

for him, for I hear he has gone sadly, woefully astray." So, on Christmas Eve, the convent bus, an ancient vehicle, generally used to convey small day scholars to and from Mont Marie, was lumbering heavily through snow drifts laden with a merry crowd of girls under the watchful eye of Made-moiselle Melanie, their French teacher. Terry, the convent gate keeper, driver, and gardener held the reins, for Mont Marie had not yet branched out into the extrava-gance of an automobile. Terry's "bastes," were usually most atten-tive to his guidance, but that even-ing failed today, as they floundered through the snow-blocked way choked and muffled with heavy drifts.

Twice the bus came to a standstill and its inmates had to tumble out, to their hilarious excitement, while with low-muttered expletives not intended for convent ears, Terry struggled to start his cumbersome vehicle on its difficult way.

The early twilight had deepened into night before Miss Milly's Christmas guests saw the great pillared mansion aglow with festive light rising through the snow laden trees.

II.

James Madison had obeyed his young Master's command to the letter. He had "spent it all," and the result was a rapist at which the most critical *bon vivant* could not smile. The great dining room was ablaze with festive light, and re-echoing with song and jest and uproarious mirth, for the cob-webbed bottles that had prisoned the maddened spirits of nearly a hundred years were passing around freely. Through the roistering clamor only James Madison's trained ear caught the sounds at the hall door and he disappeared for a moment. He returned to his master in evident perturbation.

"More company, sah," he whis-pered.

"More company!" Dick Carleton looked around at his crowded table in dismay. "The devil!"

"No sah, no," corrected James Madison, hastily. "Seven ladies, sah."

"Seven ladies?" gasped the bewildered host. "Don't let them in, you dumb fool."

"Day's in sah—in to stay—talking sort of ferrin dat I can't zactly make out, cep't it's something about Miss Milly Somers, sah," Richard Carleton started up, roused, sobered, at the name—the name that must "at be banded around nor even breathed lightly here. With a hurried apology which the flow from the cobwebbed bottles made needless, he stepped into the hall where card tables laden with dice, poker chips, cigars and cigar-ettes told of the gay night to follow.

Six bewil'dered girls stood there repressing nervous giggles, while Made-moiselle Melanie, whose bright French eyes visualized the situation with horror, confronted the master of the house with excited indignation. "Qu'est que d'est? What is this? Where is this? To what place infame have I brought ces filles innocentes?" And Made-moiselle burst into a French tirade in which Richard Carleton distinguished only one name, a name that cleared all the fumes from his brain and stood him into the dignity and courtesy that befitted the master of Carleton Hall.

"Miss Somers, Miss Somers, invited you here? There must be some mistake, madame, this is not her house."

"Ah Miss Ricardo! Then what house is it? cried Made-moiselle as the click of refilling glasses was greeted by a burst of masculine song from the room beyond. "Where are we, mes enfants! To what place have we come, with la valisere gone back to the convent? We must fly from this house, we must fly, mes enfants. Venez, venez, toute de suite, toute de suite!"

"Oh we can't, Made-moiselle, we can't," came the frightened answer. "We can't go out there in the cold and the snow." And then, being a bevy of bright American girls, with fathers, and brothers who some-times gave gay parties, at which cards and poker chips were not unknown, Miss Somers' guests explained their coming, the delayed journey, the broken gate, the mis-taken house.

"And oh, please, please," they concluded, "get somebody or some-thing to take us to Miss Milly's right away."

Richard Carleton agreed with grave courtesy that he would. A few words to James Madison, and the big seven-passenger car that had brought out the gay dinner party was pre-empted without ques-tion, and Miss Millie Somers' guests, with the reassured Made-moiselle, were ensconced comfortably in its capacious depths; and leaving the roistering revellers to the care of his faithful henchman Richard Carleton took the wheel. While the high powered machine sped on over white roads, lit by a Christmas moon, and the merry girls laughed and chattered delightedly over their Christmas adventure, their silent chauffeur, stirred into bitter remembrance by the route he was

taking, relived that scene of five years ago. Again he saw the glow of happiness pale in the fair, startled face, the tender eyes lifted in anguished reproach, again he heard the low cry of love wounded to death.

"Divorced! A living wife! Oh Richard, Richard, how could you lead me to this—to this!"

He had been a cad, coward, deceiver to the woman of his love, ready to trample the lily of her purity into the mire of his foul world. So she had thought, felt, believed, and she had turned from him justly, rightly, forever. He had never met her since. He must not meet her tonight, he would leave her happy guests safe at her door and speed back to his own fitting friends, his ruined home. And then, in striking contrast to that ruined home, there rose before him the stately gateway of Somer-set Manor and the car sped on through an avenue of noble oaks to the great house glowing with warmth and echoing with music of boyish voices led by a clear soprano. Miss Milly and her college boys were practicing for the Christmas Mass. "O Holy Night" they sang and the hymn seemed to breathe the blessedness of this hallowed home.

Then the words died into a burst of joyous welcome as the singers crowded to the door to meet the Christmas guests springing gleefully from the great car, and all was a merry Babel of somewhat confused explanation.

For one moment Richard Carleton glimpsed a slender, graceful figure standing in the wide doorway sur-rounded by youth and gladness and happy life; then, laying a fierce grasp on the wheel, he would have started on his homeward way, but the ponderous machine lurched and then stood motionless.

Something was wrong, what he did not know. As his unheeding young passengers crowded into the house, he leaped from the stalled car with a muttered curse and turned on the flashlight to discover the trouble. There was a light step on the porch and a gentle voice accosted him.

"You need help with your car? I will send our man."

The words ended in a low, startled cry. "Richard!" came from Miss Milly's white lips as she caught at the pillar beside her for support. "You here?"

"Yes," was the harsh-toned answer. "I had to come—they mistook the house, and there was no one else. But I will go at once if I can get this confounded car to move."

The flashlight showed his face lined and changed, and just now fiercely angered at his awkward plight.

"I will send Dixon to see to it," she said.

There was no hiding the tremor in her voice, the tremor of her lips, but it was the olden music sounding in Richard Carleton's ear, the music that had only grown deeper, richer in its tone.

"Meaning you must come in out of this bitter cold."

"No," he answered briefly. "I cannot, I must not, I will leave the car here, if you permit, and walk back."

"Oh no, no, no," she said, "I cannot, not of that. The young people are sitting down to the supper I had waiting for them. I did not know who it was brought them here. I—I would have thanked you sooner. You must be very cold. Come in, please, and get warm."

Again the old gentle tone, so compelling in its quiet sweetness, the tone that only a churl could resist. He followed at her bidding into the warmth and light of the library, deserted by all the gay guests doing full justice to the supper in the great dining room at the end of the wide colonial hall. A log fire blazed in the hearth, the walls, the windows were wreathed with Christmas green. So it had looked five years ago to the man who stood outcast and intruder here tonight. Milly gave her orders about the waiting car and joined her reluctant guest.

"Dixon will make it all right," she said.

"It is my cursed luck to be forced on you like this," Carleton said bitterly.

"Give it a kinder name than that," was her answer. "It is Christmas, you know, when all is friendliness and welcome and good will. A time to forgive and for-get."

"Forget," he echoed hoarsely. "I cannot, can you?" She did not answer. "But," he went on, "as I never hope, will never try, to see you again, there are some things I would like you to know."

"First, I did not, could not under-stand your Catholic viewpoint. Now I do, and in my later compre-hension of that viewpoint and its unchanging and unalterable obliga-tions, I saved the woman I had married from unutterable wretched-ness and disgrace and took fitting care of her until she died two years ago. And lastly, blind besotted selfish cad that I must have seemed to you, my love for you was the strongest, purest, highest experi-ence I have ever known. In losing it, I lost all. As no doubt you have heard, I have gone to the devil utterly and forever."

"Oh, no, no," she said brokenly. "Not after all my prayers, my tears, my heart break. Let me help you, let me save you, Richard."

"Help me! Save me!" he echoed harshly. "No one can help

me, save me now. I'm ruined hopelessly, my home, my fortune, my good name, all gone."

"Let me help you," she repeated. "Help you to save, to regain all. Not here," she continued as he would have interrupted her, "but in a new world, a new life. Father left me large interests in Colorado that are being sorely mismanaged. You are a mining engineer, go and take charge of them, Richard."

"Milly," he cried. "You would trust me like this in spite of all you have heard—all I have told you."

"In spite of all," she answered. "It will be a hard enough life for you, perhaps, it will take strength, courage, endurance, but you can redeem home, fortune, name, all you have lost."

"All that I have lost," he echoed bitterly. "There is but one thing that I have lost that counts with me. That I can never regain—"

"Will you go?" she asked again, and there was a softer note in the pleading voice. "For my sake, Richard." She stretched out both hands to him—saying hands that he caught in the fierce grasp of his drowning while his heart leaped with a wild hope that found deep shaken voice.

"I will go at your word. I would go through much more than this requires if you could say 'Come back to me.' She lifted her eyes to him, eyes dim with tears but shining with the love that knows not Time or Space.

"It will be a hard fight," she said softly, "but when it is won, come back to me, Richard."

THE GREAT ANTHEM OF CHRISTMASTIDE

By Right Rev. H. T. Henry, Litt. D.

The Christmas Cycle extends from the first Sunday of Advent to the Feast of the Purification of Our Lady. It thus commemorates three outstanding facts in the history, not alone of the Church, but of the world. And in each of these three phases we perceive the beautiful presence of Our Lady either in prophecy or in person.

The first fact, signalized by the preparatory weeks of Advent, is the long period when the world awaited the coming of its Redeemer. This expectation was prophetically an-nounced to the Serpent who had caused Adam's fall. "I will put enmities between thee and the Woman, and thy seed and her seed; she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel." Our Lady is thus presented to the expectant gaze of the world in its first morning of human habitation.

The second grand fact is the fulfilment of this prophecy. God came visibly amongst us, and Christmas is the great holiday of the world. Again do we look upon Mary, His blessed Mother. Not only do historians date all the occurrences of earth before or after this central fact of all history, but poets and painters have celebrated it in their various fashions in innum-erable masterpieces.

The third fact is the Jewish legal complement of the Birth of Our Lord, namely His presentation in the temple and the purification of His Mother. The Mosaic law required this—and He Who had come not to destroy the law, but to fulfill it, humbly allowed his sinless Mother to comply with every detail of the law. "Who made the law, the law obeys," sang one of our Latin poets.

SUMMARY OF PROPHECY

In these three phases of history, then, we confront a summary of the prophecy, the fulfilment, the comple-ment, of the Birth of Christ. And, with the perfection of prop-hecy, we also confront the person-ality of Mary, Mother of the Lord, in all three.

It is not to be wondered at, there-fore, that throughout this holy season, the Church should direct our attention to Mother as well as to Son, even as St. Matthew won-drously couples their names in his Gospel: "Mary, of whom was born Jesus, Who is called Christ. The Marian anthem for the whole of Christmastide is the exquisite Alma Redemptoris Mater, whose first three words ("Benign Mother of the Redeemer") serve both to address her and to sum up in briefest manner her marvellous position in the scheme of our redemption.

The Divine Office of the first Sun-day of Advent begins with vespers of the previous Saturday, and then is heard the beautiful anthem:

"Mother benign of our redeeming Lord, Star of the sea and portal of the skies, Unto thy fallen people help afford— Fallen, but striving still anew to rise.

"Thou who didst once, while won-d'ring worlds adored, Bear thy Creator, Virgin then as now, O by thy holy joy at Gabriel's word, Pity the sinners who before thee bow."

This is the translation of the anthem by "the distinguished scholar, the Right Rev. Sir Oswald Hunter-Blair, O. S. B.," which I find in Dom Brit's elegant volume, "The Hymns of the Breviary and Missal." The anthem has also been rendered into English verse by Cardinal Newman, Archbishop Bagshawe, and Fathers Caswall and Wallace.

It is interesting to note that the original Latin contains only six lines of classical hexameter verse. This cannot be adequately represented in English metres, since these depend on "accent" rather than on "quantity" in the syllables. As we all know, attempts have been made, from time to time, to echo in some fashion the rhythmic swing of clas-sical hexameters in the rougher medium of English verse. Thus we have Longfellow's delightful imi-tation in the rhythms of his "Evan-gelium"—to confine ourselves just now to a single example. An attempt like this was made in the English rendering of our anthem given in the Marquess of Bute's translation of the Roman Breviary. The first line of this rendering is

"Maiden! Mother of Him Who re-deemed us, thou that abidest"

and we can appreciate the rhythmic echo like to that with which the "Evangeliem" has familiarized us. From the eight lines of Dom Oswald we have descended to six English hexameters. But a still greater re-duction of space is found in Arch-bishop Bagshawe's six lines of En-glish dactylic tetrameters:

"Our Saviour's sweet Mother, who art to us given As Star of the Sea and bright portal of Heaven, O help us to rise when we fall, for while earth Stood wond'ring, thou didst to thy Maker give birth, Yet wast ever Virgin, saluted with 'Hail' By Gabriel; for us let thy mercy avail."

ANOTHER FINE VERSION

Could this space be still further re-duced? The powers of expansion, possessed by a master-worker in verse, are illustrated in the fine version made by the poet-priest and con-vert, Father Caswall. His transla-tion is also in six lines, but has a less number of syllables than any of the others:

"Mother of Christ! hear thou thy people's cry, Star of the deep, and Portal of the sky! Mother of Him who thee from nothing made, Sinking we strive, and call to thee for aid; Oh, by that joy which Gabriel brought to thee, Pure Virgin first and last, look on our misery."

It is perhaps curious to note, in this connection, that Caswall's ver-sion antedated all the others made by the poet-priest and con-vert, Father Caswall. His transla-tion is also in six lines, but has a less number of syllables than any of the others:

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