's why I am sad."

"Then is it the other people you are sorry for Bishop?"

"Laddie, Laddie, I am sorry for the whole world."

The boy saw that here was some-

thing he could not reach or understand, and with a child's quick instinct remembered his own special duties.

"You have not your evening papers, Bishop; I'll run out and get them now," and he vanished light of foot.

The unhappy man abandoned himself to despondency. He had shot his last bolt, and it had missed the mark.

Suddenly he raised his head in quick attention, and heard or thought he heard a woman's scream and the horn of a motor car sounding furiously. He waited it seemed an eternity, and then with nerves already tense and quivering, noticed that the door had been left unfastened, and, flinging it open, stood on the threshold of the long hall he had traversed nearly a week ago.

At one end he could see the faint light from the street, but the other was in darkness, and as he stood hesitating caught the faint sound of a woman's sobs.

He stepped quickly and noiselessly to the far end, and the sounds becoming more distinct, paused before a heavy curtain that hung across the entrance to a room. Lifting it aside he looked in and stood rooted with astonished grief.

On a lounge like that leather pulpit from which he had so often harangued the Bishop, lay Laddie—very white—very still, a smear of dust across his cheek, a crimson stain where the bright locks fell across his forehead. The blue eyes were shut, there was no motion as of breath and across the little body lay his mother, wailing out her heart. At the end of the couch, face buried in its depths, knelt the Master, shaking with inarticulate groans.

The Bishop's heart stood still as he looked. "Reason—Reason—Here is thine answer," he breathed. Dear God—could it have come in no other way! A little child shall lead them. "Boy, Boy—dear little Boy." The mantle of his sacred office fell over him as he stepped forward and put his hand on the Master's shoulder, and his deep voice was very gentle as he spoke. Neither the man nor the woman turned their heads, but the magic of his pleading fell like a gentle rain upon their desolation.

It is not given to mortals to speak often in their lives as the old prelate spoke then, and gradually the woman's hand stole blindly across the little body to be held convulsively in her husband's. The Bishop saw it and his voice shook a little in a last farewell of benediction. Then he bent over the still face for a moment, and went quickly out.

As he stepped into the street's free air, the man and woman raised their heads, and gazed each into the stricken face of the other, and then, their eyes resting upon Laddie, they saw upon the child's quiet breast, a little golden cross.

A New Zealand Bull.

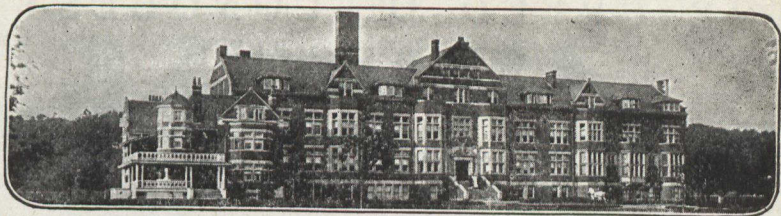
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