

to what cash I have about me, also to my watch. You shall have them freely if you will give your word to spare the Treasurer I bear with me—a treasure of which I fear you know little. I am taking the Blessed Sacrament to a dying man—

"Oh, stop your preaching!" shouted Rennie; "I'm no fool, and I know you priests carry these waters that you worship in boxes of gold or silver—jewelled, too, maybe; so you needn't think we shall let such a prize as that escape us."

"For God's sake!" I entreated, "for your own sakes, beware how you count such an awful sin."

"Oh, we're used to awful sins here!" and the ruffians laughed hoarsely.

"Come, Father, bail up! Hand over your pretty box and its precious contents."

"You must take my life first," I answered, every nerve in my body tingling with excitement. I felt as though I had the strength of a lion to defend my Blessed Lord.

"We aren't particular as to that," shouted Rennie. "Upon him, men—don't waste cartridges; strangle him if he won't give up peacefully."

The four rushed on me as one man. I'm not the weakest fellow in the world and knocked one down very comfortably, but the other three all seized me at once. I shouted for help, but where could it come from? A brawny arm encircled my throat from behind, and—

"Stop that infernal row!"

These words came in stern accents from the further end of the hut, and forth from the gloom stepped a gigantic and fierce looking man, revolver in hand. My assailants were lamb in appearance compared with the new comer, whose eyes gleamed like live coals in the semi darkness.

"Have ye forgotten," the giant went on, "that my chum's dying here? Let him die in peace, dy'e hear, or there'll be more funerals than one from this shanty."

"Mind your own affairs, Donovan," replied Rennie, but he didn't speak very loudly, I noticed. "We're only just relieving this person of his superfluous wealth; and he won't take the operation gently, so he must rough it."

"Well, all right," said Donovan, "but don't kick up such a confounded row, or I'll silence some one of you for good."

Like a lightning flash a ray of hope swept through my mind—Donovan—an Irish name! The arm around my throat relaxed its pressure.

"Donovan!" I cried, "I am a Catholic priest—"

"A priest! he shouted. "Release him, boys! This a priest Dan Clancy has been moaning after hours, and by thunder! he shall have one. Step this way, your reverence, and have no fear."

"Stop a minute!" cried Rennie; "you are going ahead too fast, Donovan. I believe I'm captain of this gang—you're mighty commanding all of a sudden, but who do you think will obey your orders? This man's our booty, and we'll do with him as we please. You'll get your share, never fear."

"Well," said Donovan, "you're general, right enough, and in a general way I'm ready to follow your lead; but the case stands this way: My pal's been crying and moaning for a priest for hours. Here come one ready to hand—I should say heaven sent him; but heaved his naught to do with us here. Now, you aren't going to rob poor Dan of what may make his death easier. He's been a true chum to me, boys, and die for him if I could! The priest is here, and poor Dan shan't die without seeing him!"

"But he shall!" roared Rennie.

"What, let a priest hear all our secrets?" Dan Clancy knows enough to hang us all twice over, and if we let him confess to this fellow we are all lost."

"A priest," I ventured to say, "never reveals anything told him in confession. Man, I beg of you, let me see this poor dying wretch—it is my duty—"

"Besides," interrupted Donovan, "if you fear his reverence blabbing, you can silence him just as easily after he has seen Dan as you can before."

"Prevention is better than cure," retorted Rennie; "he shan't go in; that's flat!"

"And I swear he shall!" said Donovan, in a low tense voice. "You see this revolver? Let go of him instantly, or there'll soon be four rogues less in the world."

"Fool!" cried Rennie, "we are four to one and all of us have shooting irons."

"Ah!" replied Donovan, "but there are no cartridges in them—the few we had left are now in my gun. I hold your lives in my hand; release the priest and let him come this way."

Suddenly my captors fell back from me.

"Don't be afraid, your reverence," said Donovan; "come!"

He lifted a blanket hung curtainwise, which I now saw screened off one portion of the room and made a sort of inner compartment.

"You'll find poor Dan in there, Father," he went on. "I'll keep guard, and if you can give the boy the comfort he needs, it's Ned Donovan will see you safe out of this anyhow. Never fear your rogues—they are unarmed, and I'll take care they don't come a foot nearer than they are."

He dropped the curtain, and I surveyed the wretched scene before me by the light of a miserable "home-made" candle which sputtered on a broken stool beside a couch or litter of straw and dried leaves.

On this rude bed tossed and moaned the emaciated form of what had evidently been a stalwart and handsome

man, though disipation had left its unmistakable traces on his haggard face, and the hand of death was pressing visibly his worn and ashen cheeks.

As I gazed at him, from his thin and trembling lips broke a mournful cry:

"Oh, God! oh God! Mercy! mercy! Send me a priest—I cannot die like this—a priest!"

I knelt beside him and took his hand. His confession was a long one, often interrupted by such exhausting fits of bodily anguish that I more than once feared he would not be able to reach the end. But, thank God! he did, and whatever he had done in the past, I believe in that solemn hour he had grace to make an act of true contrition, and I administered to him the Blessed Sacrament.

Almost immediately the dread change some of us know too well came over his face. I softly called Donovan, who knelt beside me at the bedside, revolver in one hand and clasping his friend's wasted palm in the other, and thus, just after receiving his Saviour, the soul of Dan Clancy went forth into the night.

"It's all over, Father," said Donovan, and a big tear rolled down his cheek; "the truest chum man ever had is no more. But now to look after your safety. Follow me and stick close to me."

I did so. We found Rennie and his three mates in front of the door of the hut, with scowling brows.

"Now, chums," said Donovan, "let's have no nonsense. You've got to let his reverence go in peace. He's been good to my chum, and you shan't harm him. I'm going to guide him part of the road."

"Course you want to betray us!" shouted Rennie.

"You're a liar, Rennie," said Donovan, and if I hadn't just left poor Dan's death-bed—for he's dead now, boys—I'd put a bullet through your head. Stand from that door before I count five or your miserable lives aren't worth much. One—two—

Slowly and sulkily the four retreated from the door, keeping as far as the limits of the hut would allow from the muzzle of Donovan's weapon.

"Now, listen," my protector went on, "I'm going to call Jack Blake to bring my horse and the priest's. Don't say of you dare to breathe a whisper of warning to him."

In a very few minutes, though I can assure you they seemed to me like hours, the two horses were brought to the door, and Jack Blake entered the hut to be unceremoniously thrown by Donovan among his mates.

Often and often does that scene come back to me in my dream—

"I can shut my eyes and see it now; the dim obscurity of the but—the savage eyes of the blood ruffians glaring through the gloom in impotent rage—and the gigantic figure of my preserver standing in the doorway of the hut, revolver in hand, as I mounted my horse."

A moment later he had closed the door behind us, sprung into his saddle and we were riding at full gallop through the fairly open bush beneath the soft light of the solemn southern stars.

"We are out of danger now, Father," he said. "Luckily for us, they have no ammunition."

Scarcely had these words left his lips when—crack—crack—the report of two pistol shots sounded in our ears.

"Fool that I have been!" cried Donovan; "I forgot poor Dan's revolver—that was very likely loaded. Yeees, we only ran out of cartridges yesterday, and Dan's been ill for days. They've found his gun and they're using it to kill his chum!"

"Can you see them?" I asked.

"No—I'd have a pop at them."

"Crack—crack—came again on the air."

"Ah!" The cry was from Donovan. "Are you hurt?" I shouted.

"No—nothing to speak of. Follow me close—the bush is pretty scattered here—ride like the wind!"

No more shots were heard, and, as far as I know, no further pursuit was made. On—we dashed in silence, the guns flying past us like spectres in the darkness. But that darkness grew less gloomy, and before we reached the edge of the bush the glorious sun rose resplendent above the horizon and showed to my delighted eyes at no more than a mile's distance the home-stead belonging to Burke, the man I had set out on the previous morning to visit.

"And now, Father, I must leave you," said Donovan, relating in his horse.

"And where will you go?" I asked.

"Anywhere—what does it matter? The law will have me sooner or later."

"Come with me," I said, "and try to lead a different life."

"Too late, Father," he said; "I've led an awful life. I've been guilty of—"

His voice died away in his throat, his face became the color of ashes, he reeled in the saddle, and, before I could render him any assistance, fell heavily to the ground. His horse gave a frightened neigh and bolted straight back into the bush. I sprang from my saddle and went to the prostrate man. Then I discovered that he had been wounded in the side by one of the shots fired after us, and the brave fellow had concealed his pain until loss of blood had deprived him of his senses.

I bound up his wound as skillfully as I could with my handkerchiefs (luckily a large one) and feeling certain no harm could come to him for a few minutes, rode as fast as I could (my horse was pretty tired) toward Burke's house, where I was received at the door by the master himself, the sick man of yesterday, alive and well; having, as he told me, made a most mar-

velous recovery in a few hours.

To make a long story short, Burke and his man fettered Donovan into the house and tended him there for weeks. His fall from the horse had caused slight concussion of the brain, but a fine constitution triumphed over all, and in course of time the man was convalescent.

He sent for me, told me his confession, and I administered to him the Blessed Sacrament.

In considering his story, Father Ryan said:

"There! that's the end of my story, and though I'm sorry to part from you, it's time you were all going home. The snow has ceased and the stars are out. Good night!"

"One moment, Father," said one of the company. "What became of the rest of the gang?"

"As usual, Mr. Casey, you want to get to the bottom of everything! Well, I took the police from Wallisloo to the hut, but we found it empty, save for the decomposing body of poor Dan. We buried him decently, but not one of the bush-angers were found at that time. The only one I have heard of since is Rennie, who was hung for murder at Melbourne two years ago. He was a thorough bad lot. May he be forgiven!"

"I believe, Father," said Mr. Casey, "that you've been charitably enough to pray for a mad dog."

"I'd pray he wouldn't bite me, any how. Good night and God bless you all."—Catholic Fireside.

men during the century now opening. The world belongs to Christ, and it is His for all time. The Only Begotten of the Father, having the same substance with Him, and being the brightness of His glory and the figure of His substance, He has necessarily every thing in common with the Father, and therefore sovereignty and everlasting power over all things. "I will give thee," is the covenant of the Father, "the Gentiles for thy inheritance and the utmost parts of the earth for thy possession." And by his own acknowledgment of the covenant: "All power is given to me in heaven and on earth." He reigns by acquired as well as by natural right. He has acquired the right to rule over us, by redeeming us, by saving us from the powers of darkness, by purchasing us with His precious blood. He is "the king of ages, immortal, invisible." To Him it is said: Thy Throne, O God, is forever and ever; a sceptre of justice is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou in the beginning, O Lord, didst found the earth; and the works of thy hands are the heavens. They shall perish, but thou shalt continue, and they shall all grow old as a garment. And as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed, but thou art the self-same and thy years shall not change.

To Christ we owe all that is worth living for in our present civilization, without Him there could be no comfort or security in the blessings of nature, with Him they all work together for our good. How Christ introduced His Hierarchy by making all things new is told in such luminous terms by the Holy Father in his Encyclical on the Divine Redeemer, that we cannot fail to bear to quote it here: "Jesus having blotted out the writing which was contrary to us, fastening it to the Cross, the wrath of Heaven was immediately appeased; the disordered and erring race of man had the bonds of their ancient slavery loosed, the mind of God reconciled to them, grace restored, the way to eternal happiness opened, and the title to possess and the means to attain it both given back. Then, as though awakened from a long and deadly lethargy, man beheld the light of truth so long desired, but for generations sought in vain; he recognized, in particular, that he was born for much higher and more splendid things than the frail and fleeting objects of sense, to which he had formerly confined his thoughts and anxieties, and that this was in fine the constitution and supreme law of human life, the end as it were, to which all must be referred, that he came from God so we might one day return to Him. From this beginning and on this foundation consciousness of human dignity was restored and lived again; the sense of a common brotherhood took possession of men's hearts, their rights and duties in consequence were discovered or perfected, and virtues beyond the imagination or conception of ancient philosophy sprang up everywhere. So men's projects, manner of life, and character changed, and the knowledge of the Redeemer having spread far and wide, His power having penetrated in the very life blood of nations, expelling their ignorance and former vices, a marvellous transformation supervened, which originating in Christian civilization, utterly changed the face of the earth.

The age has need of Christ. There are men who would fain retain the benefits of the civilization which was introduced with His era, but combine them with the licentiousness of pagan times. They would, forsooth, have men respect their rights, minister to their gratification and let them live in security of life and property, while pagan like they care to admit no law of obedience, of self-restraint, nor of regard for a neighbor's will being or good fortune. We need Christ to rebuke the spirit of individualism, run riot, in sectarianism and socialism, one willing to obey and all growing daily less capable of mastering their own passions, not speaking of lessing others. We need Him to cry out: "What God hath joined together let no man put asunder." In face of the nameless evils with which divorce is deluging the world. We need sadly Him: "Suffer the little ones to come unto Me," to save them from a system of education which is gradually setting Him aside, or at most suffering mention of Him as one of the heroic characters of history. We need Him: "If any man will come after me let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me," for all who, in the words of the Encyclical just quoted, "dream of, and would evidently prefer to have, some discipline of thought and act, but with principles less rigorous and more indulgent to human nature, requiring from us little or no sacrifice." We need to hear Him again teaching as one having authority, and charging His apostles: "He that heareth you, heareth me," to remind an age which despises dogmatic teaching in religion, that His purpose is to "bring into captivity every understanding unto the obedience of Christ."

Finally, Christ is needed to save the world from the spirit of lawlessness which seems to have seized on individuals and nations alike, as Leo XIII. well says:

"In such strife of passions, in such perilous crises, we must either look for a better, or some effective remedy must be found without loss of time. To restrain evil-doers, to make people civilized, to deter them from committing crimes by legislative intervention, no means all; but that is by no means all. The healing of the nations goes deeper; a mightier influence must be invoked than human consciences

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LEAGUE OF THE SACRED HEART.

GENERAL INTENTION FOR JANUARY, 1901

The New Century for Christ.

Recommended to our prayers by His Holiness Leo XIII.

American Messenger of the Sacred Heart.

The XX Century opens under most favorable auspices. As the bells sound the midnight that divides the old year from the new, the world is summoned to gaze upon a solemnity imposing alike to angels and to men. At that hour the Venerable Vicar of Christ, mounting the world's central altar of God, offers the sacrifice which blends together heaven and earth, and transcending all time, links our century with century, making to our God who unites the offering one, and the people of every age, in obedience to the call of the Chief Pastor, over 1,200 Bishops, whom the Holy Ghost has appointed to rule the Church of God, are offering the self-same sacrifice all over the earth, fully 100,000 priests are going up to the altar of God, fully 200,000,000 faithful souls are uniting with them actually or in spirit, making in every place this clean oblation.

How like the vision of the Apocalypse: "After this I saw a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations and tribes, and peoples and tongues: standing before the throne, and in sight of the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands: and they cried with a loud voice, saying: Salvation to our God who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and the four living creatures; and they fell down before the throne upon their faces, and adored God, saying: Amen. Benediction, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, honor, and power, and strength to our God for ever and ever, Amen."

Outside, also! still many more millions are celebrating the dawn of the new century in a carnival of noise, excitement, self-complacency and glorification, pleasure, infatuation, and delusive forecasts of human triumphs still to be achieved. Yet above all this din and confusion rises the cry of the multitude before the throne, sounding aloud in magnificence and power, like the voice of the Lamb: it is worshiping! Salvation to our God, and to the Lamb! Benediction, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, honor and power and strength to our God for ever and ever. Amen! If we are alive, and enjoying in peace the fruits of human industry, if we take delight in praising the glorious deeds of men and their progress in science; if we are grateful for living to see the day when human energy and perseverance can control and direct for man's benefit the most subtle forces of nature: then, "not to us, O Lord, not to us; but to Thy name give glory."

The spectacle of the midnight Mass at the dawn of the new century, with the incense and the faithful assisting assembled in spacious cathedral, in wayside station or convent chapel makes the Catholic mind and heart instinctively go back to the first days of the Christian era, to the solemn services held under cover of night in the gloomy catacombs, to the solemn rites offered under the open sky by apostles and pioneer missionaries of every age, to the sacred mysteries stealthily performed in days of persecution in hidden crypt and in ruined abbey; and ever and always it is the same, the altar, the priest, the people, because all are made one in the Victim sacrificed, Jesus Christ, yesterday, to-day—the same forever. The memories raised by the retrospect of the centuries since all things were re-established in Christ, set the Catholic mind piously speculating on Christ's reign in the hearts of

12, 1901.

was as welcome as a fire to a man who had been so long in the dark. "I am thankful to have lost my way; you have led me to some light."

"I am thankful to have found you," he replied, "for I could not have found you without myself. You are about, you have fallen in."

I started and looked at him. He thought as he thought of me. But I judge by looks, could find a poor priest."

to regard me with curiosity with some extraordinary then, after a moment of me. I can assure you that I am not a 'billy' of tea, and of some sort for better than camping the snakes and very much," I said, "I am from Burke's visit a sick man and your way there good mates. Sick with till to-morrow. I come with me or my mind quick, for too glad to accompany, and thank also agree that the four friend's shanty you are peckish I am and on my horses an incredibly short could not think three were elapsed—we stood fairly large but side gave a peculiar which was answered in in, and the door

reverend sir," said my look after your rection. "you're welcome mode; we don't often your cloth here; but are welcome for that. object to smoke?" founder of smoke than from a good cigar, but faced on entering the to make a skipper interior seemed enise and remarkably hat, which immediately at and caused a prof. Somewhere, sounds of laughter, heard the tears from able to discern any-discovered proceeded who were seated round le in the centre of the ough-bearded fellows g mates for my guide, bearing bigger-bull! They regarded me, I kind of amused curle-while's great volumes rty, short clays.

Blake!" roared one gant, in a voice like th the croup. "What e you brought us to—my guide," is a rev-an—I don't know his shed into the outer air see my horse.

I remarked, "is Ryan; he priest, and I crave for the night."

"Lighter shook the sides of ad," said Redwhiskers, ce will find us a very but you can have a some grub, such as it for it; we're poor men, and can't afford to give

"I replied, 'I have not lth me, but, no doubt, I satisfy your demands.' haps, you won't mind

"peculiar emphasis placed that I did not like

"I replied; 'now or does it matter? How require?"

on have about you," was

you mean?" I cried. "ense" was the answer. "m Jack Rennie—maybe of me?"

All Australia rang as that of the most dang-angers. What was to be done nothing for the little abou:ms—but the Blessed Sacrament—how should outrage? I made a dash

undered Rennie. all the men had sprung to and four ugly looking re-mented straight at my don thought occurred to first of men have some good could tell these fellows the and throw myself upon

said, "you are welcome