## PRETTY MISS NEVILLE BY B. M. CROKER

CHAPTER XXVIII

I AM ADVISED TO LOCK THE STABLE DOOR

i toujours pour principe de ne faire jamais pa e que je pourais faire par moi-meme. —Mont Every mail for the last four months had brought me a letter from Major Percival; a letter of at least three closely written sheets. The first of these effusions had now worn off, and I found them somewha dry and monotonous. They were not in the least bit like love-letters: I might have read them aloud to the whole cantonment with perfect impunity. Generally there was a long count of balls, dinners, and fetes and the immense attention my future lord and master received from high and low; two pages would be devoted to the shortcomings of his new valet two pages to an incipient cold or touch of gout; a long list of books I learn, and inwas to read, mark, digest, was not an unusual item. The delight of his relations at the prospect of his approaching marriage and their entire epproval of my photograph, were now and then alluded to. Also the immense crowds of pretty faces upon which his eyes were constantly feasted; it was gratifying to know that not one among the multitude could compare with More than once Major Percival hinted that not a few of these pretty creatures were only waiting for the least soupcon of encourage ment to smile on him. His last letter

I have been looking at landaus, in Long Acre, and seen several that I fancy; but I have not made up my mind as yet about the lining. I wonder which will suit you best, sapphire blue or dark green? By the way, I hope you are taking great care of your complexion, and not allowing the sun to make acquaintance with your face and hands, and pretty white throat? Apropos-I am exceedingly uneasy about my hair. It is coming out in handfuls, and nothing will stop it. Your aunt has an excellent native recipe, which I should like to try. Remember me kindly to her and your uncle, and ever believe me, yours affectionately, H. PERCIVAL.-(P. Do not forget the hair wash.)"

just received, was lying in my lap,

as I sat in our deep, cool front ver-anda, early one beautiful morning.

The concluding page will suffice as a

I folded up this letter with strange, unaccountable feeling of dissatisfaction and discontent, and glanced down the veranda, where all our party were assembled—auntie absorbed in her knitting, uncle in the Asian, Boysie Towers and his brother Boo Boo deeply intent on building a castle of bricks, while Maurice (who was sitting on the steps) acted as confidential adviser and consulting architect, with Rosie on his knee. Rosie Tow-ers, aged eight, a slender, rather pretty little girl, with neat black legs short white frock and crepe yellow no secret of her devotion; and, strange to say, Maurice submitted to her endearments and blandishments with an twinge of jealousy. In my youth, Maurice had never suffered to sit on his knee, with my arm entwined round his neck, and my head on his shoulder; he never gave me rides on his peny, nor boxes of but then I was never an alluring young person, of an affectionate disposition, like Rosie; in fact reverse, and I was distinctly plain.

"I am sure I don't know on what grounds we should have the Towers nursery in this veranda-why not have the orphanage here at once?" exclaimed Mrs. Vane, pettishly; sud-denly uprooting herself from a deeply comfortable chair, and surveying Maurice and his young companions (and the litter they were making) with an air of marked disfavor. Rosie, why do you tease Captain Beresford? You will throttle him before long; and you are really too big a girl to be nursed?"

Oh, but I'm so dreadfully comfortable," rejoined Rosie, with a toss of her golden mane; "and besides, he does not mind, do you?" to Maurice, in a cajoling voice.

the way," I observed, walking down the veranda with my letter in my pocket, "does any one know of a good hair-wash?

'Hair-wash!" echoed Mrs. Vane: "why, what do you want with one? Your hair is already below your

'Not for myself," I answered; "but for a friend. 'Ah, yes! I can understand you.

For an elderly friend," she rejoined with a look of unspeakable signifi-

'Jarvishas some stuff that he swears by," said Maurice, glancing up, brick in hand. "I can't say I've ever had occasion to try it myself; but he declares that it would make the hair grow on an old bullock trunk."

"Well that certainly sounds prom well that certainly solution from ising. I shall take an early opportunity of looking at Mr. Jarvis's locks," said Mrs. Vane. "He is a singularly wooden-headed youth."

He went to England the day before yesterday; so I am afraid you must postpone your inspection," replied Maurice, gravely.
"To England again? Why, he is

always on leave—sick certificate, ur-gent private affairs, every dodge."

"I'm delighted to hear it. He brings me a parcel from his sister. How is he looking?" "Oh, awfully fit.

so the void is filled."

right. Captain Robinson has come

"Oh, awfully it.
"I thought you were talking of taking a run home this year?" said Mrs. Vane, puckering her eyebrows.
"So I was, but I have changed my mind," replied Maurice, setting down Rosie, and picking up his hat and whip; "I shall put it off till next

"One wants a lot of rupees for a trip home these times," said uncle, reflectively; "you young fellows are so deucedly extravagant, and send your money flying in all directions.' Bear in mind that all your friends will expect handsome presents," ob-Mrs. Vane, impressively; really served valuable jewelry, shawls, and Indian curiosities. That will be one little item; you cannot return empty "But I shall," replied Maurice, with

decision; "I assure you that the only curiosity I mean to take home is

Who knows but you may take a wife as well?" said Mrs. Vane. with a smile

Who knows?" returned Maurice reddening slightly. Then, suddenly looking at his watch, he exclaimed, By Jove, I had no idea it was late: I must be off. Here, syce," beckoning to his horse-keeper, "come on. Of course you are all coming to our sports this evening?" he proceeded, addressing every one in general, but looking at me. "I'm one of the per-formers, but I'll keep you good places in the front row, where you will see the tent-pegging and the lemoncutting to the greatest advantage. Good-by;" and, with a wave of his hat, he galloped off followed by Tuppence, ventre a terre.

the way Pussy," said auntie, as she turned back into the veranda. I think you had better tell cousin of your engagement. need not keep him in the dark; I am sure he will be delighted."

"I am not quite so certain of that," remarked Mrs. Vane, pointedly; "but I quite agree with you that he ought to be told at once.

Shall I break it to him gently, Nora?" said auntie, with a smile.
"No, do not," I replied, eagerly; "I would much rather tell him self. Leave it to me, please-all of

anxiously around. "Of course we will, my dear, if you wish it," said auntie, with suave

Well, mind you do tell him-and "or it will be a case of locking the

"My dear Violet," exclaimed auntie, in a shocked voice, "you don't know what you are saving. Maurice and Nora have been brought up together, and are just like brother and sister. A little, incredulous sniff, not lost

on me, was Mrs. Vane's only reply, as she turned away, and began picking petals off the lovely creeper that embowered the whole veranda.

"Oh, Pussy!" said uncle, suddenly raising his eyes above the paper. could you not have waited a hair, adored Maurice, and made little longer? This cousin of yours is just a fellow after my own heart. Now I could easily understand a girl falling in love with him," he conexcellent grace. I felt a wholly in- cluded, with an emphasis by no means complimentary to Percival.

'James, James, you really must not say such thing!" said auntie, austerely. "You can hardly expect Nora to marry to please you in order chocolate, nor a magnificent doll; to have two shikarries in the family.

"I think the old grandfather was not so far wrong after all," persisted have done worse might come Mrs. Beresford of Gallow;' the latter part of his sentence was muttered to his Asian, but I heard it nevertheless, and was by no means as indignant or displeased as might have been expected.

## CHAPTER XXIX

ABOUT A TIGER AND A KISS

"All men have their price."—Walpole.
Uncle's shikarry, "Mari," was a
very singular-looking old person. Your uneducated eye might fancy him to be in the last stage of emacia tion and decrepitude, but he was nothing of the kind; he could gird up his loins and run for miles; he could sit up all night on the branch of a tree, marking down the gorged tiger. he was the most knowing of his profession, the best organizer of a beat in the presidency, and the mutual and jealously guarded, enormously paid servant of uncle and Maurice. Tigers are rarer than they used to be in the good old day of John Com pany; a brace of tigers before break fast is a how unheard-of bag. They are not to be found sporting in one's compound, or gamboling on the high road, as some people still imagine. Nevertheless, within forty miles of Mulkapore there prowled a who had never yet been eater.' brought to justice, though more than seventy people were said to have been his victims. With the very name of this notorious monste mothers subdued native naughty children to abject penitence and prompt obedience; and the rumor of his being in the neighborhood immediately placed a village

in a state of siege.

All the inhabitants shut them selves up in their little mud hovels till he took his departure; for he had been known to stalk through the streets more than once, and carry off always on leave—sick certificate, urgent private affairs, every dodge."

"Well, you see, he looks upon Asia as a country to be avoided, and as he has plenty of coin, perhaps he is women, children, grass-cutters, and told her own preux chevalier to go fetch—"

"Or," cried Maurice, "like the amiable creature that fluid her gold beasts, and told her own preux chevalier to go fetch—"

finally - emboldened by success able-bodied men and women. He really seemed to be the embodiment of the "evil one"—continually going bout seeking whom he might Shooting parties for his benefit had been organized over and over again, and without success. He evaded every effort to take him; he scorned the bait of a plump young buffalo. Nothing would entice him short of a solitary human being, and he traveled in too erratic a manner to fall an easy prey. Say that he had made a meal of a miserable herd boy, close to some village, and, the news being brought into the cantonments, all the noted shots would to horse and away, to beat that neighborhood; but ere they had pitched their camp fresh tidings would probably arrive—i. e., that the tiger had killed a coolie woman in a district thirty miles off. Twice he had sprung upon and devoured the wretched Banghy postman, whose tinkling bells and singsong chant, far

this terrible brute. One evening, just before dinner, I ame into the veranda, and found uncle and Maurice interviewing the shikarry—a little, withered, naked savage, with a dirty turban, a belt, stuck full of flints, powderflasks, and knives. What a contrast to Maurice-tall, upright, well-built. in irreproachable evening dress and snowy linen, the beau ideal of an officer and gentleman. And yet this type of advanced civilization was literally hanging on the words of the wizened, half-naked barbarian. So deep were their confidences, so rapt cousin's attention, that he did not even notice me.

from overawing, had simply attracted

"Maurice," I said, as I stood in the doors: ay, " never mind that stupid old man, but come and help me to wind some silk."

"I will in a minute, Nora," he answered, without even turning his head. "Just hold on for one second." I felt decidedly piqued. "The idea of ignoring me for the sake of that horrid old shikarry; of making me wait while he talked to him!" I thought, as I sank into a chair with a gesture of resignation, and listened their inthralling conversation. This was what Mari was saying, with nideous faces and great gesticulation:

True tell you, sahib! Tiger done ome Nazapett country again, killing Banghy postman same like as before, and nearly in same place, two mile this side village. People there plenty 'fraiding; gentlemen tying up buffalo no use, that tiger only taking native

Dinner, dinner, dinner, good people," said auntie, coming briskly into the veranda; "here are Colonel Keith and Mr. Campbell, literally starving;" and in a lower and more impressive key, "Jim, do come in;" so Jim and Maurice were obliged to tear themselves away, and dismiss their retainer until a more conveni-

I was in a bad humor that evening, I could not tell why. Why are we sometimes in bad tempers in spite of ourselves? I was determined to show Maurice that I was not to be treated de haut en bas, so I snubbed him every time he spoke to me, and gave all my smiles and my conversa-tion to Dicky Campbell. Now Maurice did not care for Dicky, and certainly We could Richard was conceited. not quarrel with him for thinking his own regiment the brightest jewel in the service of the crown, but it was hard to expect us to go with him in the opinion that Lieutenant Camp bell was decidedly the show man Otherwise, of the battalion. Dicky was harmless : he had a kind heart his overpowering conceit was but th incrustation of the precious metal

within. But Maurice did not think so. Maurice thought the metal brass, and declared that "there was a lot of cheap swagger" about my fellowpassenger in the Corunna. Dicky had a weakness for very pronounced collars and cuffs, for exquisite gloves, for a drawl and an eyeglass, and for I think it was this latter frailty that Maurice found it impossible to

Great was the talk about tigers, beats, and kills; about the number of victims that had fallen to the man-eater, and the length of time he had baffled his enemies.

"I hear he is a huge brute, old and thin, and has lost half his teeth," said Colonel Keith, helping himself to

halas 'Just like all man eaters; they only take to human beings when they are no longer active enough to catch deer and big game," replied

uncle If this horrid beast had lived in the Middle Ages, he would soon have been got rid of," I remarked, medita-

tively As how?" inquired Maurice, with a smile; "brought down by an arquebuse, or pinned by an arrow?"
"I don't know how; but he would

not have been allowed to go maraud. ing about, as he does now. air lady, hearing of the terrible havoc he was making, would have bidder ner own true knight prick forth and bring her in the skin, or never see her face again." Especially if she had another

string to her bow, and wanted to get rid of him," asserted Mrs. Vane, cheerfully.
"Either leave his own skin or bring the tiger's," added Colonel Keith. "A case of St. George and

Keith. the Dragon, eh, Nora?" Or," cried Maurice, "like the

"I should have fetched it," said Dick, grandiloquently, flung it in her face." Oh! fle-fle!" said auntie, shak

ing her head.
I'm sure I don't know what pos sessed me to say it. I did not mean it. I regretted it the instant I had spoken. I merely wanted to say something disagreeable to Maurice who had hitherto smiled invulner able throughout the meal.

"The young men of to-day not half the pluck they had in days of yore," I said supercilliously, "il all tales are to be believed. I don't think there is a man in Mulkapore this moment who would go out single handed and bring in the dead body of

that man eating tiger."

Dead silence. I felt that all eyes were on me. I glanced over at Maurice, who gravely met my gaze,

and said in an icy tone :
"I accept your challenge, Nora figuratively speaking, I pick up the gauntlet. 'I did not mean it as a challenge,

I faltered, nervously, not a little frightened by the storm I had raised.
"Did you not? It certainly sounded like one" - very stiffly. "It be-hooves us to stir ourselves, Campbell, and show people that the young

men of the present day are not the fainéants they are supposed to be." I assure you I only meant it as a joke, Maurice; really, only a joke," I exclaimed, with a miserable attempt at a laugh; " and, of course, present company are always excepted

"When you are pleased to make jokes of that kind, Nora, you should prepare us by saying previously, This is going to be a joke :' other wise, the point is missed; and I am afraid I cannot accept your most flattering excuse," returned Maurice, with overwhelming politeness.

I hate him to speak to me like this. How stern he looked! He reminded me of the old days at Gallow. However, times were changed; I was not going to allow him to keep me in order now, so I replied with great dignity: "I would not be rude,

Maurice, if I were you."
"That's right, Miss Neville," said Dicky, approvingly. "Just walk into him. He can be very insulting sometimes, can't he, eh :

Maurice took no notice whatever of my remark or of Dicky's suggestion, and went on cracking walnuts Mrs. Vane (who sat beside him) with the most unruffled composure Evidently auntie felt that there was thunder in the air, and made an early move, and I escaped into the front veranda with eager haste. I felt rather ashamed of myself a

sat on the steps with my elbows on my knees, staring at the stars, and istening to the croak croak of the frogs in a neighboring marsh. Never aind, I thought, I would make it all right with Maurice by and by. I had no business to say such things out of pure ill-temper, especially to himto him of all people, when I remem bered that Sunday at Gallow, and Beauty Connor. But I had no chance of making amends; Maurice's dogcart came round in a few minutes hours before its usual time), and I eard him go into the drawing-room and say good-night, offer a seat to Dicky, and drive away, without even a message for me. About 12 o'clock next morning uncle came home in a state of the liveliest excitement Before the door of his office-brougham could be opened, he called out

Did you hear of it, missus ? you think be was such a young idiot?' Then, stepping hastily out, "Could believed that he was such on infernally fool-hardy fellow?"

Whom do you mean?" we cried in a breath. "Whom should I mean?" sitting eavily down, and casting his topee

on the ground with great violence. Beresford! He went off to Nazapett last night; found the colonel at mess : got three days' leave, and, two nours later, he and that fool Mari had started alone. Madness! I hear he is not going to have any beaters nor fireworks. Nothing!"—opening his hands expansively—"but means to hands expansivelybring the brute down on foot. Just the way poor Renny met his death three years ago."
For some seconds no one spoke

and then auntie, turning to where I stood, as if turned into stone, said very sternly :

TO BE CONTINUED

## MCDONALD'S SACRIFICE

Robert McDonald was in eventh heaven of delight. A compassionate onlooker could not have said why it was cause of joy that a notably unsociable person received an invitation for a fortnight's visit especially when the Christmas fes tivities, for which he was being asked were sure to draw a full complement of guests to Lindoris Court.

Yet the fact remained. Robert McDonald, sitting over his books late in the evening, had been over joyed by the arrival of that simple little missive.

He spread the note upon the table before him. It was not the words which claimed his attention. the glance which conveyed their meaning he had forgotten figure, and one only, rose before him fair, with calm eyes of clear, sea blue, young at the time. eyes childlike as the morning, yet in whose limpid serenity a shadow of place?"
pain seemed to linger. It was a face Rober

That gracious, womanly figure stood to him as an embodiment of the Christian ideal, "a lady with a lamp" -the lamp of holiness, of truth, of good deeds always bright, and burning beacon-wise in her gentle, stain-less hands. She was his Una, his Queen of Beauty and of Love, surely the virtuous and valiant woman of inspired Scriptures. Such was the fane of reverental imaginings wherein he had shrined the lady of his dreams as some gleaming saint upon a blazoned window. And all day long the light of another world streamed through the splendors of his wondrous window, filling the places of the scholar's

with inspiring loveliness.

He had now known Mary Hamilton for three months. He recalled their first meeting. She had been decora-ting the church for Father Lang, and was just leaving it as he himself entered for his customary visit. He had been impressed by the strength and Madonna-like beauty of her face it was one in a thousand. Occasionally, after their introduction, they had met each other at the homes of friends, then he had called at her step mother's, and once, he had spent week with Miss Hamilton and several other guests at Lindoris Court on the invitation of her guardian severe old Mr. Anthony Codrington.

soul

Yet, despite his opportunities, he had scarcely come to know her well. Timid and somewhat reserved, he had been sufficiently happy in worshipping his star at a distance. But for this laxity he resolved firmly to make ample amends during the forth-coming Christmas visit which he knew she also was to make. And in this intention he was confirmed by the memory of the loneliness he had suffered during her three weeks' unexpected absence a short time pre viously.

The castles built were radiant with hope, as was McDonald's gentle and unpresumptuous nature, fragrant with prayer. True Catholic that he mystery. There were passages hung was, he confided this enterprise to his Mother-Confidant in Heaven. And at last it was Christmas, the snow thick and white as of yore, the glossy holly bushes scarlet berries, the red-breasted robins tame and friendly, the atmosphere full of that indefinable, magical spirit of Yule, of unfettered gladness.

It was a glorious Christmas Eve. So cold was it that the air seemed a crack with the intensity of the icy silences that brooded over the wide white fields and the lonely lanes, unfamiliar in their "wedding robes" of now. Like the Spirit of Christman a single robin, perched on a thickly owdered branch, just level with Mo lonald's face as he sat in his trap. oured a veritable carol of glee to

"Dear little bird!" thought Robert delightedly. "Robins mean good for-tune, I have heard, and the little fellow sings with all his heart as if he were congratulating me and wish ing me 'Happy Christmas!" It is my happiest Christmas even now, and mething tells me 'twill be happier vet. A merry Christmas, and the best of feasts to you, little robin, bird of Mary, as you surely are.'

And the same elusive, boyish un-reasoning spirit of delight was with him through all that radiant evening, through all the next day's holier beauty and throughout the festal week that followed. It was paradise only to be there in her presence, only to see her, beautiful as a Christ-It was like kneeling nigh some well-beloved patron saint to be eside her, as once it chanced to him said in common by the household,

guests included. Then, from the clear heavens above, there fell a thunderbolt. The summer cloudlessness of his happiness was destroyed by the black storm wreck that drove across it. She was not for him. His golden Esclairmonde might no longer light his path with the illuminating radiance of her

lamp. Have you noticed how like an old Madonna that beautiful Miss Hamilton is?" he had one evening chanced to overbear David Kerr, a newcomer in the district like him self, ask of one of the older resi-

Yes, she is wonderfully like the Madonna di San Sisto to my mind," the other had returned, "especially in repose. It is an extraordinarily saintly and really uncommon type She and her fiance are well matched are they not? He is Mr. Codring ton's only son-you know him, Bern ard ?-a most agreeable young man What a grave medieval face his is; isn't it

That is true. They are very un usual in appearance. I hope they will be as well matched otherwise. Have they been long engaged ?"

'Oh, they were betrothed from the cradle almost. Old Mr. Hamilton and old Mr. Codrington were the closest of friends, and it was their wish that the children should marry. It was Mr. Hamilton's dying wish and Miss Mary is Codrington's ward "O God be merciful to me a till she reaches her twenty-seventh year. I have heard that his father's will leaves Bernard absolutely penniless unless the marriage takes place. But I don't think he required such compulsion. It would not argue They suggested no gay picture of much discrimination on his part, revelry and good fellowship. One would it? They have been formally engaged for, I think, three yearsthat was of a young girl, tall and maybe four. They were both very

When is the marriage to take

Robert McDonald, sick at heart, strong, sweet and true, a face like had heard no more. The stunning that of some cloistered saint. It was the one face in all the world for him. unwilling eavesdropper. He crept Esclairmonde, the Light of all the World, he had named her to himself. Was this Christmas, the

insanely happy of mood? Was it to him that that deceitful little robin had sung such encouragement?

He stared blankly out of the windows. How dull and flat, how colorless and insipid everything was! Why had he been such a fool as not to have seen before that life was one long weariness? Why was he so wretched, what did anything matter? Yes, one thing mattered. And that was Esclairmonde. She was the whole world. Surely the whole world mattered. But she did not matter to him. He must learn that. Es clairmonde-there was no Esclairmonde-Mary Hamilton, then, did not matter to him. She was no concern of his. He must put her out of his life. It was like having to learn by heart difficult and unintelligible words. He felt like a child again, at a hard school.

Several days elapsed ere he could recover his balance. Hitherto every thing had been a strange delirium to him. He could not comprehend it With the fuller realization came, however, a terrible keenness of bitter pain and disappointment. He could scarcely bear to look at Bernard. The very thought of him was

agony. Thank God, the visit would be over in two days' time-he could scarcely leave earlier without an ex-Meanwhile he chatted and laughed, sang and joined in the games with a fevered zest that made the more observant of his neighbors wonder, knowing that sudden changes are due to some cause.

A strange dream visited Robert McDonald's slumbers that last night of their stay. He thought he wandering along in a vast subterranean chamber. A thousand lamps swinging from the far-vaulted roof lent it a weirdly illimitable appearance, and a hot, drug-like atmosphere over at the entrance with strangely worked curtains of silk, passages alternating with iron-studded doors. all around this hall. While he was wondering what he should do and whither to go, a lady draped and veiled in white, with a shining lamp in her hand, his Esclairmond beckening him to follow. She bade him burst open one of the great nail-studded doors and release her Bernard. He hastened to obey and a great dragon of incandescent heat came leaping forth to envelop him in a terrible flery embrace.

At this juncture Robert awoke. was not a moment too soon. The room was full of smoke, the heat was fearful. A crackling, frightful sound all around, a brilliant glow in the garden, hurrying steps and cries of Fire!" left him without a moment's doubt. Hastily donning a strong wrap and snatching a few of the valued of his possessions he left the room and succeeded in effecting a safe descent to the garden with a panic-stricken companion or two.

Here, in the large summer house most of the household was congre gated. One had a good view of the burning building from this place, and it was a terrible spectacle. A large, square, old-fashioned house, compactly built, there was scarcely a hope for to increase the work of destruction. The flames had enveloped one whole side in a sheet that plazed up into the dark, pitilessly dry sky with a hungry roaring and crackling that made the onlookers shudder. A chill wind was blowing and this but served to increase the work of during the evening prayers that were destruction, fanning the fire and carrying it more easily from point to

point. Ever and anon, a cruel, forked tongue of red leaped forth from an other of the windows, joining its companions as a widened sheet of flame, spreading its baleful activities always further. Leaping, dancing and running here, one steady frightful blaze there, the sound of crashing beams, of splintering wood and stonework, the horrible cracking of destruction proceeding apace -it was a nightmare, a vision of

horror. The house was doomed. They were busy counting the refugees. One after another answered to the rollcall or was satisfactorily accounted for, there was no one missing. Stay! where was Bernard Cod-rington? Had any one seen him? Yes, the last that had been seen of him was in the burning house, he had wakened early and assisted many. But where was he now None could tell! Hurried searching to and fro revealed nothing, and old Mr. Anthony was in despair, for the boy was the apple of his eye. O God! what had become of him?

Heavens! There at an upper window in that raging Inferno of flames the young man was clearly seen. There was a simultaneous groan from the onlookers. It was too hot around the house-how could anyone enter. Tears streamed down old Mr. Anthony's stern face. He

"O God be merciful to me a sin-ner!" he cried. "I have sinned, I have sinned, but if Thou, O God, wilt be merciful and spare him to me, no longer will I resist Thee—"

There is a back way up, a secret entrance," came the trembling tones of Mary Hamilton. "The flames have hardly reached it yet, but I am afraid that before the brigade can arrive it will also be impracticable.

The only hope—"
"Let me go, let me go, Miss Hamilon," eagerly besought McDonald. And he was gone.

How he succeeded in battling his

way against tremendous odds to the room where Bernard had been seen, how, with the unconscious, inert load he snatched from the smoulder-

happy Christmas to which he had so looked forward? Was he the person who had driven to Lindoris Court so stone back stairway after repeated ready, he totteringly gained that stone back stairway after repeated falls, he had not the faintest idea. Dazed and half dead, between the combined action of, at one time the stifling heat at another of the volumes of suffocating smoke, and frequently too, of the keen, bright white-hot agony of the flame, it was a miracle, a real miracle, that the more than heroic feat should ever have been accomplished. an eager little crowd assembled around the stairway as he appeared, and, just as he would have dropped down it unconscious with his unconscious burden, a dozen willing hands and arms received them safely.

Bernard would live, aye, and retain no trace of that terrible night's suffering upon him, said the doctor, some few days later. It was otherwise, however, with the brave res-cuer. He had been cruelly burned and the shock he had sustained had been of too grave a nature.

"He is sinking and cannot last very much longer. A noble man! said the physician warmly.

Esclairmonde, radiant with a newer, stiller beauty, happier of face than of old, with a happiness that all the compassionate sympathy of her grief for the dying man could not algether conceal, entered the sick room again after the doctor's departure. it would be some little time yet ere he could arrive.

The dying man looked at her pene tratingly. "Esclairmonde, Light of the World,"

ne murmured. Her face flushed, tears filled her Kneeling by his bedside she eyes.

gently lifted one of the wounded, bandaged hands and held it softly. "Listen, Robert, I will call you Robert," she said. "Your devotion, your unselfish generosity was all re-vealed tome by the wanderings of your recent delirium. I was nursing you. Thank God, thank God, your reward will be beyond words. He will know how to return it to you. I cannot tell you how moved I was to hear

that story from your lips. "But the best returns that I can make to you," she went on, "is to tell you how great a happiness you have brought to me, and to Bernard also. You may know that our en gagement was more a matter of our parent's wishes than our own. about a year after it occurred, my real vocation in life was clearly made known to me, and some time later the Heavenly Bridegroom's call came also to Bernard. I had no freedom till my twenty-seventh year. Ber nard also was under age, and Mr. Anthony persistently refused to listen to us. Once, becoming very angry, he threatened us with the curse of a slighted and neglected parent should

we persevere in our folly. Bernard and I endured months of misery. Then came the fire. Mr. Anthony feared God was about to punish him by taking his son from him, and he vowed, as you heard, to surrender him should he be saved from death. Your heroism, your

noble action was God's answer. "Your martyrdom has given God a priest and a nun who will never forget you all their lives through. Our Lady of Mount Carmel, to the shelter of whose mantle I go, will receive you now. To you, under God, she owes another daughter. The Sacred Heart will embrace you, for to your disinterested generosity He owes a

new priest, another Self. Thank God," were McDonald's dying words. His cup of bliss was full-the lost life was more than found again.—Richard Grant in The Magni-

## A CONVERT'S STORY OF HIS OWN CONVERSION

FAITH CAME THROUGH PAULIST MISSION

In writing down the following account of my conversion to the true Church of our Lord, my purpose is chiefly to impress upon such readers as may yet be outside the Catholic fold, or perhaps have received an intuitive glimpse of the truth. the great mercy of God in extending the anfathomable Grace of Faith even to those who may have, for a number of years, entirely neglected to give serious thought to the welfare of their souls. I was one of these.

When I was born forty-two years ago, my father was a prominent dignitary in the Evangelical Lutheran State Church of Sweden. He died before I was five years old, but my deeply religious mother gave me just as thorough a Christian education as my pious father could have bestowed on me, had he survived to guide my early steps in life. I was only fourteen when my dear mother passed away also, and I was placed under the guardianship of my brother in law. My intention at this time was to follow in the footsteps of my father, thereby fulfilling the fondest wish of my mother, who had always hoped to be spared until the day when I would serve God at the altar and in pulpit. When I was confirmed and made my first Holy Communion, a year or so after her death, my mind was still bent upon a clerical vocation, and I was as sincerly religious then as any youth ever brought up in a good Christian home.

However, this first Holy Communion, or rather the preparation for it was the first thing to estrange me, not only from the Lutheran sect, but from the practice of religion altogether. While being instructed for the important event, it was impressed most emphatically on my mind that it would mean eternal damnation for