

**AS WE FORGIVE.**

By Evelyn Orchard.

Roxford slid rebelliously to his knees. His lips moved, repeating after the Rector the familiar sentences of the Lord's Prayer. But in the middle he came to a dead stop. Millie noticed it, though she was devoutly kneeling and repeating herself. He murmured "Forgive us our trespasses," but the next words seemed to block the rest of the petition—"as we forgive them that trespass against us."

Millie knew exactly what was in his mind. She wanted desperately to slide her hand along and grip his fingers encouragingly. But somehow she dared not. Only she slipped in between her own petitions another one which winged its way right up through the stars, growing rather dim, but still cheerful in a morning sky.

They did not often come to early Communion together, these two and it was a rare letter day in Millie's life, because it was the first time Will had offered to come since his quarrel with Anthony Blake.

It was rather a silly quarrel, arising in the first instance, as so many upheavals do, out of the merest trifle.

Most quarrels, traced to their source, are of this order, and any court of sane, well-balanced men would pause to marvel before judgment over the mysterious littleness mingled with the greatness of human nature. What the Judge of all the earth must think of the creatures He has endowed with heroic qualities fills one with a strange wonder.

The Roxfords and the Blakes were near neighbours, and had once been intimate. The men had travelled by the same train from Buckingham, by way of High Wycombe, every morning for years. They were in the same line of business, but not in the same firm. The quarrel arose because Blake had made use of a bit of private information which Roxford in an unguarded moment had suffered to pass his lips. According to Roxford, he had made illegitimate use of it to bring about what is called a business coup, involving large profits, and when successful, filling less astute, far-seeing men with envy and regret. The bit of information was regarding a firm known to them both which was on the eve of dissolution, and which had stocks and liabilities which, properly handled, would bring much grieve to the mill of their successors.

Blake had said the time was not yet, and that great caution had to be exercised, and Blake had gone straight away and created the time for which Roxford's firm was waiting.

It was not playing the game, of course, and there had been a stormy scene, nearly amounting to blows, between the two men, then a complete break between the families. It was very awkward, because they had built houses on the edge of the same common to be near one another, and the women had no quarrel. Millie, like the good dutiful wife she was, had obeyed Roxford's order that she was to cease acquaintance with Mrs. Blake forthwith. But the children provided a little alleyway for commerce of a remote but not unkindly sort. Even Roxford admitted that they could not poison the minds of the young generation with their quarrel, though he announced his intention of telling both his sons the story as soon as they were of an age to understand it.

That had happened two years ago. It did not appease Roxford's wrath though undoubtedly it gave him a severe satisfaction, to hear that the coup Blake had brought off behind his back had turned out rather less successfully than had been anticipated, and that, further, it had involved them in a lawsuit which ate up most of the profits.

But still he never spoke to Blake. They passed one another at High Wycombe platform every morning as if they had been utter strangers. Men who knew it forbore to put them in circumstances where they had to meet, and on the whole the sympathy was with Roxford.

What enraged Roxford most was that Blake held office in the pretty little church on the Common which had served as an additional bond between them. He became much slacker in his attendance after the quarrel, because Blake made no difference in his. This was the first time he had offered to accompany Millie to early Communion, and by the way he hesitated on the prayer, she understood that his heart was in a queer medley. She respected his sincerity, and she loved him beyond everything. When they came out the dawn was just breaking. It was the first Sunday in Advent, and the waiting world was getting ready to enthroned once more the Christ Child that had saved mankind.

"Oh Billie," she said, with a little strangled breath that was almost a sob. "You can't think how I loved being there to-day with you! Do you know it is nine months since we were there together."

"Is it though?" said Roxford. "Well, I can't pretend, Millie; I may be on the wrong tack in some directions, but I'm sincere anyway, which is more than some are. Smug hypocrites I call them, nothing else."

Millie's fingers usually like thistle-down tightened on his arm.

"Don't Billie, it hurts this morning somehow. Won't you—won't you get rid of what Rose-red calls the camelous hump to-day, and be like you were?"

"There isn't anything the matter with me, dear. Try your counsel and reproof on the right people."

"Oh but, oh but, though you say that,

Will, you don't feel it—at least not every bit of it. I couldn't help seeing, or rather hearing, when you stopped at 'As we forgive.' You know it isn't any use praying all the rest if we leave that out."

"Then I shan't go again. I'm only religious according to my lights. If it happens to be a farthing dip at the moment you know who put out the candle—not me!"

"Will, I felt so queer this morning there in the half light. It seemed as if Little Son had come down from where he is, and was standing there right by the altar rails, holding out his hands and saying, 'Daddy come!'"

The Roxfords had lost their eldest son, a brilliant and promising boy, and Roxford's shoulders heaved.

"It's taking an unfair advantage, Millie—I can't talk about it, and I won't. There was something in his voice which forbade further speech on her part. Her little effort had failed, as so many other efforts had failed. But she would still hold on, hoping and praying and waiting, as the faithful women do all over the world buttressing its crazy posts and heading them for the stars.

Roxford did not go any more to church that day. He left Millie to take the children, and after they were off, set out accompanied by Rags, a mongrel of sorts, as precious to the Roxford household as any of its human units. Rags "belonged", and was proud and glad to belong. As to his joy at being taken for a walk by his adored master on a lovely winter morning when the hoar frost was glittering on the gorse bushes, that, as the novelists say, beggars description.

Millie's words had sunk deep, and he was turning them over and over in his mind, making a kind of examination of himself as it were, when suddenly climbing out of a rather steep gully in the Common, he came face to face with Blake on the further plateau.

His face flushed angrily, he stared a full minute stonily, without the slightest sign of recognition and turned in a slanting direction. But he was pursued, not by Blake, who had loathed the encounter quite as much as he did, but by a vision at the altar rails of his dear lad with the face of the morning, his beseeching grey eyes so like his mother's bidding him come. Come whither? Why to the foot of the Cross! Where else? There is no other resting place at the long last for the souls to whom the Lord God has given the gift of immortality.

Rags was amazed to see his master turn suddenly, and begin to walk back very rapidly. His ears drooped a little, lest this should mean that the promised ramble was to be curtailed. For they were not yet long out from the pretty house on the Common's edge, where Rags had a home in which his heart found complete happiness.

He stood slightly wistful a moment, and watched; then, when his master did not take the homeward path, but another which properly pursued would take them farther afield, and bounded forward. Roxford took no notice. His attention was fixed on a lanky figure slightly stooped at the shoulders pursuing the same path several hundred yards ahead. Roxford, veering towards middle age, was acquiring to his own disgust and Millie's amused resignation, the waist line of middle age. So when he put on a spurt, he was slightly breathless by the time he came up with Blake, who turned in evident astonishment, not in the least knowing what to do.

Two Englishmen in an impasse like that present a singular picture of resignation mingled with despair. They loathe so much the display of any kind of feeling, excepting anger, which bubbles like froth to the surface, and frequently means nothing. Obviously Roxford had to take the

initiative, and he received no assistance from Blake.

"Look here, Blake," he said, in short staccato accents. "This sort of thing can't go on. It's beastly silly, and—and—well I can't stick it any longer. I'm sorry I've kept it up so long, and we'll, we'll, hang it all, let's wipe the slate and shake hands."

Blake looked profoundly surprised, his shoulders began to heave, he could not speak. And that made the situation worse, in fact it became just intolerable.

Their hands met, however, and certain kinds of handgrips can convey a good deal.

"If you're going Yardley way, and my cur is heading for it, we may as well go together. Haven't you a dog now? What's become of the spaniel?"

"Died of distemper last year. Got the blight—I expect she is the same as the rest of us. Fact is, Roxford, nothing's gone right with us since it happened. It was a bad deal for me and mine. You got the best of it, after all. But I'm sorry, I wanted to write, and Enid has never left off urging me, but well, you know how hard that sort of thing is on a chap. I think it's jolly decent of you to do this, but I rather wish I'd done it myself, you see it only makes my debt the deeper."

"Oh, stow it, this had nothing to do with me. It was Millie did it, she and no other. It was Millie's hand you shook a minute ago. Women are the very dickens, they never let off a chap. How are they all at your house? Tell me everything that has happened in the interval."

The y did not talk any business, they talked only of the precious things of life, the things of which draw men and women together, and provide the meeting ground for the true commerce, which brings all men sooner or later to the Home in which no evil thing, nor all the massed forces of darkness, can come.

Returning from church with her little brood behind her, Millie saw the two men in the distance, walking together. The children wondered why she gave a little gasp, and stood still. Then she hurried into the house. She had not finished removing her things in her own room when Roxford came lumbering up the stairs.

He put a somewhat shamed face round the door.

"I've seen Blake, Millie, and he and Enid are coming round to-night after supper. We've cleared it up, so now you'll not have to go on, world without end."

He would have run off with that, but she caught him and drew him into the room. Then she put her arms round him and held him close, and her tears were on his cheek. There might have been some of his there too. Nobody could be sure.

"Oh darling," whispered her crooning voice. "I'm so happy, I can't hear myself hardly. And Alan will be here to-night looking on, and just think next Sunday you'll be able to say 'As we forgive.' Doesn't it make you happier, Will?"

"I suppose so," he said, then added handsomely. "Why, of course, I've played a fool's game, and I just wonder you've put up with it so long."

Millie kissed and parted him, and went down to dinner with a face so sunshiny that the children looked at her in secret wonder. Her soul had winged its way to the better country, where there was rejoicing because another wanderer had come home.

**SCIENTIFIC PROOF.**

One day a teacher was having a first-grade in physiology. She asked them if they knew that there was a burning fire in the body all of the time. One little girl spoke up and said:

"Yes'm; when it is a cold day, I can see the smoke."—The Epworth Herald.

**LEAD PENCILS**

Where do all the lead pencils come from and where do they go? Although almost everybody has one, many folks never buy one, but even so more than 750,000,000 are manufactured for use in the United States every year, requiring many thousands of cords of wood.

But woods suitable for lead pencils are becoming scarcer and many manufacturers are turning to paper. Red cedar and red juniper, according to the American Forestry Association, are the woods chiefly used in making lead pencils.

A hunt is on for other kinds of wood that will take the place of these. In East Africa a kind of cedar has been found with which experiments are being made.

The production in the United States is about 80,000 cases of pencil slats per year. For each case 100 gross of pencils is made. This results in about 1,000,000,000 pencil slats per year. From each case 100 gross of pencils is made. This results in about 1,000,000,000 pencils of American grown cedar.

Since one fourth of this number is sent to foreign countries that leaves 750,000,000 pencils for the home market, which means an average of seven pencils per person, figuring on the last census.

As far back as history goes man has tried to make things to mark with and to set down his thoughts. The Arctics and the Pharaohs had crude marking devices. As early as 1750 Kalm, a Swedish naturalist, made experiments with American cedar.

In 1812 William Munro made 500 pencils at Concord and sold them in Boston, but the war stopped his plans. In 1861 Eberhard Faber began making pencils on a large scale in the United States.

The graphite which makes the mark is, of course, the important part in the manufacture of the pencil. Ceylon has furnished much of the graphite used in America. Graphite is also found in Madagascar and in Mexico.

Czechoslovakia contains deposits of both the amorphous and crystalline graphite. In the United States the chief deposits are in Alabama, New York and Pennsylvania.

One-half the trouble in every community, comes from the fact that so many people have not the capacity to keep their mouths shut. We have two ears but only one tongue which is suggestive of the fact that we should hear more than we tell. By the power of a secret divulged families, churches, neighbourhoods and even nations fly apart. By the power of a secret kept, great charities, reformatory movements and Christian enterprises may be advanced.

**TOO MUCH FOR THEM**

That's what I call killing two birds with one stone," said the jeweller as the couple dropped dead on hearing the price of the diamond ring.—Sun Dial.

Why is a newspaper like a pretty woman? To be perfect it must be the embodiment of many types. Its form is made up. It is always chased though inclined to be giddy. It enjoys a good press; the more paid the better. It has a weakness for gossip. Talks a good deal. Can stand some praise, and it's awfully proud of a new dress.

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**Mail Contract**

SEALED TENDERS, addressed to the Postmaster General, will be received at Ottawa until noon, on Friday, the 3rd February, for the conveyance of His Majesty's Mails, six times per week on the route between

AYELSFORD and WESTON, under a proposed contract for four years, to commence at the Postmaster General's pleasure.

Printed notices containing further information as to conditions of proposed Contract may be seen and blank forms of Tender may be obtained at the Post Offices of Aylesford and Welton's Corner.

W. E. MACLELLAN,  
Acting District Superintendent  
Office of District Superintendent,  
Postal Service,  
Halifax, December 22nd, 1921.

**Town of Wolfville**

Office of Town Clerk and Treasurer.

Notice is hereby given that the assessment roll of the town of Wolfville upon which the rates will be levied in and for the said town for the year 1922, has been filed in the office of the undersigned, the town clerk, and that the said roll is open to the inspection of the ratepayers of the town.

And further, take notice that any person, firm, company, association or corporation assessed in such roll, who claims that he or it is over assessed on such roll, may, on or before the tenth day of February next, give notice to the undersigned, the town clerk, that he or it appeals from such assessment, in whole or in part, and shall in such notice state particularly the grounds of objections to such assessment.

And further take notice that if any person assessed in such roll claims that any person, firm, company, association, or corporation has been omitted or wrongly inserted in such roll, he may, on or before the tenth day of February, give notice in writing to the undersigned, the town clerk, that he appeals in respect to the assessment or non-assessment of the said person, firm, company, association or corporation and shall in such notice state particularly the grounds of his objection.

Dated Wolfville, this 3rd day of January, 1922.

R. W. FORD,  
Town Clerk.

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