

A Question of Time.

(Jessie Reader, in The Messenger.)

"I will listen to you, Father," said the sick man, quite humbly, putting his hand on the priest's arm; "it seems to me I have listened to a good deal this morning, but you know you are pouring new wine into an old bottle, and the bottle must go to pieces—the new vintage is not for me; let me die as I have lived, leave me to darkness and annihilation."

"God forbid," said the priest, solemnly, "you shall not die till I have taught you a fairer science; to-morrow I shall begin."

And as he walked home he said to himself, "A fortnight ago it was a question of time, but he is better there is no doubt about that, and now it is a question of eternity."

Mr. Maitland spent a wakeful night after his rather exciting interview with Father Louis, his mind busy with many new thoughts. He had not seen his children for a couple of days, and he reflected that when he saw them again, he would be aware he was a new factor in their minds, with which he would have to reckon.

The thought troubled him, this knowledge of God which had come to him, seemed to give him an advantage over him; he felt like a burglar who had been caught in the act; he had detected him in the act of misappropriation of their goods, as it were, and they had a right to reproach him. He was conscious also of the fact that the arguments with which, "but yesterday," he could have refuted such charges with a stout heart, had somehow resolved themselves into thin air, and become vexatiously nebulous. Troubled and disturbed, he fell asleep at last, and when he awoke a couple of hours later, Hubert was standing by his bedside.

"Priscilla sent me up to shut your window," said the boy, when he had wished his father good-morning; "it has been a heavy storm of rain, but it was only a storm, so I thought I would wait till it passed so as to open it again, as you don't like it closed. May I stay with you a little? Priscilla is getting your breakfast ready—coffee and toast and lovely fresh fish. You must be much better to be able to eat a good breakfast like that."

"I am much better, Hubert," said his father, "if I can only keep it up."

"Oh, I think you will; you see things are different now, aren't they?"

"What do you mean, how are they different?"

"Well, you see we have a friend now, a new friend, who can do anything we ask, and who has been awfully, awfully good to us; we are asking Him every day to make you better and we are quite sure He will."

"You mean Father Louis?"

"No, it's God. Father Louis says He is only His servant (but oh, we do love Him). We found out about God and we are awfully glad to know Him—I have been wanting to tell you about Him for a long time, as I was wondering if you would approve of our asking Him to help us—you do, don't you, father?"

There was a slight shadow of apprehension in the boy's clear, honest eyes. Mr. Maitland did not answer directly; there was a struggle going on in his heart. At last he said faintly:

"I must hear a little more about Him before I can tell you that."

"I thought you didn't know Him," said the child, simply, "but if you ask Father Louis he will tell you everything about God. It was he who told us to ask Him to make you better, so we all ask Him, Reggie and Elsie and me, and He is making you better, isn't He?"

"Perhaps so, Hubert, for a little while."

"Oh, it will be lovely when you are quite better again, father," said the boy, "and we can go for long walks with you and for long sails on sunny days when the sea is calm. And Father Louis says you are not to go to that horrid school again any more, that it is wretched work and wretched pay, and that there will be better work than that for you by the time you are well."

"You seem to have settled things very nicely amongst you," he said, dryly, but with a faint smile on his lips.

"Yes, we have," said Hubert, quite seriously. "Now isn't God good? Father Louis says He always does so much more than we expect, and that we must love Him very much, and thank Him every day, and you will too, won't you, father? Father Louis will tell you how to talk to Him, as of course we can't see Him, though Elsie will say she does see Him; it's not true at all, of course, but Father Louis only laughs when she says that, and takes her on his knee and strokes her hair. He is very fond of little children, and sometimes he has toffy in his pocket, such toffy! He says he has a brother who could make toffy like that. Now here's your breakfast, father, mind you eat all that toffy, I bought it; I bought it out of the boat this morning. Priscilla said I was to get three for a shilling, but the man only gave me two, but they were big ones, and he said that would have been dirt cheap at eighteen pence. When I told Priscilla that she said she was a liar, and that she never knew a Veerse fisherman that wasn't! She is rather down on the Veerse people, but Father Louis now, he likes them awfully, and spends no end of time amongst them, and I rather like them myself."

"Run away now, little son," said Mr. Maitland, gently, "you have been long enough in the sick-room." His soul was in a tumult, and he wished to be alone.

It was afternoon when Father Louis arrived, flushed and a little breathless, after a walk from the Manor, in a storm of wind and rain, looking more like a grizzly bear than ever, with his thick iron grey hair all blown about and disordered. He had thought out a course of instruction for the atheist to meet his particular case, and he had all his "heads" in order. After their great, when he had satisfied himself as to the physical condition of his patient, he sat down and took a book from his pocket.

"There is something 'here,'" he said, "I want to read to you."

"Shut your book, Father," said Mr. Maitland, in a low, quiet voice, putting his hand over the page; "I cannot hear you now, you are too late."

"But indeed, and indeed, you must hear me," said the priest affectionately, covering the small, white hand with his own, "and I am not too late, you must not think so."

"Yes, you are too late, nearly three hours too late," and he smiled.

"What do you mean, Mr. Maitland?"

"I mean someone has been here before you; someone to me more eloquent and convincing than you can ever be."

A pained look came into the kind grey eyes. "You promised to listen to me," said the priest, quietly, "who has forestalled me?"

"Hubert."

"Your little son?" Father Louis gave a great sigh of relief.

"Yes, Hubert has been here as both prophet and apostle, he brought the good news of God, as to one who had never heard of Him; his God is to be my God, of that he has no doubt; his God is a good God, worthy of love and thanks, therefore I must love and thank Him. Yes," he went on after a pause, "Hubert has forestalled you; Hubert has been here as a resurrection of my own dead self; in him I saw myself a boy once more, with a child's heart and a child's faith. I have said there is no God, and it has been true in my regard; there has been no God for me since these far off days of boyhood, and I must go back and become a boy again in spirit, if I would find my lost faith. I could not tell my son to-day that there was no God; truly 'the heart has its reasons which reason knows not,' and I remembered your words that I had nothing better to give him than his faith in God, and I felt their truth. If, then, I have nothing better to give him, then certainly I have nothing better for myself, for it is against the very instinct of fatherhood not to desire to share one's best with one's own son. Here then is a parting of the mental ways, and I cannot stay to listen now to any learned treatises—you understand, don't you, Father? I was taught at my mother's knee to say 'Our Father, Who art in Heaven'—When I can say that again I shall be ready for you; at present I feel I must be alone, I have a long way to go."

"Not so far as you think," said Father Louis, taking the hand that was stretched out towards him in mute appeal, "or rather I may say for his finger, and he gave two-thirds of the way. I will leave you as you wish, and when you send for me I will come and begin your instruction, not as an atheist, but as a Christian."

"But, Father, the remaining third may be the hardest part of the way."

"You are reckoning without God, you remember what we are told of the return of the Prodigal Son? When he was yet a long way off his father saw him and ran to meet him—he called for the best robe for him, for shoes for his feet and a ring for his finger; did not that loving father understand how hard that last part of his journey would be, as he came amongst his own people in his confusion and shame, in his poverty and nakedness? Oh, my son, when the way gets hardest for you, God will be nearest, and you will feel His loving arms close around you to bear you to your home. I leave you now, in His keeping, and the old professor will put his book in his pocket and go home, he is not wanted; with all his years and experience he might have been expected to know better the ways of God, how He ever uses the weak things of the world to confound the strong—how to the ministry of the little ones He has confided His perfected praise that the psalm of life may be learned from the lips of childhood."

Two days passed and in the quiet of his sickroom Mr. Maitland travelled far back through the memories of life. Along the dusty highway of manhood, down the green lagoon of youth and innocence, he sought for the lost threads that would lead him back to childhood and to faith. He found them where he dropped them, and he found also the old allurement of evil knowledge, waiting and beckoning, and drawing mind and heart to the quest of some invisible and unknown good. Touched by memory old temptations quickened into life and activity, they drew him after them as of yore, or laughed him to scorn as he passed them by. His intellectual pride, that sharpest weapon in Satan's armory, goaded his troubled spirit, and drove him back to his old mental lair. But his heart would not be convinced, his soul was waking up and demanding more than his reason could offer. One by one he summoned up his scientific facts, which had done duty as a "vade mecum" for half a lifetime, and he tried them at the tribunal of his reason. Had he ever done so before? He reflected; had he not rather taken them on trust, on the authority of those who delivered them, and was it not after all a matter of faith? It would seem so. It was then a question of this

faith against the faith of Christ, and now, when he had to try them both on the touchstone of death, the one proved itself vain, unsatisfying, barren—declaring its impotence in the face of the mystery of life and death—while the other cried aloud, "I know! This is the revelation of the sons of God; He is our beginning and our end, our life and resurrection; death is swallowed up in life, and time merges into eternity!" This was truly the fairer faith, and the one that could alone satisfy the human heart, with its inborn hope of immortality. And yet, again, was not this hope of immortality but a trick of Nature, to support man's spirit under the burden of his suffering, toiling life? So, the cold waves of incredulity ebbed and flowed through his soul—he remembered how time after time he had seen all the old religious beliefs routed and put to flight before the reasoning of his masters in agnosticism, he remembered the conviction he used to feel within himself. Had he that conviction now? He had not; he was racked with conflicting thoughts; Father Louis could also make out a strong case, and he knew that his hands were the brief for his higher and nobler self. Would he ever be able to send for him? Could he ever really decide to adopt the Christian creed? He thought not, and yet, somehow, he desired to do so. He had prided himself on his knowledge—not without pains and study had he built up his temple of reason, and now when he should seek shelter there, and find therein a calm haven of thought, it seemed to him, and he was moved to turn his back upon it forever, and make himself a laughing stock to all his fellow workers! Had he not already left it now? And if he were not a champion of Atheism, he was nothing, and worse than nothing in the Kingdom of God; he was a rebel and an outcast, there was no place for him there. He groaned in his mental anguish, and turned restlessly in his bed; at length his physical weakness asserted itself and demanded sleep, for his thoughts had kept him awake until long after midnight. Outside, the wind was sighing eerily, and there was a muffled sound of moaning in the noise of the sea, like the first complaints of a soul in pain: it would shriek and howl presently in the frenzy of its anguish. While the invalid slept the veering wind stole round the house, with a light breath it stirred the curtain of his window and lifted the hair from his forehead—it passed, only to return again in a moment, with the icy breath of the northeast in its touch, blighting and harmful as the malice of an evil heart; the sleeper felt it and shivered, but it was gone directly, and then with a fixed purpose it settled into the southwest and began to bring up its heavy artillery for a storm. In another hour a furious gale was blowing, and the sea was a roaring, seething waste of foam; it was a real sou'wester; it was that "visitation of the winds that take the ruffian billows by the top, curling their monstrous heads, and great clouds of spray were blowing over the land, mixed with rain and hail. The noise of the storm penetrated the senses of the sleeping man, and an oversensitive nervous system, already overstrung by suffering and mental effort, responded to the disturbance of the elements and jarred and jangled harshly through his whole being. The roar of the wind "the scream of the surf dragged down by the maddening wave" mixed themselves up in his inmost consciousness, and took him out, in the terrible reality of a vivid dream, into the turmoil and struggle of the elements. A dream, a nightmare, winds seized and buffeted him, and he lay exhausted and breathless at their mercy, while the waves hissed and swirled, now black as yawning caverns, now mountains of yeasty white. It was a revelation of the powers of Nature, of man's littleness and weakness in the face of her dreadful forces. A great fork of lightning split the darkness, and then a crash of thunder woke the

sleepers with a start of terror. He sprang up in bed, his heart gave a sickening bound against his side, and then seemed to stop beating; he was trembling with excitement; chilled, frightened and distressed. Again a dreadful heart throb, and then the long pause before the next visit. With an accompanying sense of suffocation, something seemed to grip his throat, and he struggled and gasped for breath. He tried to cry for help, but only a faint, hoarse sound came forth, a mere whisper compared to the roar of the storm. He felt quite confused in his mind, and though he tried hard to think what he ought to do, it was only after a severe mental effort, which brought the sweat to his brow, that he remembered the little hand-bell beside him, and rang it. It was a mere tinkle in the noisy house. The struggle for breath grew harder, sweat poured down his face, and the anxiety of his mind increased momentarily. Fear seized upon him, the awful fear of death: here was the end come suddenly upon him; and he would die, unattended and alone. Would no one come to him in his dire distress? He rang the bell with desperate vehemence. Priscilla, good faithful soul, had never neglected the summons before, but tonight she could not hear: He flung his arms out despairingly and from the depth of his misery and helplessness there went forth a loud cry for mercy and succor to the God he had so long denied and resisted, the soul broke loose from its swaddling clothes, and laid hold of the strength of God, its true and rightful support. And already help was on its way to the sufferer. Hubert, awake and frightened, had heard the bell ring in his father's room; he waited, expecting to hear Priscilla open the door, but although he strained his ears he could not hear her. He grew anxious; suppose his father wanted something and Priscilla had not heard his bell? He jumped out of bed, and groped his way to his father's room, as he tugged the handle of the door, it banged noisily open, caught by the wind, and in the faint light of the lamp he caught sight of his father's white face, with its agonized expression. With a cry of fear he rushed to his side, "O Father, what's the matter?" he sobbed.

"Hubert," he gasped, "O Hubert, thank God you have come! I think I am dying, boy."

"No, no," cried the child, passionately, "God won't let you die, I know He won't. Oh, have some medicine, father, or some brandy," and he began looking wildly round

for something to give him.

"Don't, child," said his father, "but go and call Priscilla for me, and oh, Hubert, I want him."

"Who, Father Louis?"

"Yes, but it is too late; tell him, boy, I would have sent for him if there had been time."

Hubert did not hear the latter part of the sentence, he had already darted away to call Priscilla. Then, to fetch Father Louis, if his father wanted him, he must have him at once, he would give him something, he was sure, to make him better. But could he find his way to Redland in the dark, and could he get along in such a storm? He lifted the blind, and looked anxiously out. It was not dark as he imagined; a waning moon had just risen, and it was showing white and ghostly through the driving clouds; he would venture, God would

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for something to give him.

"Don't, child," said his father, "but go and call Priscilla for me, and oh, Hubert, I want him."

"Who, Father Louis?"

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Synopsis of Canadian North-West HOMESTEAD REGULATIONS

ANY even numbered section of Dominion Land in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, excepting 8 and 26, not reserved, may be homesteaded by any person who is the sole head of a family, or any male over 18 years of age, to the extent of one-quarter section of 160 acres, more or less.

Entry must be made personally at the local land office for the district in which the land is situated.

Entry by proxy may, however, be made on certain conditions by the father, mother, son, daughter, brother or sister of an intending homesteader.

The homesteader is required to perform the conditions connected therewith under one of the following plans:

(1) At least six months' residence upon and cultivation of the land in each year for three years.

(2) If the father or mother, if the father is deceased) of the homesteader resides upon a farm in the vicinity of the land entered for, the requirements as to residence may be satisfied by such person residing with the father or mother.

(3) If the settler has his permanent residence upon farming lands owned by him in the vicinity of his homestead the requirements as to residence may be satisfied by residence upon said land.

Six months' notice in writing should be given the Commissioner of Dominion Lands at Ottawa of intention to apply for patent.

W. W. CORY,
Deputy Minister of the Interior.

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I am still obliged to say Mass and give Benediction in a mean upper room. Yet, such as it is, this is the sole outpost of Catholicism in a division of the County of Norfolk measuring 35 x 20 miles.

The weekly offerings of the congregation are necessarily small. We must have outside help for the present, or haul down the flag.

The generosity of the Catholic Public has enabled us to secure a valuable site for Church and Presbytery. We have money in hand towards the cost of building, but the Bishop will not allow us to go into debt.

I am most grateful to those who have helped us, and trust they will continue their charity.

To those who have not helped I would say—"For the sake of the Cause give something, if only a little". It is easier and more pleasant to give than to beg. Speed the glad hour when I need no longer plead for a permanent Home for the Blessed Sacrament.

FATHER H. W. GRAY,
Catholic Mission, Fakenham, Norfolk, Eng'd.

P.S.—I will gratefully and promptly acknowledge the smallest donation, and send with my acknowledgments a beautiful picture of the Sacred Heart and St. Anthony.

(EPISCOPAL AUTHORIZATION)

Dear Father Gray,

You have duly accounted for the thealms which you have received, and you have placed them securely in the names of Diocesan Trustees. Your efforts have gone far towards providing what is necessary for the establishment of a permanent Mission at Fakenham. I authorize you to continue to solicit alms for this object until, in my judgment, it has been fully attained.

Yours faithfully in Christ,
F. W. KEATING,
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THURSDAY, JULY 9, 1908.

BOYS'

Hard luck! you say. No luck about it, in.

The luck that made you race you ran. Was that you didn't? "I can."

Hard luck! you say. You have fought. Another carries off.

No luck about it—y— You learn the mean. "I will."

Hard luck! you say. You deserve? When every obstacle.

Slide to your course. That sigh: He conquers who.

"I'll try."

—Emil Carl Aurion

FILIAL I

There is not on earth sight than the un-attention of children.

Where filial love the heart will all other virtues. No woman will ever truly believe, who is not under obligation to the heart who grows, will there be for attention to their way.

† † †

If you are visiting, advantage of the kind, hostess to do things, not be allowed to do, an abuse of hospitality, the one who is entertained, the embarrassing position, allowing things for, be blamed, or correct you may be sure you are asked to visit.

† † †

This is the day of Graduate. Appointed nature, carrying nature in one hand and a certain scholarship in the other, the youthful question, cation make their be, precative audiences, the assemblage of ad, wisdom and sentences, how to promote so, Graduation Day is, epoch in the life of the world seems to salute, pay her unusual honor, over her superior attain, as on her tongue, music, high ideals in life, spoken of by the favor, Convent education, I, ethereal, up in the blue, where material life is, the soul dwells in the bliss. But the illusion, solved. It will be, again" when school an, are over and the world, existence is faced. Or, or care of home, perhaps, may bring the stern, disinterested Cosmos in, of the graduates. I wish, happy, God-ordered life, heaven is placed, them. A girl who keeps, the Creator treasured in, who shuns temptation, confession and Holy Com, have no fear of success.