

from the new found friend; he paused a moment at the door in saying good-bye to look back at the pretty picture. He wished he might take it all away with him. It was a lesson and a rebuke. How little wealth had in the framing of such a picture! It never produced such a happy, shining countenance as the one that beamed at him out of the invalid's resting place. The lily dominated the scene; no flower had ever struck him in this way before. They formerly meant a stout monthly bill from the florist. But today, this glorious Easter lily, meant to him, even as it meant to the child, a glorious coming up into God's light. The world was happier and the sun brighter for such things. Only an Easter lily—and an innocent soul to appreciate it!

TUNING IN AN EASTER STORY

By George Henry Waldron

The hands on the office clock had but ten minutes to go before it would be too late, which is to say that it was nine minutes to five. Hence the air of expectancy.

Not that anyone was worrying unduly for Walter Courtney's sake, nor concerned greatly as to whether or not he took advantage of the situation and closed the option, making the first step in a move that would mean the tearing down of the old Wrigley block and the erection of a big, modern apartment.

But it was strange to the point of astonishment that one whose remarkable financial advance for one of his years had been due to making the most of the main chance at every turn, should come so near to letting slip his opportunity to consummate the biggest real estate bargain in years.

Twice within the next five minutes it sounded as though Courtney was getting in under the wire. But the footsteps coming from the direction of the elevator passed by the door marked "Nelson and Nelson, Attorneys," and died away down the hall.

Not necessary, perhaps, but thoughtful, was the suggestion from his father that made young Fred Nelson pause in his pacing of the floor at four minutes before the hour, to call up the office of the young man who five years ago to the day had shown his shrewdness by quietly securing an option on the property at John and Nassau streets at less than two-thirds its present value.

Courtney had been gone three hours, came the answer. He had left word that he would be at Nelson's not later than 4.30 o'clock.

Three pairs of eyes, belonging, respectively, to the two Nelsons and Williams, office clerk and notary, watched as though they expected something to jump out of it, the wall timepiece that made the only noise in the room. But the ticking that told off another full hour was like every tick that had gone before and all that would come after. Nothing happened.

Something was happening to Courtney, but it was at the police station. With Officer Burke at his right, he stood looking through the wire grating in front of quiet Captain Joyce, who had seen before him too many persons of diverse mood and nature to be impressed by the ordinarily agreeable, but now angry and argumentative Walter Courtney.

In one and the same breath the latter was letting it be known that the man he had hit had walked in the path of the car, that he had done everything possible in directing that he be given care, that he would have reported the accident anyway, not being the idiot that some—with a look at the strong-armed Burke—would make him out, and that his objections to coming to the station immediately were not due to a desire to run away but because he was trying to get to Nelson's law office before 5 o'clock to close a deal that had meant thousands.

"Now it's too late."

The near tears that Burke imagined he detected in the voice as Courtney surrendered to circumstances, prompted his contribution in sarcasm.

"You almost make me cry. Only if I do, it'll be for Jim Gleason and his family. Too bad about that deal. You can thank your lucky stars you didn't kill him, tearing through the streets like—"

"I wasn't tearing. Wasn't going over—"

The Captain's raised hand and his request for an end to the discussion showed that Burke had a supporter back of the desk. Walter Courtney went down the station steps disconsolately after having been cautioned to hold himself in readiness should he be wanted.

Mechanically, and with thoughts of deals driven for the moment from his mind, Courtney started his car and drove over to the home of his victim, who had requested that he be taken there rather than to a hospital. Not without sympathy, he was led principally by a desire to have an end to the anticipated hold-up for damages. That the errand should take him to the Wrigley Block was odd.

By no means dilapidated, the building was one of the last in the vicinity to withstand the advance of a more modern style of architecture. A meat market, a grocery and a quick repairing shoe shop occupied the ground floor and above were living

quarters, the rentals for which went downward in proportion as one went upward to reach them. The Gleason's lived on the third floor.

Courtney passed a departing physician in the hall. He was given a kindly greeting and found no rancor in the heart of the man stretched out in bed with a badly sprained leg and some contusions on the head. With the homely philosophy that makes the best of things, there was household satisfaction, without minimizing the accident, that it had been no worse.

"You were not to blame, Mr. Courtney. Serve me right for taking chances. It's 'Safety First' hereafter."

"Maybe"—Courtney, going half way, forced himself to the admission, "maybe it was—partly my fault."

"I don't think so."

It was Mrs. Gleason who spoke. Courtney did not misunderstand. He knew enough of human nature to realize that beneath the banter was sympathy and affection.

"Jim's forever shooting in front of automobiles at crosswalks and saying he's as much right there as they have. He's often been mad when I wouldn't let him drag me along."

"I think she's glad I was hurt," came a voice from the bed. "Says I ought to offer this up for my sins—when I haven't any—so that I'll have that much less to suffer in purgatory."

"I told him that if it had to happen it couldn't have come on a better day than Good Friday, and that it will help him to bear his bit of pain if he thinks of the sufferings of the Saviour."

Courtney had forgotten that it was Good Friday. Having delivered himself up to Business, it had long held him, body and soul. An idea of the change that had come with years might have been gained by a comparison of the cold if artistic surroundings of his bachelor apartments with the atmosphere that prevailed here and that was suggestive of boyhood days. But Courtney was not in a reminiscent mood.

Sometimes portraits of family friends have a way gradually of impressing themselves, and here were some that Courtney could not but recognize. In direct view, in an adjoining room, was a handsome painting of the Sacred Heart, and there was a fine engraving of the Immaculate Conception in the bedroom. A smaller picture of St. Joseph hung near the door, while on the dresser was the likeness of a sweet faced Sister with a crucifix.

To make conversation, the visitor was about to ask if she were a relative. Mr. Gleason answered the unspoken query.

That's the "Little Flower of Jesus."

Then there was another introduction.

"Mary, this is Mr. Courtney."

When Walter Courtney arose and said that he was pleased to make the acquaintance, it was no polite fabrication. Reserve without ungraciousness, personal attributes that attracted admiration and an indefinable quality that impressed one meeting Mary Gleason with a sense of worth, exerted their influence.

Courtney did the natural thing when he proceeded with a renewed explanation of the accident and an expression of deep regret. He was heard only part way through.

"Yes, I know. I'm sure you couldn't help it."

Mary who had come to ask after her father's comfort, without being rude to the "company," went along briefly to other topics with her mother. She said that one of the girls at the office was to call for her on the way to church, which led to a word or two about the plans for the radio concert at the parish hall Easter Monday night and the regret that her father would be unable to attend, a deprivation of which he made light.

Feeling that he was a little in the way, Courtney left after greeting at the door Father O'Reilly, who, making a sick call in the neighborhood, had heard of the accident to one of his parishioners.

Having come in anticipation of hearing a charge of negligence and the presentation of a preliminary claim for damages, Courtney had been agreeably surprised. He was departing disappointed that his questions as to whether he could not be of assistance had been negatively answered, and that his final urgent request that he be permitted to do at least something during the idleness of the head of the house had been politely but firmly refused.

With the disappointment, however, was admiration for the family spirit of independence, a spirit that to Courtney's fancy seemed concentrated most completely in the personality of Mary Gleason.

It was going over some of her words the next day that gave Courtney an inspiration. Mary and her mother became parties to the scheme only after argument had convinced them that the arrangement would not only be a pleasant surprise for the injured man but would furnish him many an enjoyable hour in his confinement, and on the agreement that Courtney should feel no obligation to make the provision permanent.

Thus it was that one of the largest home radio sets to be found in the city, with the best amplifier procurable, was installed in the Gleason home during the day. Courtney had to decline an invitation to stop during the evening, when instructions were to be given on tuning in

and getting the most out of the instrument, and when a program would be heard. But he was present on Easter morning.

Jim Gleason's expressions of wonderment had given way to calm enjoyment of the uplifting strains of music appropriate to the joyous feast of the Resurrection. It didn't take the place of church, as he truthfully said, but probably it was the next best thing for a sick man—nor was it lost on other ears—to hear a brief message from a noted clergyman on the significance of Easter, and the way its lesson can be given personal application.

With a plea for a determination to rise to better things, there was a passing reference by the speaker to the necessity for a choice in many cases between two paths, and a reminder, among other suggestions, in this connection, that one cannot serve God and Mammon. So was the way to the risen Lord made clear.

Then the most exultant notes of "The Hallelujah Chorus" from "Elijah," sung by one of the most famous choirs in the country, filled the room. In the silence that followed was a spell that was felt by all.

It was broken by the preparations of Mrs. Gleason and her daughter to go to Mass.

"Wish I were going with you," said Jim. "Hear Mass for me. And pray for me, will you?"

"Yes," promised his daughter, "and I think I'll pray too that nothing comes of that other matter. It's not wrong to pray for such favors, is it?"

Mrs. Gleason explained to Courtney.

"Mary heard a rumor the other day—we were talking about it just before you came in—that this block was going to be sold and torn down and a fancy apartment put up at rent that no one here now could afford to pay. I wish they'd leave things alone when there's no need to be changing them. I don't know what we're coming to with the rents the way they are, and going higher. But I told Mary not to worry."

Courtney's silence was becoming noticeable before it dawned upon him that he had not responded. Then he bowed abstractedly and said six words.

"That's right. That's right. Don't worry."

"Have you been to church yet, Mr. Courtney?" asked Mary at the door.

"No—not yet."

Walter Courtney did not know enough about feminine apparel to say whether or not the girl who had just gone out had on smart Easter attire but he was sure that her appearance was altogether charming. Perhaps modesty and good taste, rather than smartness, would have better described what she wore. He gazed with half closed eyes at the door through which she had passed and pondered a moment on the possibility of her knowing who had held the option. He decided that she did not.

"That was fine music and a good talk."

Courtney's nod indicated agreement.

"Did you say you were going to church?" continued Gleason.

"Because if you are there isn't much time to lose. I'm not hurrying you out. But don't stay on my account. I'm all right."

"I did not say so"—Courtney reached for his hat and slowly arose—"but I am going."

He walked across the floor and as he turned spoke with some feeling. "I don't mind telling you that I haven't been—very lately. Maybe the thin air of that radio stirred me to think of the substance nearby. Anyway, I'm going to Mass, too. You see what good it has done me to come over here. Good-bye."

If Father O'Reilly was surprised to see Walter Courtney coming down the middle aisle as he stood in the rear after Mass, he did not say so. But he need not have spared Courtney's feelings. Walter himself brought up the subject as he shook hands with the genial pastor of St. Patrick's, telling the story in a few words.

"So you've been 'tuning in'?"

The tight grip of the priest's hand put into his words more than the humor the twinkle in his eye gave them.

"Well, it's the first time I ever knew the grace of God to come by wireless. But now that you have the station, keep in touch with it. I want to see you here every Sunday."

"You will, Father."

And Courtney made way for others.

Walter was fairly well satisfied with himself when he went down to his office the next morning. Although on the Friday before he was overcome with chagrin when engine trouble just outside the city had spoiled his plans regarding the option, from what had taken place in the meantime, barring the accident itself, he was now glad that he had not been on time. This view of the matter, even though the outcome had been beyond his control, he considered in the light of a victory over himself.

But he was soon called to defend his title. From the first envelope he opened dropped the challenge.

And the fight was on.

It was a letter from Nelson and Nelson, attorneys for Mrs. Ramkin, owner of the Wrigley block. She had no particular desire to sell the property, left her by her husband, dead now six years, as she did not need the money. Neither did she

wish to stay the hand of progress. If she retained ownership she would let the property remain in its present state, but realized that if Courtney or someone else purchased it, the new owner would rebuild.

Mrs. Ramkin felt in some way obligated to give Courtney another chance, though in no manner responsible for the fluke the day the option expired. She could not wholly stand by the old figure, but if he wished to take advantage of three days' grace on a further opportunity to buy it, he could do so at an advance of \$20,000 over the original figure, thus providing in a way for certain work that had been done on the property, and in slight consideration of changed values, though still leaving it considerably below its actual worth.

The law firm felt it in order to add on its own account a note to the effect that the three days' grace in such a case was quite unusual and was a mark of the client's generosity if not business-like spirit.

Failure to mail the letter promptly on Saturday had cut down Courtney's additional time. He had only until 5 o'clock on the present day to decide. But it was enough. It was the kind of an offer to be snatched out of hand. And why shouldn't Courtney so snatch it? Why, not, indeed?

Came thoughts then of the Gleasons—Mary, her mother and her father. They would have propositions to settle, as would most of the others in the block, and doubtless difficulty in finding suitable places within their means. It was almost like turning them out cold. And was it principally through public spirit that the new structure would go up, or was it to increase holdings and add to banking deposits? Mrs. Ramkin would leave the property as it was. Why not let her?

Swiftly offsetting this line of argument was the conviction that anyone passing up a proposition like this for such an intangible thing as what had been told him at Gleason's ought to have a committee of persons appointed to manage his affairs. Then, too—

So went the conflict through the day. It was 4:45 when Courtney closed his desk.

As he approached the building in which was the office of Nelson and Nelson two courses were open. He could drive past and forget the offer resting in his pocket, or he could stop and use a portion of the remaining five minutes to buying the Wrigley Block. There was no evidence of indecision as he turned in towards the curb.

With about half a minute to spare, the deal was closed.

"When do you expect to tear down and rebuild?" began the senior Nelson. "I think—"

"Who said anything about rebuilding? I bought the place to prevent that very thing being done. If I hadn't taken it someone else would have purchased Mrs. Ramkin into selling. There's such a thing as carrying this improvement idea and rent jumping business too far, you know."

Nelson's stare might mean either a doubt as to Courtney's sanity or the acceptance of his explanation as a joke. The purchaser added a bit by way of dropping the subject.

"Anyway, the building is in good condition and is a fine investment as it is. May I use your phone?"

It was interesting news that Mary Gleason brought home at the supper hour when she announced that Walter Courtney had telephoned her at the office to tell her that the block had just been sold.

"Who bought it?" asked her mother.

"That's just what I don't know. But we'll learn tonight."

"In what way?"

"Mr. Courtney asked me if he might call—to tell me about that—and other things."

CRUCIFIXION PLANT

There is a popular belief in the Old World that the crown of thorns placed on the Saviour's head was derived from a certain species of euphorbia, which when grown nowadays in botanical gardens, is often trained into the form of a thorny crown fastened upon a cross.

The "crucifixion plant" as it is called, has no leaves worth mentioning, save at the tips of its branches. All the rest of it is mainly thorns.

But the weirdest thing of all about it is that, when cut with a knife, drops of red juice, resembling blood, exude from it. No wonder, then, that in the Old World, where religious symbolism has such a strong hold upon the people it should be regarded with awe.—The Tablet.

JESUS RISEN

Down, down, all lofty things on earth,
And worship Him with joyous dread!

O sin; thou art outdone by love!
O death! thou art discomfited!

Ye heavens, how sang they in your courts,
How sang the angelic choirs that day,

When from His tomb the imprisoned God,
Like the strong sunrise broke away?

Oh, I am burning so with love,
I fear lest I should make too free;
Let me be silent and adore
Thy glorified humanity.

—FATHER FADER

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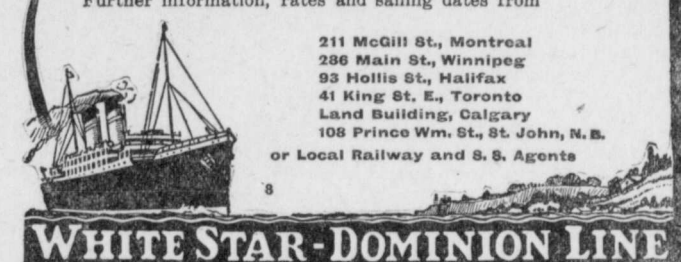
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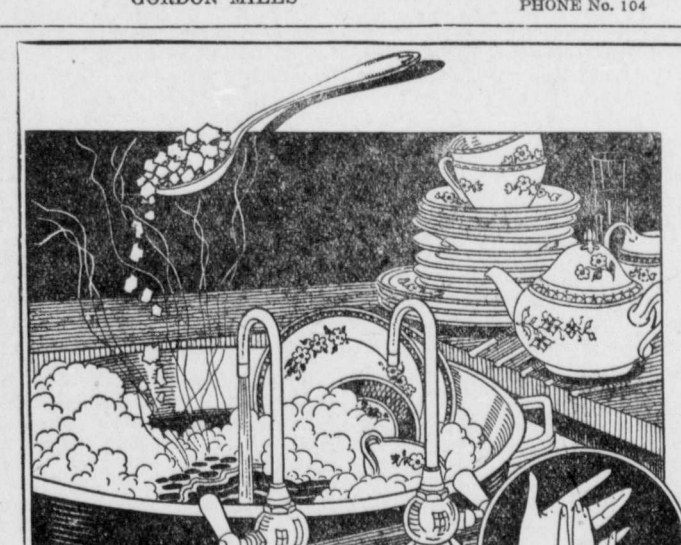


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