

A TERRIBLE MISTAKE.

A dense fog descended upon Montreal. In the heart of the city it was thick, brown; in the suburbs it was rolling with smoke, damp, choking and chill.

Little John Curry groped his way through the lanes of Maisonneuve, considerably at a loss, for the neighborhood was completely unknown to him, and he heartily wished himself at his destination. Yet he was by no means unhappy, for he was about to make love to the prettiest girl in the world. No thought of rejection ever came to his mind, for he was the only son of a banker, and even if she did refuse him, it wouldn't be for want of money on his part. Yes, she was quite worthy of him. Thus ran his thoughts, and so concentrated were they that he wandered on, paying little attention to what path he was taking. At last he rose from his meditation to consider where he was. But the fog was so dense that he could not see a yard ahead of him. The night was so still that he was afraid to walk a step further. But suddenly the stillness of the night was disturbed. He heard the sound of hasty footsteps coming after him. He stopped abruptly, feeling as if he had been stabbed in the pit of the stomach with an ice-cold knife. John was filled with a vague fear, he listened carefully. The patter of the flying feet was rapidly drawing near. Then he was seized with great trepidation, and he too began to run. A voice called out: "Stop! stop! you villain, or I fire!" John, however, bounded on unheeding the words. He found that handicapped by his heavy overcoat, to say nothing of his own meagre proportions and his lack of speed, he was no match for his pursuer. The chase was soon ended. A strong hand clutched him by the collar and jerked him backwards, and but for the tight grip of his assailant he would have fallen.

"What!" he gasped. "You scoundrel!" thundered the unknown fiercely. It was very dark, but Mr. Curry made out that he seemed to be a well-dressed, clean-shaven young man, and of pleasing countenance. "Give me that watch," said he. He looked so fierce that John did not hesitate for a minute for his request. "Certainly, certainly," he quavered, "it's a little hard, but—" "The watch," said the unknown, sternly. John unbuttoned his coat and drew from his pocket his watch, and gave it to the stranger. "And thank your lucky stars," said the stranger, "that I let you off so easy." He took the watch without looking at it. "Now, get off with you," said he, and he aimed a well-directed kick that sent John sprawling on his hands and knees. Then with a laugh the robber strode away.

Poor little John, with tears of anguish in his eyes, mortification and rage in his heart, gathered himself up, recovered his hat, brushed his knees and elbows and buttoned up his coat again. He would proceed no further, but returned to the warmly lighted streets he had just left. Then he could make enquiries at some shop, and perhaps secure a guide, for he had by no means abandoned his intention of calling on his loved one on that night and declaring his passion. He felt so shaky and sore that he went into a public house to get a glass of brandy, and told the landlord of his misfortune. The landlord sympathized with him and said, "There's a lot of rough customers out here. You're not the first one to be waylaid by a long run."

"Could you direct me to Westmount Park?" said John, "or perhaps there is some one on the premises who can act as guide for me." "Certainly, Mr. Bill, my son, will take you for a copper or two," so Bill was fetched, and conducted Mr. Curry to his destination.

"Is Mr. Caples at home?" he asked, when the door of the house was opened to his knock. "Yes, sir, will you please step in?" He entered and the maid ran upstairs to announce him. There was a hat and coat hanging on the rack. What did it mean? Grace, Miss Caples, his adored, had no brothers, was it possible that he had a rival? he asked himself, but Mr. Caples, bustling into the hall to welcome him, interrupted his reflections. "Come in, my dear boy, come in," he cried, heartily, "you're just in time for something to eat."

He led him into the hall, where the table was already set, and dinner seated. Miss Caples was there, and a handsome gentleman by her side,

and John wondered if this was his rival. Having shook hands with Miss Caples very shyly, he awaited an introduction to the young gentleman.

"Oh, I forgot, you have not met Mr. Jack Weeks before. Jack, this is Mr. Curry." The young man arose and confronted Mr. Curry at last. "Glad to have the pleasure—" he was beginning, and then stopped abruptly. As for John, he felt as if a dagger had been pitched into him, for this Mr. Weeks was no less than the person who took his watch.

"What is the matter?" cried Mr. Caples, alarmed by the extraordinary demeanor of John. "It's all right," said Jack Weeks, "old friends, in fact bit of a shock to both of us. How do you do, old boy," and he gripped the limp hand of John and clapped him on the shoulder.

As he did so he winked meaningly at John half a dozen times. John was utterly puzzled. He saw dimly the footpad eating and drinking with a good appetite; he saw him talking and laughing with Grace perfectly at his ease and altogether enjoying himself.

Dinner over, they adjourned to the drawing-room. Jack Weeks at once sat by Grace, and poor John sat by the door alone. Mr. Caples soon fell asleep, then Mrs. Caples, speaking in a piercing whisper, said: "Oh, I declare, I had almost forgotten. I want to ask your advice, my dear Mr. Weeks, on some old prints Mr. Caples picked up in the street the other day. Would you mind coming down stairs with me, and looking through them?"

Mr. Weeks complied with her request, and this left John and Grace alone, as he had long wished for. "Miss Caples," he said, "I have been longing for this chance for weeks."

"Indeed," she said, with downcast eyes. "This is the supreme moment of my life; in a very little while I shall be the happiest or most miserable man on earth."

She stole a side glance at him. "Grace, I love you—" "No, no," she cried in a whisper, and she shrunk away from him. "Yes, Grace, I love you with all my heart and soul. Don't you love me a little, too?"

"I like you, Mr. Curry."

"That is not enough; that is not what I want."

"I can give you no more than that."

"Can't you even give me hope?"

"No hope?"

"None. Please don't press me any further, Mr. Curry. I am very sorry, but what I say is quite true, and you are only distressing yourself by going on like this."

"Perhaps," he said, and his voice was unpleasant, "perhaps you prefer someone else."

She did not answer.

"You have no right to cross-examine me in this way," she protested, "but since you persist, I will tell you. I do like someone else, and I am engaged to be married to him. Mamma does not know of my engagement yet, but papa does, and approves of it."

"And who is the lucky man?"

"What can it matter to you, Mr. Curry?"

His face lowered. "Is it this Mr. Jack Weeks?"

She gave him a glance, and it was enough for him.

"No, no," he cried, clutching her waist. "Listen to me for one minute longer. Do you know what this Mr. Jack Weeks is?"

"He is all that is manly and—"

"Yes, but do you know what he does for a living?"

"Of course I do. He is an artist, a painter, a prosperous one. He will get on. But really, Mr. Curry, I fail to see what right—"

"I have every right. He is a poor artist, and to make himself a rich one, what do you think he does?"

"I was not aware."

"He plunders honest men, Miss Caples. He stops them on the high road and he robs them. He is a common footpad."

Grace laughed merrily. "I never heard anything so ridiculous in all my life," she cried, "you must be mad."

"Mad or sane," he cried heatedly, "I will vouch for the truth of what I say. He robbed me on my way here, and he treated me violently, very coward that he is." He became very excited. "If you don't believe

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me, tax him with the theft in my presence. If you won't I will before you all."

Grace felt strangely excited, and as they were staring at each other, the door opened and Jack Weeks walked in. John, fearing that his courage would go away from him, bounded up from his seat and walked towards his successful rival.

"Mr. Weeks," he said, "what have you done with my watch?" "I have it in my pocket," said Jack Weeks, as he took the watch and gave it to John. A cry of astonishment broke from Grace, and Mr. Caples, waking with a sudden start, inquired what was the matter.

"Well, it's a quaint story," said Jack Weeks, "if you will all sit down and listen, I will tell you it." They all sat down, and Mr. Jack began: "I was walking down a side street, when suddenly I saw a hand at my vest pocket, and I caught sight of my watch going out of my pocket. I had time to see that it was a small man that took it. So I went after him for all I was worth and stuck to him as well as I could, when all at once he turned up a side lane and I after him. Of course I lost sight of him. I was on the point of giving up the pursuit when I came to the gaslight, and made out the outline of a man's figure. So I started off again, and shouted 'Stop or I fire.' This only made him run faster. After a little running I caught hold of him, and demanded the watch. At first I had a mind to give him into custody, but the fellow looked so frightened that I let him off. After a while I looked to see how much time I had lost by my adventure, and you can picture to yourself the horror I had at finding the wrong watch instead of my own. 'Well, old boy,' said I to myself, 'You're in luck.'"

At the conclusion of the story, Mr. Jack Weeks turned towards John and extended his hand, saying "Very sorry I caused you so much trouble." Some time afterwards, Mr. John Curry found another prettiest girl in the world, and by a peculiar coincidence, he was married on the same day and in the same church as Jack Weeks, and in after life was never the worse for his "terrible mistake."

Richard M. Lynch.

Tom Watson's Magazine for April.

The second number of Tom Watson's Magazine is an improvement on the first, good as that was. Mr. Watson himself fills several pages with his trenchant editorials under the general head, "Politics and Economics." His picture of the conditions in Russia must strike the most callous heart with sympathy, as his view of the way out, for the people of that country, must invite the attention of all reflecting minds. His comment on the New York Subway strike, and the duty of the Mayor in that crisis, is of particular point, in view of the fact that the People's Party proposes to enter an independent candidate in the next mayoralty campaign. Among other topics that Mr. Watson handles with force and brilliance are bribery in Georgia and President Roosevelt's plans for railroad rate legislation. That Mr. Watson is not only an editorial writer, but also a magazine editor of originality and taste, is clearly shown by the remaining contents of the April number. (Tom Watson's Magazine, 121 W. 42nd street, New York.)

APOSTOLATE OF THE PRESS

We heartily endorse the suggestion of the Northwestern Chronicle that one Sunday of the year should be devoted to the Apostolate of the Press in all our pulpits; not for the sake of the local Catholic paper (which need not be mentioned), but for the sake of the Catholic public and the Catholic home.

WHISKEY DRINKING.

English and Scotch Consume More Intoxicants Per Head of Their Population than the Irish.

(Boston Hibernian.)

We have received letters from four members of the A.O.H., three of whom are residents of Boston, protesting against what one writer terms "a gross misrepresentation of the race at home and abroad." The alleged misrepresentation occurred in a lecture, the subject of which was the Irish race, delivered in Charles-town under the auspices of the A.O.H., by a well-known Boston gentleman, on March 19.

The lecturer, among other things, said: "One of the handicaps to business success has been the drinking among the Irish people. For centuries Ireland's curse has been intemperance. It could not be expected that, considering the persecution of England, that Irishmen would be free from this terrible curse. They took to drink to assuage their sufferings." etc. To that statement as a whole our correspondents object and they have good solid reasons for their protest which we prefer not to publish. But the Hibernian proposes to examine the statement briefly as a matter affecting the character of the race because the statement clearly means that the Irish are a drunken people compared with other people with whom they mingle in business relations. British writers and speakers generally have aided in spreading that impression.

DRINK IN ENGLAND, SCOTLAND AND IRELAND.

Has drinking handicapped the Irish people compared with people of other nationalities in the race for business success, as the lecturer asserted? We have no statistics to show the quantity of drink consumed by the various nationalities comprised within our cosmopolitan American population, but we have precise and accurate information regarding the quantity consumed by most European peoples. Take the Irish, English and Scotch. Mr. Mulhall, the eminent statistician who died only a few years ago, shows that the Scotch, and English year after year have consumed more intoxicants per head of their population than the Irish. Here, for example, is Mr. Mulhall's schedule of consumption for the year 1896:

Millions of Gallons.				
Beer.	Spirits.	Wines.	Older.	
England....1044	27	18.4	14.0	
Scotland....63	8	1.4	0.5	
Ireland....99	5	1.0	0.5	

That total amount of consumption for each country for the year 1896 reduced to terms of alcohol shows that the consumption per capita in England was two gallons, in Scotland 1.7 and in Ireland 1.6. Now let us take the official excise returns of consumption in the three countries for 1902, from the viewpoint of cost. These show that the English spent about \$22.50 per head of their population for intoxicants, the Scotch about \$18.00 and the Irish about \$16.50. Let us now take the latest returns, those for the year 1904, and we learn that the English population spent per head about \$21.75 for drink, the Scotch \$16.29 and the Irish about \$16.20.

THE IRISH DRINK MUCH LESS THAN THE ENGLISH.

The proof is accurate and abundant that the Irish drink much less than the English and something less than the Scotch, but our Boston lecturer of March 19 evidently unaware of that fact declared that they as a people in their business enterprises were handicapped by drink. But the English are more heavily handicapped by drink and the Scotch also, but both these peoples have been leaders in manufacturing and commerce. Had the lecturer given a little study

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to the condition of Ireland under Grattan's Parliament, that is, from 1782 to 1798, he would have found that while the drinking habit was considerably worse then than even now business enterprises were springing up and flourishing, but only to fade and die with the exception of the privileged linen manufacturing, when in 1800, Ireland was legislatively annexed to England. The destruction of Irish manufactures in the English interest and the consequent loss of technical skill and business training generally among her people for three generations was not brought about by the quantity of intoxicants then consumed. The basic cause of Ireland has been the robber rule of England, the deleterious influences of which have unconsciously affected our lecturer so far as to lead him to make such a statement utterly unwarranted by the facts.

It would be accurate to say that most people of northern latitudes drink too much, but that the Irish are among those who consume the least. The lecturer's wretched, pitiable apology that they took to drink to assuage their sufferings under the persecution of England is of similar kidney to blaming drink for lack of business training and technical skill. The idea of a strong people like the Irish Gael, a people strong physically, buoyed up with an eternal hope, persistent spiritually and nationally, taking to drink as a whole people to assuage their sorrow is not very complimentary to the race. The lecturer should review his opinions on the subject and amend his knowledge.

SOCIETY DIRECTORY.

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