

DURSTON'S BURGLAR.

Richard Durston, bachelor, had always been afraid of burglars and susceptible of old maids. He could not remember the time when the dread of being robbed or sued for breach of promise was not upon him. In other respects he was quite courageous. He never seemed to feel nervous about dogs, lightning, or fire. He even dared to do right now and then. On the people he was as plucky as the average man in spite of his conviction that the time would come when he would have trouble with a burglar and a suit at law with an old maid.

Durston, as you know, lives in a hand some house on an up town cross street. He has always held that the majority of burglaries are effected through the treachery of servants. He has, therefore, kept bachelor's hall for many years with the aid of only one assistant—an old woman—a kind of heirloom in his family. As he generally dines at his club he has managed to live very comfortably without keeping a boarding-house for men and women who might be in league with robbers. His aged housekeeper is not ambitious. He feels confident that she will never sue him for breach of promise nor permit a burglar to make a breach in the house.

Durston's library and bedroom are on the second floor. The old woman sleeps in a back room on the floor above. She is very deaf, so when Durston wishes to call her he touches a button at the head of his bed. This sends a mild electric current through the reclining form of the housekeeper up stairs. She approves of this process in the belief that it tends to rid her rheumatism in check. It seems very shocking way to treat an old woman, however. And then Durston must find it unpleasant to discharge a servant two or three times a day.

But even so a burglar. One night last winter Durston reached home rather late than usual. As was his custom he examined the doors and windows in the lower part of the house and then went to his library. He found his smoking jacket and slippers in their accustomed place. A wood fire was crackling in the grate and a decanter of whiskey and a box of cigars tempted him from the center-table. Durston smiled contentedly as he drew in easy chair toward the fire. Life was very pleasant to him. He was one of those happy bachelors who have no regrets. Not that Durston lacked sentiment. Far from it. In fact, he was not at all what the world calls a practical man.

No, Durston was inclined to look at the romantic side of life, and he smoked a perfect and sipped his whiskey and seltzer in front of the blaze that might be indulged in imaginings that would have shocked the hard-headed housekeeper up stairs worse than did her private electric current the day the battery was ever charged.

Durston had for the moment forgotten all about old maid and burglars. He was in a condition of bodily and mental repose that drove into outer darkness all the unpleasant things of life. Finally the conviction came upon him slowly that it was time to go to bed. He fought hard against the proposition, but there was no escape for him. Looking at his watch he found that it was long after 1 o'clock. Turning out the lights in the library he entered his bedroom. He was still in a state of sleepy contentment. Just as he was about to put out the gas he was startled by a slight noise that seemed to come from the ceiling. He listened intently. Five minutes passed, but there were no further sounds from below. Durston rounded himself by perfect darkness and crawled into bed. But he could not sleep. That unlucky noise had rendered him feverish. The thought of burglars had destroyed his serenity of mind. His revolver lay on a chair by the bedside and he kept his hand on it for some time. The weapon seemed to whisper to him: "Peace. Durston, go to sleep, my child. I will not go off until the burglar comes."

This assurance on the part of the pistol quieted Durston somewhat and he was beginning to feel very sleepy again when he heard a light step on the stairs. There was no mistake about it. After keeping silently aloof for years Durston's burglar had come at last. At first our bachelor felt a cold chill creep up his spinal column. Then, as the burglar carefully stole through the hall and entered the library, Durston was astonished to realize that he was lying in bed with a pistol in his hand, a housebreaker in the next room, and that he was beginning to enjoy the adventure. The thought flashed through his mind that even a breach-of-promise case might not be as horrible as he had imagined.

"The reckless fellow seems to think that there is nobody in the house," chuckled Durston as he heard his visitor light a burner in the library. Then, quietly getting out of bed and stepping gently to the door of his bedroom, Durston pointed the revolver at a snail, dark, rather well dressed man who stood in the center of the library looking about him eagerly.

"Put up your hands or I'll send a ball through you," cried Durston sternly. The dapper little burglar saw at a glance that his game was up.

"Don't do anything rash," he remarked calmly, helping himself to a stiff dose of Durston's whiskey and then lighting one of his unwilling host's cigars.

Durston was astonished and amused. "Now that I've got my burglar after waiting for him so many years I might as well make a little pleasure out of him," he said to himself. Then to the burglar: "You're a cool one. I congratulate you on your nerve. You will pardon me, however, if I ask you to take the trouble to lay aside your cigar for a moment and step to the telephone."

The burglar looked sharply at Durston, who still covered him with the revolver. There was that in the bachelor's face that shook the coolness of the intruder. He walked quickly to the telephone.

"Take down that pamphlet there," continued Durston. "Now look up the call for the precinct station house. Have you found it?"

"Yes."

"Ring up the Central office."

"The burglar suddenly turned the crank."

"You know what to do now," G. J. Abner.

A glance at the revolver was sufficient for the frightened little man. He blisfully

gave the required number to the operator.

"Is this the — precinct station-house?" he asked after a time. "All right. Wait a moment."

"Tell them you're a burglar and want a policeman sent here at once to arrest you," commanded Durston, smiling grimly.

"Will one policeman do if they ask," said the burglar.

"Use your own judgment in that matter," remarked Durston, politely.

"Hello, hello! Yes, one will do very nicely. Hurry him up, please. Yes. Thank you. Good night."

"You did very well," commented our bachelor. "If you robbed as cleverly as you telephone you would not be where you are now. I must put you to the inconvenience of stepping into my bed room for a moment. I want my housekeeper to see a nice little burglar who has ordered his own arrest."

Durston, with a pistol still in hand, touched the electric button at the head of his bed. A few moments later the housekeeper, on nightgown, entered the library. With a cry of despair she clasped the burglar to her bosom. "My son, my son, why are you here?"

Durston was amazed. He had not known that his housekeeper had a little boy.

"Is this one of your boys?" he yelled at her.

"My only son," she sobbed. "I have not seen him for twenty years, but I recognized him at once. Is he a friend of yours, Mr. Durston?"

Our bachelor knew not what to say. His housekeeper, as I have said, was an inheritance from his parents and he had always been fond of her. She had taken good care of him all these years and he hated to tell her that her son was a criminal.

"Yes," he shouted, "he dropped in to have a cigar with me. I knew you would like to see him. But he is obliged to go now. He wants to catch a train for Montreal. Kiss him farewell. He won't be back for sometime."

"Thank you, sir," murmured the burglar. "You have a good heart."

A few minutes later Durston stood on the front steps of his residence and watched his housekeeper's son as he hurried down the street.

"What shall I say to the policeman?" was the problem vexing him.

You remember the mysterious item that appeared in the newspapers the next morning. Durston explained his telephone message on the ground that he had been suffering from nightmare. The above is the first public statement of the facts in the case. I hope Durston won't get into a scrape by this narration. As a good citizen he had no right to let the burglar escape.—Edward S. Van Zile in N. Y. World.

A POEM BY CARDINAL NEWMAN.

Ave Maria.

Our papers and magazines have naturally been full of Cardinal Newman, who was so greatly loved and admired. One writer in his last mentioned certain lines written by John Henry Newman to his brother Francis on his twenty-first birthday, and containing a tribute of affection to the memory of their mother. But their mother was then alive, and died only ten years later. This writer, having been corrected for his mistake, owns the error, and did not intend to mislead as to the date of the lines addressed to whom the lines addressed. An English friend informs us that it was of his grandmother Cardinal Newman wrote. "In the year 1809 I had suffered the loss of a beloved mother, taken from me suddenly; and in writing to Cardinal Newman shortly afterwards, I mentioned having derived consolation from these lines believing as I then did (being quite unacquainted with the date of his mother's death) that they alluded to his mother. The Cardinal replied to me as follows:

"The Oration, March 3, 1869.

"To the Author of 'Tyburn':

"My DEAR — I grieve indeed at your bereavement, and thank you for your kindness in telling me of it. I said Mass for your intention—that is, for your mother's soul—this morning.

"I always say and feel one cannot lose a mother twice. It is a loss which stands by itself. I never wrote any lines about my own mother; those you refer to were about my grandmother, who died at ninety-two. God will sustain and comfort you, and you will be able to bless Him and thank Him (as indeed you do, but with joyfulness) for what at first causes you such sharp suffering.

"Yours most sincerely,

"JOHN H. NEWMAN."

We subjoin the lines referred to:

My brother, 'tis no recent loss,
Which binds our fates in one;
Even from our tender infancy
The twisted thread of our lives
Her deed, who stood in our fond mind
Our forms, by sacred love embraced.

In her affection all had share—
All six—she loved them all;
You saw her early chosen pair
Did her full favor fall;
And we became her dearest theme.
Her waking thought, her nightly dream.

Ah! brother, shall we ever forget
Her love, her care, her zeal?
We cannot pay the countless debt,
But we must ever feel;
For through her earnestness were shed
Prayer purchased blessings on our head.

Though in the end of days she stood,
And pain and weakness came,
Her force of thought was undimmed,
Her fire of love the same;
And 'tween memory faded its part,
We still kept on, as in her heart.

And when her Maker from the thrall
Of flesh her spirit freed,
Nor suffering's cup could call—
In mercy 'twas decreed:
One moment here, the next she stood
The vesture of our God.

Now, then, at length she is at rest,
Rejoice in that Saviour's bliss,
Who was her hope below;
Keep till the day when He shall own
His saints before His Father's throne.

So it is left for us to prove
Her prayers were not in vain;
And that God's growth-decaying love
Has fallen on gentle rain,
Which, sent in the dew of heaven's hour,
Tints the young leaf, perfumes the flower.

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THE SAILOR PRIEST.

SKETCH OF THE EARLY LIFE OF ALEXIS CIERE.

HIS STRANGE CONVERSION—HOW HE WAS BROUGHT BACK FROM INDIFFERENCE TO THE CHURCH.

Lady Herbert has rendered yet another good service in the latest number of the *Quarterly Review* by giving to English readers, under the catching title of "A Martyr from the Quarter Deck," a rather full life of M. Alexis Ciere, who, after serving for about twelve years with distinction, and attaining high rank in the French navy, became a Jesuit, was seized by the Communists in Paris with many of his Order, and shot without a trial because of the cloth he wore. He was one of the six, of whom the Archbishop of Paris was another, who were done to death that dread evening, May 24, 1871, in the prison yard of La Roquette. Many had heard his name, and had come to know something of him from the "Acts of the Captivity of Deaths of Fathers Olivier, Ducoudray, Garburt, Ciere and de Bergy," published some years ago by Father de Pontlevoy; but few knew of the early career of this martyr of the Commune. Lady Herbert's little and edifying pen now tells the attractive tale; yet it is a pity, if it could be otherwise, that such charming books as the *Quarterly Review* produce, should, by their high price, be beyond the reach of so many. We would, therefore, which they will, by a summary to bring this very singular and touching life nearer the people.

FATHER CIERE'S EARLY LIFE.

Alexis Ciere was born in Paris, December 12, 1819. His father was a Freeholder, touched by the venom of Voltaire, and a Socialist; his mother was a good Catholic. They were typical people of the middle class. His mother died when Alexis was only thirteen years old. Her death was, of course, a very serious loss to the boy; for, although she had early impressed this soul with a knowledge of a fear and a love for God, the tender about missed the caring hand that would safeguard and strengthen them, and they withered to the roots. He used to say of her that he remembered most clearly of all how she was wont to read to him "out of a large book bound in vellum" of the lives of the saints, and how the stories fired him to do some great thing for God. Years after, when he was a naval officer, in argument with messmates who leaned toward infidelity, he said: "After all, gentlemen, the principles instilled into the heart of a child by a good mother are the most deeply engrained, and are always the best."

ADAPTS THE CALLING OF THE SEA.

Alexis was sent by his father early to a public school where religion was ignored. Then began for him a troublous life. It was a wicked life; yet he was a winning boy. A school-fellow said of him: "Alexis is idleness itself; but, thanks to his great gifts and intelligence, he is counted amongst the most distinguished students. He is most charming, sweet-tempered, and unselfish. I think he never had a quarrel with any one." After brilliant examination he passed into the Polytechnic. He took his B. A. degree at seven years. While in the Polytechnic he was a pupil of the well known Auguste Comte; but Alexis does not seem to have been caught by his evil influence. He passed out brilliantly as he had entered, and so became entitled to choose what he pleased from among the various posts that present in the public service. To the wonder of many he chose the navy; and on October 2, 1841, he was gazetted a naval cadet. He joined the *Triomphante* at Brest the same month, and his first voyage was to the South Pacific.

What he was then like we come to know from a message and from the captain of his ship. The former says: "M. Ciere was very much superior to me in all scientific knowledge; but as he had not been in a training-ship, he had never learned the names of the ropes or any of the technical things required to give orders on board ship. So he used to come to me at night to be taught, and his humility and perseverance soon got him to know how to handle a vessel well." His captain wrote: "Alexis is a capital fellow, honest and brave, and already gives proof of an energy and decision of character that should make him a distinguished officer."

THE FIRST TURNING OF HIS THOUGHTS TO RELIGION.

This trip to the Southern seas became one of the turning points in M. Ciere's life. The ship touched at the Gambier Islands, where a few years before some French missionary priests had established themselves, and had so worked upon the natives, who until then were cannibals, that they brought them to lead civilized lives. But think, says M. Ciere in a letter home, "what impressions these devoted priests must have undergone! We passed, he says, 'three days with these good people, and the whole ship's company, officers and men, assisted at Mass on Sunday, — it was the first Mass he attended for ten years.' The natives sang during the Mass. I cannot describe to you what left in the mind of this eventful congregation, or the impression it has left on my heart." On the voyage home he confided to a fellow officer, who was a practical Catholic, that he meant to look deeply into the Catholic faith. Arrived in Paris, however, the calls of friendship and of duty left him little time. After a very brief rest he got orders to join the steam convict *Catana* at Toulon; she was about to sail for Senegal. He took with him some religious books, however, and in a letter later to his father he writes how greatly he admired the writings of Bossuet, which, he said, "kept him company every evening."

Nay, writing to the officer mentioned just before, he says: "Will you believe it, having heard we were about to leave this station"—off the coast of Guinea—"under some impulse I know not what—I got leave, rushed ashore, sought out one of the missionary Fathers and made my confession."

Then he adds: "Would you send me a rule of life suited to a fellow on board? I will now try to live well, as it is hard. When one has spent a wild youth one pays dearly for it afterwards. The recollections of sin haunt one. When I look at my past life I tremble; it is only

by the mercy of God I am not overwhelmed. I pray Him most earnestly now to give me a real horror of evil."

The ship was ordered home in 47. Ciere was then a changed man. With his natural disposition to go through thoroughly whatever he undertook, he had thrown his whole soul into the study and practice of his religion. "At my efforts now," he writes, "I am to become a better Christian and to love God with my whole heart." Yet the change did not make him morose or less winning than before. He was appointed to a home station at Brest, St. Nazaire, and thereabouts; and a messmate writes of him: "M. Ciere is more fascinating than ever. He defends his faith passionately when we attack him, but his wonderful sweetness and good temper prevent any feeling of bitterness amongst us."

He himself, writing to his brother about the conversation of a mutual friend, for which they were striving, says: "As a gay with him as possible; let him see how many joys and pleasures allowed by true religion, and that to be a good Catholic does not mean to give up all earthly enjoyments. You will do little by argument, but very much by persevering kindness."

HE TAKES TO STUDY THE WRITINGS OF ST. THOMAS.

An amusing story is told of him at this time. M. Ciere met one day in the street a venerable priest. Touching his cap, he stopped him and said: "Pardon me, monsieur, but would you kindly tell me what author has written best on religion?" The priest answered: "St. Thomas Aquinas." "And in what book?" "In his theological *Summa*." "A thousand thanks," responded Ciere, and, raising his hat, he went off to the nearest bookseller set by the Summa of St. Thomas. A singular book certainly for a young naval officer to take to; yet he writes to his father, who was naturally amazed at such a line of reading: "I assure you I have found greater sweetness in it than in any book I ever read." He used to call it his "arsenal," where he found in their ammunition to reply to the taunts and objections of unbelieving messmates. Man would be not neglecting his profession. The admiral (Bourgeois) of the Brest station wrote of him in an official note to the Admiralty: "Alexis Ciere is an officer full of talent, and thoroughly well educated. A pupil of the Polytechnic School, he adds to extensive theoretic knowledge a thorough acquaintance with the naval profession and a devotion to duty which makes him in all respects an admirable officer." Speaking of Ciere, he expressed himself still more fully: "I must not forget this young officer, who even then showed a maturity of judgment and a conscientiousness for duty, together with a varied knowledge, and so highly honorable in character that a very brilliant career must be before him. His one idea was to make himself of use to everyone. I had established a kind of elementary school on board the *Pelican*, which all the crew were expected to attend every evening while we were in harbor. Talies was set on the lower deck, and young Ciere directed the lessons of the men with a patience and ability that used to astonish me. He would himself give instructions to those who were anxious to get beyond rank in the merchant service. I have met many of these men later, who told me how much they owed to him for their success in their career, and how glad they were for his teaching. All this was not done without great self-denial on his part, and giving up of many of the pleasures in which his brother officers indulged.

This seemed to be a characteristic of Ciere, "to make himself of use to every body." While at Brest he became a member of the Conference of St. Vincent de Paul. He had just been gazetted first lieutenant, but he gave to the Conference all the time he could snatch from his duties. A member of the Conference said of him: "He is the most zealous of us all—a perfect model, and the prime mover in all our works. Sometimes you will see him followed by a whole crowd of children, who hang upon him, whom he teaches, instructs and tries to amuse. He is always at something good, not sparing himself for a moment."

A MODEL OF CHARITY.

About this time he took a resolution, and carried it out, to divide his pay into three parts each month. One part he sent to his father, who was then old and had failed in business; one he reserved for the poor, and one for his own needs. How much this last was run upon at times by his charity to others we may readily surmise. He would often look justly at his empty cigarette case when he had not left himself a sou to replenish it. To show how well balanced was his mind and how correct his views were about religion, we would quote from a letter written by him to his brother—the brother who was in Paris during the troubled days of '48, and was led away somewhat by the wind political passions of the time. The words are interesting, too, when read in view of some circumstances in political life nearer home: "His views on the scope of religion. I do not think that religion should interfere directly in all political questions (its duty is to keep before our minds the gospel principles of religion and charity. I do not say that religion should be relegated to one department and politics to another. Religion is a universal law, for the end of man is to save his soul, and it is for religion to proclaim this. All things—nature, society, man, woman, man, to attain his end. In Adam all fell; nature became corrupt, and this corruption more or less affects everything, and in general society. Through Christ we can be rehabilitated in grace and can counteract this corruption. The result is that religion, which reminds us of all this, has first claim upon a citizen; that its warnings be heard and heeded."

AN EXCITED VOYAGE.

The year 1850 saw M. Ciere take part in an expedition which kept him away from France for about four years. It led to strange adventure, and opened scenes that were most novel, and gave opportunities for the further exercise and development of the qualities of his singular life. The story, too, sheds a pleasant light on French naval life that may astonish some. But we have already transgressed our limits, and must wait to tell the tale in a second paper.—*F. M. R., in Irish Catholic.*

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