

PRETTY MISS NEVILLE

BY B. M. CROKER

CHAPTER XVII OUR NEIGHBORS

"Why tempteth she to clothe her heart with love?"—Pittacus.

Mrs. Gower (who always took excellent care of herself) was among the first who fled from Mulkapore at the earliest symptom of the hot weather. Those who remained on the plains were few and far between. During the months of March, April and May it certainly was warm. We had cuscuta tatters in every available aperture, and punkahs going night and day. Only when the sun had quite gone down did we venture out for a breath of air—and it was not always to be had! Everything was hot; even one's clothes, when first put on, felt as if they were scalding from being thoroughly well aired at the kitchen fire. Water was invariably tepid, and only for our daily supply of ice, I don't know what would have become of us. Colonel Keith lived in a small bungalow about half a mile from ours. Three or four times a week he arrived to dinner, in his grass-green gharry, drawn by an old white "caster" that, thanks to his long neck, rejoiced in the name of "The Gander." Colonel Keith filled the back seat of his gharry to admiration; and there was no concealing from one's self the fact that he was unusually stout. He was somehow, when you came to know him pretty well, the best-tempered, best-natured, and most jovial, delightful, elderly gentleman you ever met in all your life; and there was not an ounce too much of him in his friends' opinion. His fair, open countenance surmounted a massive double chin, his twinkling blue eyes beamed with perennial good-humor, and he was the possessor of a hand grip that nearly dislocated your bones, and of a laugh that literally shook a room. He was exceedingly popular, poor as he was. He had the spirit and energy of a boy of twenty, disguised in the outward raiment of a stout elderly gentleman. He saw everything and everybody from the best point of view, and wore spectacles couleur de rose. Few men in his situation would have had so light-hearted. True, he had good health, and drew nine hundred rupees a month; but out of that sum he had to provide a home in England for an invalid wife, and to educate, feed, and clothe three growing sons and two daughters. All this had to come out of his pay, and when remitted home, at a ruinous rate of exchange, very few rupees remained to Colonel Keith's own personal expenditure.

"A light heart and a light purse," he would say. "Here I am, a gray-headed, fat old fellow, living on two hundred rupees a month, in my old age, in the very same station where, as a youngster, I kept my three horses, a buggy, two shika-camels, and tribes of servants, and lived on the fat of the land. Oh, those good old days! when gram was eighty measures for the rupee, food and lodging nominal prices, and Teddy Keith a gay young bachelor! To what have matrimony and age reduced me!" he would exclaim, laying his hands on his fat sides, and surveying his goodly proportions. "Make any while the sun shines—there are evil days in store for you," he would say to various bachelors. It was no uncommon sight to see him lie back in his chair, hold his sides, and laugh till he cried—laugh till the tears rolled forth from his eyes, and his anxious friends trembled lest he should go off in a fit of apoplexy. He was the repository of more jokes and confidences (matrimonial and monetary), than any one else in Mulkapore; and his good sense was as proverbial as his good-humor. He and uncle had been school-fellows and brother-officers, and he was just as much at home in our house as in his own tiny, scantily furnished bungalow.

We had neighbors living in the bungalows on either side of ours. To the left resided Major and Mrs. Towers and family—the latter consisting of seven small, noisy, ill-conducted olive-branches, whom their mother colonized among her friends as much as possible, constantly sending Boyisie and Rosie and Teddy abroad to spend a long and happy day. Their mother was the laziest woman I ever met. She never rose before eleven o'clock, never did any housekeeping—leaving all to her butler. He provided everything—even the children's clothes, which were gaudy and ridiculous to the last degree. Once a month he brought his little account to master, and master would swear and storm, and call him a thief and a swindler—epithets that Ramsavere received with many expostulations and salaams, and for which he recouped himself in hard coin of the realm.

Major Towers spent his afternoons at rackets, his evenings at whist, and very little time at home; indeed, home was not a particularly inviting place. The servants were lazy, dirty, and disorderly; a grimy mat would respond to visitors (after they had howled themselves hoarse), bringing forth a cracked soup-plate for their cards. If "missus could see," you were shown into a gloomy, frowzy drawing-room, decked with undusted furniture, broken ornaments, and withered flowers; cobwebs descended from every corner, and dirt and toys and dogs reigned supreme. Enter the lady of the house—handsome, in a large, fair, phlegmatic style; her dress and hair and general appearance leading one to imagine that she had been recently dragged through a

hedge backward; her collar unpinned, her hands ringless, her hair untidy, and no pretty little softening details to complete her toilet. She was always exceedingly agreeable, most amusing and entertaining, and one almost forgot her squalid surroundings in the charms of her conversation. Being such very near neighbors of the Towers, we were subject to incursions from the juveniles at all times. Boyisie, I am sorry to say, spent many of his leisure hours with us, and he was an enfant terrible of the first water. Auntie tolerated him, so did uncle, marvelously to relate; but I looked on his visits with anything but favor.

Our other near neighbors were a Colonel and Mrs. Fox, and their two grown-up daughters. Mrs. Fox had been a noted beauty in her day, and still possessed considerable remains of good looks. She had piercing dark eyes and a well-cut, aquiline nose, and was by no means averse to being reminded of her charms, plump and passéé as she was. For years she had devoted herself to society, and society to her; and as her beauty waned she had called in money in large sums to her aid, trying to keep her footing against the more youthful rivals by the means of magnificent dresses and costly entertainments. Her husband went his way, ably assisting his wife to spend the contents of the family purse by the help of a string of third-rate race-horses. A large family of children had been drafted home at an early age, and kept at cheap boarding-schools, and as much in the background as possible, while *pater* and *mater familias* pursued each their own line of amusement in the gorgeous East.

However, young people will grow up, and at length they found themselves obliged to give a home to two stout, plain girls, well on in their teens, and large, unpaid school bills outrivaled old, long standing Indian debts. These young ladies had to be brought out, and that speedily, as two other equally well-grown sisters were rapidly "coming on," and to keep them all at home was a feat even beyond Mrs. Fox.

Some of the most pressing bills were paid off, some of the least promising racers sold, and Colonel and Mrs. Fox made a second departure in life, as the heads of a large and partly visible family. They were now deeply involved in the soucar's hands; and the one great thing for Mrs. Fox to achieve was for her daughters' speedy marriage—a feat she seemed to know how to set about accomplishing; and in her girls' social successes hoped to live her own youth over again.

"But 'Mossy' and 'Tossy'—still, well-nourished-looking young people, had no pretensions whatever to their mother's good looks. They were admirable dancers and tennis players, lively and agreeable, and were invariably voted "such jolly girls by their admirers; but no dancing or tennis-playing or agreeableness could make them otherwise than short and stout and plain. One of them, alas! had a snub nose; the other, weak eyes. Nevertheless, their admirable mother did her duty by them nobly.

At first, each eligible bachelor colonel and major had a pressing invitation to "consider himself as one of the family," to drop in at dinner, tiffin, or chobah-hazee at any time he pleased. This invitation not being seized upon with the avidity she anticipated, the wily parent transferred her interest to captains and well-allowed subalterns. Mrs. Fox assumed a kind, motherly air, that captivated certain young men, especially if recently from home. She had a friendly, solicitous way of asking after their mothers and sisters she took an affectionate interest in their flannels and their health, their prospects and their pay. In short, these "dear, gentlemanly boys" reminded her so forcibly of her own son—such a handsome fellow!—that she could not help feeling like a mother to them, and desired them to come in and out whenever they pleased, and to make themselves quite at home. Often, some foolish youth, fresh from the loss of his own home, had taken Mrs. Fox literally at her word, and became quite confidential respecting his income and future prospects. She would figuratively rock and dandle all his suspicions to sleep, and make him over to the society of her dear amiable girls, in order that they might exercise their fascinations upon their adopted brother. More than once a proposal was the result; but alas! men were deceivers ever—they love and they ride away; and although every nerve would be strained, although Colonel Fox invariably seized the earliest opportunity of asking a young man's "intentions," urgent private affairs or a long shooting excursion, in fact, prompt flight, had hitherto been the unfortunate conclusion of all the Misses Fox's *affaires de coeur*. Their partners had so frequently "revoked" that their matrimonial prospects occasioned their mother serious uneasiness.

The Fox family went out a great deal, and seldom had any time to spare for such humdrum people as aunt and uncle. They were more accessible during the hot weather, when nothing in the way of gayeties was going on; and evinced a short but flickering interest in me when my boxes of various very smart dresses arrived from home. They condescendingly borrowed patterns, tried on hats, and made themselves quite familiar with my wardrobe. If I had any garment that I fondly imagined was particularly becoming,

they would exclaim, in one breath: "Oh, don't wear that! You have no idea how hideous it makes you look. Don't wear blue! Pink and red are certainly your colors."

And I, silly goose, believed them, and hastened to act upon their advice. They distinctly approved of the seclusion in which I had been kept, and suggested to auntie that I should not come out for another season. "I looked so absurdly young; I could not be eighteen." Colonel Fox had a daughter by a previous marriage, a girl rarely alluded to by her relations, and at present consigned to the keeping of an uncle in the northwest provinces, until the marriage of one of her step-sisters would make a vacancy for her in the family nest.

"Three girls are too much to chaperon," quoth Mrs. Fox; "and really, if Ellen is as pretty as they say she is, she is sure to settle very well from her uncle's house!"

One day I was buried deep in a novel and arm-chair in the drawing-room, when in came Mrs. Fox in a great state of mental excitement, bearing in her hand a letter. She did not notice me, but accosted auntie breathlessly:

"Dear Mrs. Neville, I've come over to you to tell you the news. Just had a letter from Dick's brother, and I know you'll be interested, as you know her mother."

Auntie gazed in mild interrogation at her visitor, who had taken a seat in front of her, and sat with her hands on her knees and her toe on the back of her head, evidently in a state of the liveliest exultation.

"Just had this letter—read it, putting the envelope into auntie's hand. 'It's about Ellen.'"

"I have not my glasses; will you tell me what it is about, and that will do as well?" said auntie sympathetically.

"Then I'll read it to you, my dear Mrs. Neville, with pleasure," returned her visitor unfolding the letter withunction.

"Ellen—that's my step-daughter—has had a most excellent proposal of marriage. Hem! hem!" reading the introduction to herself, then, clearing her voice, she said, "Here's what my brother-in-law says: 'Young Green, of the Feniches, has come to the scratch at last. Richard will have his job,' she supplemented, coloring, and only that her pride and triumph carried all before it, she would have given us a revised edition of the missive in her hand. 'He has been nibbling for some time, in spite of Ellen's standoffishness and folly. He came to my office yesterday and proposed, asked for my sanction and yours. I made some little demur, as became an all-but parent. However, I closed the bargain, as I have made most searching inquiries, and hear he is a most prudent, sensible, and capable man, with very good expectations from his father, who is in the wool trade; he has an allowance of three hundred a year and has no debts. He is not, strictly speaking, handsome—in fact, between ourselves, he is very plain; but you cannot expect everything, and I think that Ellen has done uncommonly well for herself. He is to speak to her to-day. I suppose I may make your consent for granted?'"

"It seems most satisfactory," said auntie, as Mrs. Fox folded up the letter. "Of course you will write and give your consent?"

"Write!" echoed Mrs. Fox. "I sent off a telegram the instant I read the letter. Just four words in it—'With all my heart.' I expect another letter to-morrow or next day, telling me every particular. You cannot think how pleased I am! It is such a desirable thing to get one's daughters well-married—looking over in my direction, as much as to say, 'it is quite time you were settled, young lady!'"

Then Mrs. Fox and auntie commenced a discussion about trousseau, which lasted for nearly an hour, and at last our visitor took her departure. Three days later the expected letter arrived, and Mrs. Fox brought it to auntie with a very long face. Alas for her hopes and plans! Ellen would have nothing to say to Mr. Green, and he and his prospects had been absolutely and definitely rejected.

"I call it flying in the face of Providence," said Mrs. Fox furiously; "and Richard is furious, and says he won't keep Ellen any longer, and is about to send her home without another week's delay." I heard all this second-hand from auntie, and also that the dismay and indignation of Mrs. Fox were impossible to describe.

Within ten days Mrs. Fox had arrived, and no doubt received a very tepid reception from her disappointed relatives. I took a great fancy to her at first sight. She was not the least like her step-sisters, but resembled her mother, auntie's former school-fellow. She was rather small, and very slight and graceful, and had a nice, pleasant, but not exactly pretty face, gray eyes, an aquiline nose, and a late-looking mouth; it was this resemblance that spoiled her beauty, and made people say, "What a determined-looking girl that Miss Fox is!" She was three years older than I, and talked as if she were fifty, being, according to uncle, "a rock of sense."

We became great friends, and she was allowed to come over and spend a good deal of her time with us; in fact, I have reason to believe that her sisters and step-mother were by no means ill-pleased to dispense with her society. For, in spite of all her endeavors to restrain them, her sisters' admirers would leave their lawful spouses, to offer up incense to their plump and elegant-looking newly-arrived relation.

In due time I make my debut at a grand ball at the Residency, and, though "I say it as should not," had a great success. My card was crammed before I had been ten minutes in the room, and I could have had three partners for every dance if so inclined.

Now that I was launched in society, I was invited everywhere with uncle and aunt. I went to balls, dances, dinners, and picnics, and enjoyed myself vastly. Uncle used to grumble and growl at being dragged about, and kept up till all hours; but in his heart I think he secretly liked it, and auntie too. I made all her caps, and arranged her lappets and laces, and provided uncle with dainty little *boutonnieres*. As I pinned one of these in his button-hole, preparatory to starting to some entertainment, he would say: "We little knew what we were saddling ourselves with when we took the charge of you, you spoiled puss." He would declare over and again that I received far more attention than was good for me; that my head (such as it was), was completely turned, and that for his part, for the little he could not discover what there was to admire in such a conceited, overbearing little flirt.

But I think that he and auntie were not ill-pleased to see their Nora surrounded by crowds of competitive partners, nor to hear her spoken of as "the beautiful Miss Neville, the belle of Mulkapore!" Yes—I, the hideous toad, the ugly duckling, had really become the fine young swan that Mrs. Roper had predicted.

Although I had various admirers, my heart was still exclusively mine own; it was perfectly immaterial to me who my partner was; so long as he was a good dancer or tennis-player, as the case might be. No one in the whole world had it in his power to make my pulse beat one throb faster—in fact, I began to question within myself whether I had an organ of that particular kind at all! The instant any of my friends became in the least degree personal or sentimental I used to be seized with an uncontrollable desire to laugh; and laughing, we all know, is fatal to tender speeches, and always had the effect of bringing my cavalier's eloquent outpourings to an abrupt and indignant conclusion. Uncle Jim declared "that I was a hard-hearted, mercenary little wretch, reserving my hand for some octogenarian old general, with many bags of rupees;" and I would retaliate by ruffling up his grizzled locks all over his head, carrying off his *puce*, or, in his cheerful case, much to the indignation and amazement of our dignified butler, who, being a Mohammedan, sincerely despised all white woman-kind (except auntie), and did not half relish seeing his respected "shahib" treated with such off-hand familiarity.

TO BE CONTINUED

THE GOLDEN WEDDING

It was the year of 1849, that memorable year which saw thousands of men leave their comfortable homes, and face dangers and death, in order to reach the newly-found gold fields of California. This year had wrought great changes in the West. The dormant missions and pueblos had been rudely awakened from their peaceful slumbers by the imporing tide of active, ambitious, bustling gold-seekers; but San Antonio, nestled among the hills, away from the public road and all intercourse with the world, still undisturbed amid its rich olive groves and vineyards. The most prominent feature of the village was the church, an adobe building dating a century back. Around this, were scattered two score small houses, the dwellings of the mission Indians, and farther down the slope ran the little brook which had its source in the creek west of the mission. In this brook the women did their washing, while the barefoot children played and gambled, splashing one another, much to the displeasure of their mothers. Here too, under the cool shade of two stately sycamores, the men would sit after the work of the day, and talk of pleasant, homelike things. The news which had caused so much alarm among other missions was heard by these men with disdainful indifference. No one could harm them, they said, while Father Ambriss and Don Carlos Rodriguez stood by them. Besides, they had very vague notions of things outside. They did not know how closely connected they had been with the other missions in prosperity, and how this connection would hold good in adversity. Of all the Indian population only two men had gone far enough from the mission to lose sight of the Campanilla. The rolling, treeless hills which surrounded the fertile San Antonio Valley bounded their world. Under the shadow of these hills they had been born, and here, where they had toiled and labored, they hoped to rest some day with their ancestors, in the little graveyard, with its half ruinous adobe wall and mouldering crucifix.

Father Ambriss, the tutelary genius of San Antonio, was a man past middle age, a true specimen of the heroic Franciscan missionaries who civilized the New World. In appearance he was prepossessing, tall and spare, with regular sunburnt features, and soft gray eyes that could speak volumes at one glance—all these united to a deep melodious voice and unsurpassed eloquence, made him beloved, not only of the Indians, but of all who came in contact with him. Many years had passed since he had come from

Mexico, a young priest full of ambition and dreams, and during those years he had accomplished much. Many of his dreams had come true; others, alas! had dissolved into nothingness. He had formed many enduring friendships in the country and his friends vied with one another to show him their love and reverence. Foremost among these had been Don Enrique Rodriguez, the Master of Las Rosas. At his arrival from Mexico the priest had been joyfully welcomed to "Las Rosas," and the short distance which separated it from the mission made it so easy of access that he considered it a second home. Here his advice was eagerly sought and followed, and when both master and mistress had passed away, leaving the weight of the vast estate on Don Carlo's young shoulders, it was he who proved both father and counsellor to him, and helped him bear the burden, until the poor lad looked to him as a second father. To-day as Father Ambriss sat on the mission veranda, the soft autumn breeze fanning his temples, and the monotonous droning of the bees lulling him to rest, he saw a horseman riding towards the church. With a quick movement of pleasure he left his seat and walked briskly down the steps to meet him. It was Carlos. Alighting he advanced to shake hands, and on doing so, the priest noticed the sad look on the fine young face and the unwonted tremor of the hand. "Why didn't you come before, Carlos?" he asked. "I was away, Padre. I have just returned from a trip to San Francisco." And as he spoke his eyes wandered over the golden cornfields and waving pastures until they rested on the distant roofs and chimneys of Las Rosas. Dear Las Rosas, where he had been born, where he had grown to manhood, and where, till yesterday he had hoped to die!

"Ah! you do not seem in good spirits, my son. Has anything unpleasant befallen you, or is your sad look the outcome of the tire-some ride?"

Carlos seated himself on one of the stone steps leading to the church, then looking into the priest's kindly eyes, he said, "Padre, what I feared so long has happened. Las Rosas has passed from my hands forever."

"What!" burst from Father Ambriss' ashen lips. "You have sold Las Rosas?"

"The government has sold it for me, Padre. In vain I presented my papers of possession to the court. They are of no value now that California belongs to the United States. Las Rosas is government land now, and as such it has been sold to a man from Washington."

If the poor Indians could have seen Father Ambriss' white, drawn face no doubt they would have been terrified. His lips were compressed, his nostrils dilated, his eyes, so gentle before, flashed with intense excitement and his breath came thick and irregular.

"And what will you do now? What will become of Carmelita? Of your grandmother and grandfather?"

"I have vast tracts of land in Mexico, Padre, with my sister and grandparents I will go there. I will strive to live there, and to forget even the name of California. But before we go we must have the great wedding feast. You will arrange everything, won't you, Padre? See that all the Indians come, and that all enjoy themselves. I want my grandmother's golden wedding to be the greatest feast that San Antonio ever witnessed—our farewell feast. And, Padre, we will keep the sale of Las Rosas a profound secret; for but you and I know it now. The time will come soon enough when I will have to tell them."

There were tears in his voice, and tears in his heart, as he bade the priest farewell, and he slowly away. The first streaks of dawn had just appeared in the East, where the morning star still twinkled, and the cock had not yet stopped crowing, when the door of the saguan of Las Rosas opened noiselessly, and a girl, fresh and lovely as the flowers themselves walked into the garden. Lightly she went from bush to bush gathering the fragrant, dew-washed roses, and handing them to the maid who followed her. "You must arrange them prettily Estefana," she whispered.

"Yes, Senorita, I will fill every room with them." The big shepherd dog, stretched on the veranda, pricked his ears, as the murmur of low voices reached him. He listened a moment, then giving a deep growl, he bounded into the garden barking furiously.

"Hush! Pastor! We must not awake them before the Padre comes," said Carmelita, patting his head.

The dog recognizing his young mistress stopped barking and wagging his tail meekly followed her into the house. But a few minutes afterward his bark was heard again, loud and clear, this time aroused by the sound of hoofs on the gravel walk.

"It must be the Padre and Carlos," said Carmelita running out to meet them.

The guests were slowly assembling in the salon and as Father Ambriss entered he was greeted by a chorus of glad voices.

How swiftly the hours glided on that happy autumn day! There were songs and toasts and revelry, and many a fancy dance to the metallic click of the castanets. The house was a bower of roses. In the dining room the table groaned under its weight of silver and flowers, and the parlor, with its low-broad-beamed ceiling, was filled with dark-eyed senoritas and gallant caballeros. Here sat Senor and Senora Hernandez opening with eager, shaky hands the many presents brought to them by the friends and relatives sitting around them. How happy everyone looked! Contentment reigned supreme. Only Carlos and the priest looked sad, when by chances their eyes met. Down in their hearts they had a sad, sad secret.

Outside, under the spreading pepper trees and slender palms, long tables had been prepared for the Indians, who had come in groups from the missions, laden with fruits, flowers and ferns, their simple offerings to the Senora. And how they enjoyed themselves, these dark skinned siles. This was their gala day. They ate, drank and ran races. The women sang the sweet, low melodies of their people, and the men told wonderful stories, handed down to them by their fathers.

That night when the late moon appeared behind the hills, flooding the valley with its mellow light, all was repose at Las Rosas. Only Don Carlos stood in the balcony, his hand pressed to his forehead, thinking of the awful revelation he had to make on the morrow.

A month afterward Las Rosas stood vacant and silent awaiting the advent of its new owner.

Fifteen years had elapsed. Don Carlos impelled by the unconquering longing to see his former home, was again riding down the Valley of San Antonio. It was the hour of noon as he approached the mission. The hot, vertical rays of the sun enveloped the earth and held it spell-bound. In vain he waited to hear the Angelus ring across the meadows, in vain he looked around for some familiar face. On the church steps he met an Indian girl.

"Padre Ambriss?" he asked. For her only answer the girl turned to the left, to the little graveyard, and pointed out a grave whose cross was a trifle larger than the rest. Amid the rootless huts of the Indians, and the dead, broken branches of his orchard trees, Padre Ambriss slept.

With an aching heart, Carlos visited each long loved spot. He slowly followed the grass grown road that led to La Rosas. What a change he found there! The rose bushes, dead, the roof tiles broken, the massive doors gone. The west end of the veranda, his grandmother's favorite spot, here where she sat for the last time the day of her golden wedding, had been turned into stable, where four splendid horses were now feeding. In the East end three rough miners sitting on the floor laughed and jested and as he approached, one of them glanced up with a good natured grin.

"Looking for a job, partner?" he asked. "No, I am simply a traveller on my way South."

He turned away, and mounting his horse, galloped off across the San Antonio Valley, and far beyond those hills which hid from view the little adobe church—that dead deserted church which he would never see again.—Helen Proto, in The Tidings.

THE LIGHT OF HIS EYES

(A TRUE STORY) By Rev. Richard W. Alexander.

How marvellous are God's ways when He brings the forces of His power and tenderness to bear on human souls?"

Thus said a good Jesuit to me not long ago.

"Let me tell you a little incident," he continued, "that happened a few years since and which was told me by one of the participants."

"It was in the days now past when we used bicycles. One of our younger men, by no means an expert, was directly wobbling his wheel along cautiously behind an elderly man who was about as poor a rider as himself. Suddenly the elder man's wheel dashed against a cart at a crossing. The wheel overturned and was smashed, while the prostrate man received in his face the full force of a broken spoke, gouging out an eye which lay on his cheek, a bloody and hideous spectacle. Immediately, before the crowd gathered, the priest sprang from his wheel, and ran to assist the prostrate man. He found that the poor man was more stunned than hurt except for his face, and his eye, which was a terrible sight. Having brushed off the dust and mud, he took a clean handkerchief from his pocket, and giving it to the first small boy at hand—and they were at hand in a trice—told him to wet it at the nearest hydrant. The boy wasn't ten seconds gone, and came back with the dripping handkerchief. The priest carefully wiped the blood from the eye, and raised the eyelid, forced back the ball into its socket. He then tied the wet handkerchief over the eye, and around the head. The man was much shaken, and the priest advised him to go to the nearest doctor. On finding that the injured man could walk, he started him on his way, and mounted the wheel to continue his own journey.

As he sped along, the thought occurred to him that maybe he was too hasty. What did he know of sur-

gery, or of the replacing of an eye-ball? Suppose blood poison should set in, on account of his unskillful act! Suppose the man should die! He blamed himself for not taking his wheel and hunting up a surgeon. But then he reflected, he did the best he knew how—and his motive was pure charity. He had never seen the man before, so he left him to God and went about his daily work.

Next day he read in the paper a greatly exaggerated account of the accident. He was lauded as a hero, and the gentleman in question was described as one of the well-known, highly respected citizens of the town. The latter was reported to be completely out of danger, and his eye saved. Not anxious for notoriety the Father took good care to keep the matter as quiet as possible. He remembered, however, that the man to whom the accident happened, was a noted bigot, a Puritan of the bluest type.

A prayer rose to his lips, however, that the Lord would have pity on that poor man's soul.

Time passed on, year after year, and the accident was forgotten, when one day the priest in question was called to the parlor of the rectory. A card was handed to him, but the name meant nothing, as it was not among those of his acquaintances. An elderly, dignified gentleman who wore glasses arose to greet him. Taking a folded white handkerchief from his breast pocket, he displayed a name in the corner of it.

"Is that your name, Father?" said the visitor.

"The priest looked at the handkerchief in astonishment. It was his name without doubt.

"Yes Sir," was the reply, "but how did you come into possession of my handkerchief?"

"Do you remember a bicycle accident about a year ago in which you figured, together with a smashed-up party and his bicycle? You put a man's eye back into its socket as deftly as if you had studied surgery all your life!"

"Why," laughed the priest, "now that you mention it, I remember all about it. Are you the sufferer?"

"I was the sufferer," said the man, "and were it not for you I would be blind to-day. You did the job so quickly and so well that there are left behind no ill effects worth mentioning. When I showed my eye to a specialist he was amazed at the completeness of the job, and when I told him I lost track of you, he said I owed you my sight, and perhaps my life. But I had the handkerchief you tied around my head, and your name was there in full. I wasn't long in finding you out and I found your house pretty soon, too. I have been visiting your church, attracted by my desire to see you, and have been listening to your sermons, and to those of the other Fathers here. My mind was enlightened, and my heart touched. I went to one of your priests, and having been instructed, I have lately been received into the Church. I repressed my desire to talk to you, wishing to wait until I could tell you that you had given sight, not only to my eyes, but to my soul. I am a Catholic now, and to you I owe the light of my eyes, and the light of faith. Moreover, my family—wife and children—are all under instruction, and will follow me into the Catholic Church. Your act of charity, and this white handkerchief which revealed your identity, were the means God gave me to see the faith, and I have come this morning to tell you the whole beautiful story, and to thank you."

Need it be said that the priest blessed God, who had made him an instrument in so remarkable a conversion? How little we know of the influence we exercise by our simplest words and works of charity upon those we meet!—The Missionary.

AN EUCHARISTIC CONVERSION

FACT STRANGER THAN FICTION

Fittingly, it would seem, is this story of a conversion to our holy faith written in the little town of Golden Gate, just opposite the entrance to the great harbor of San Francisco, for it was here that the subject of this sketch lived when he entered the Church. And fittingly, too, is it written, as the sequel will show, within the octave of Corpus Christi.

Far away, in the distant Hawaiian Islands, took place what I may rightly call the first step towards the realization of that for which I constantly prayed—the conversion of my husband. From the beginning that conversion would seem to have been intimately connected with the Holy Eucharist. An act of generosity and justice towards the priest began the drama. It is unnecessary to enter into details, but suffice it to say, that this priest, absolutely through no fault of his own, found himself involved in serious difficulties of a political nature. Being a foreigner and without friends, he was in serious danger when Mr. —, inspired by a sense of justice and fairness, went to his aid and extricated him from the difficulties.

"For this day's work," I said to Mr. —, "you will be protected while you live; no one will be allowed to harm you."

A few years later Mr. — had occasion to befriend another priest, the famous and saintly Father Damien. It was expedient at that time that Father Damien should come from Molokai to Honolulu for important reasons. But it would seem that the authorities, both ecclesiastical and civil, did not consider that there was