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GENERAL INTENTION FOR DECEMBER.

*Named by the Cardinal Protector and blessed by the Pope
for all Associates.*

PARISH MISSIONS.



HE first missionary whom our Divine Saviour sent forth to save souls, was His great forerunner St. John the Baptist. Afterwards, it may be said, Parish Missions were begun in regular form on the day when the Master sent out His missionary band of twelve

Apostles, and commanded them to preach, as the Precursor had preached before them, that "the kingdom of heaven is at hand," and that in order to be ready for it the people should "do penance" (Matth. 10, Mark 6, Luke 9). Our Divine Master thus gave His band of missionaries a great, many-sided truth, which they were to bring home to the minds of their hearers, and a practical means of turning that truth to account, which they were to persuade their wills to adopt and embrace in their daily life and conduct.

Ever since that day, Parish Missions, under one form or another, have existed and flourished in the Church of Christ, and the message brought by the missionary has always been the same pregnant and everlasting truth, "the kingdom of heaven is at hand," the same ever-needed practical lesson, "do penance." When the missionary speaks to his listeners on the End of Man, Sin, Death, Judgment, Hell, or topics akin to these ; in other words, when he tells them that we all come from God and are to go back to God, that we have been called forth from our native nothingness by an all powerful act of God's mysterious love, and are destined to live for all eternity in perfect happiness with Him ; that there is but one real obstacle to hinder us from attaining this glorious destiny ; that the days of man on this earth are short, his life a vapour which appeareth for a little while, and afterwards shall vanish away, and it is appointed unto men once to die ; that we are to give a full and strict account of all our thoughts, words, deeds and omissions to a Judge who searcheth the reins and the heart, whose decision shall be entirely fair, and from whom there can be no appeal ; finally, that there exists a place of punishment which has been prepared by the justice of God for those who die in mortal enmity with their Creator, Redeemer and Father ; what does he do but impress upon them, in many words and with varied forms of expression, that the kingdom of heaven is at hand for them? The burden of the missionary's message to our sinful and fallen race to-day, is the same as was the theme of the first Twelve to the men of their time ; so, too, the warning cry that strikes upon our ears and penetrates to our hearts, as we listen to the development of the great and everlasting truths, and as the unseen world becomes more real and more important in our eyes, is, as it was in the days of the Apostles : "Do penance."

* * *

These great truths and the vital lesson they enforce are easily forgotten or lost sight of ; the kingdoms of this world

and the glory of them are so bewitching to our bodily senses, they are in such a state of ceaseless bustle and turmoil, they bring into play such a multitude of devices to draw our attention to their doings and sayings, to fill our mind with their thoughts, and to win our admiration for the brave show they make, that they not unfrequently shut out all else from our view, and expose us to forget that the fashion of this world passeth away, that we have not here an abiding city, and that the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of which there shall be no end, is at hand. Hence the need of Parish Missions; the need of a clear and forcible statement of the fundamental truths which alone afford us a solid basis on which to build truly successful lives here and hereafter; the need of an occasional breaking in upon the ordinary routine of parish life, by means of the exercises of the Mission; the need of the infusion in some degree of the element of novelty, from time to time, to arouse in many souls a keener interest and a livelier faith and to win back to God and to their duty those who may have refused for years to avail themselves of the ordinary helps of an organized parish.

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The Apostles, as we know from St. Mark and St. Luke, on coming back to their Master after this mission, related to Him all things that they had done and taught; doubtless they were filled with joy and astonishment at the wonderful success of their labours. So, too, the missionary of to-day has often reason to bless God for the visible evidences which he beholds of the power of divine grace to conquer man's rebellions will and strengthen his faint heart. He sees the realization, in a true and mystical sense, of the promises made by our Divine Saviour when He was sending forth His Apostles to preach the Gospel to every creature (Mark, c. 16, v. 17): "These signs shall follow them that believe: In My name they shall cast out devils; they shall take up serpents; if they shall drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them;

they shall lay their hands upon the sick ; and they shall recover." We may apply to our own time the explanation of these promises given by the great St. Bernard in speaking of the missions of his day : " Devils are cast out," says the holy Doctor, when sins and bad habits are uprooted from the heart, when the light of faith shines again in the soul and the love of God is aglow once more, filling the sinner with genuine sorrow for the past and a firm resolve to enter upon a new life. Men speak with new tongues when words of vanity, of fault-finding, of uncharitable gossip, of profanity, of blasphemy, are replaced by a new language, by words that are gentle, kindly, helpful, mild and cheerful, or, when the occasion is offered, by the eloquent language of silence. They take up serpents and cast them out of their path, when they drive out of their mind and heart the poisonous suggestions of the tempter, who strives to induce them to fall back again into their former sins and thus make their last state worse than their first. They drink a deadly thing without being hurt by it, when they refuse to give way to the baneful urgings of their own perverse nature. Finally they lay their hands upon the sick and make them recover, when they cure their diseased affections by applying as a remedy the steady practice of good works, and by implanting and developing a love of what is holy and saving."

These same promises are commented upon in an equally practical way by Pope St. Gregory, the great Pope who, 1300 years ago, sent Augustine and his fellow monks to accomplish the conversion of England : " Our holy Mother the Church," says the holy Pontiff, " does every day for the souls of men what she did in the time of the Apostles for their bodies ; her priests cast out devils when they make use of the power of exorcism in Holy Baptism, impose hands upon the persons to be baptized, and command the evil spirits to begone from their souls ; moreover, her faithful children speak with new tongues, when they lay aside

the worldly conversation they were wont to indulge in, entertain one another with holy and wholesome subjects, or speak as well as they are able about the glory and goodness and power of their Creator and Father ; they take up serpents when, by their good and prudent counsel they remove from their neighbour's heart all ill-feelings and bitterness, and all designs of wrong doing ; they drink a deadly thing and it does not hurt them, when they are forced in spite of themselves to listen to harmful suggestions, but yet are not drawn on to commit the wicked deed ; they lay their hands upon the sick and make them recover, when, on seeing their neighbour growing weak in good works, they hasten to his assistance with all the means in their power, and strengthen his wavering and faltering steps by the encouraging sight of their own good example." Such are some of the consoling fruits of the great work of Parish Missions ; such they were in the past, such they are to-day.

The Sacred Heart of our Divine Saviour longs for the conversion of sinners, and Parish Missions are and always have been a most effective means to reach that end ; let all the Members of the League, therefore, do all in their power, by their personal influence and by their prayers, to bring about a still greater development of this great means of doing good, and to obtain, if need be, the priceless grace of frequent missions for the parish to which they belong.

C.

PRAYER.

O Jesus ! through the most pure Heart of Mary, I offer Thee all the prayers, work and sufferings of this day, for all the intentions of Thy Divine Heart, in union with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass in reparation of all sins, and for all requests presented through the Apostleship of Prayer : in particular for the success of Parish Missions. Amen.

A NOEL
Say, Shepherd, Say.

Organ accompaniment by
 Mr. ARTHUR LETONDAL

1st VOICE.

REFRAIN

Say Shep - herd. Say, seest thou tho

ORGUE.

p

2ND VOICE.

hut a-down the hill? Yea, Shep - herd.

DUO.

yea, yon-der's tho sta - ble; hast - en still! Just at the

Ped.

sight of yon poor hov - el. What rapture fills my heart and mind! That wretched

man - ger, so they told us, Shelters the Sa - viour of man -

kind. Yes yes, 'tis there, 'tis there, the sta - ble Where rests the

End. 1st voice.

Sav - iour of man - kind. How sweet the sound of An - gels

End.

2nd voice.

sing - ing! How bright their hal - os' cir - cling span! Their words are

1ST VOICE.

yet in echoes ring-ing. Glory to God, and peace to man! Tho' first-

lest-ial band in song rep-eated: Behold in Beth-le-hem is born your King!

2ND VOICE.

" Lo, ye shall see a stable wherein seated A Virgin tends the Babe of whom we

DUO

sing! A Vir-gin tends the Babe of whom we sing!

S

2

- 1st. V. :* What omen, shepherd, canst thou find
 In this Child's birth on whisp of hay ?
2nd. V. : I scarcely know, but to my mind,
 A king would come with more array.
1st. V. : Perchance, some day, this child among our vales,
 A Shepherd grown, will guard His flocks and fold ?
2nd. V. : How could this be ? The Angel surely hails
 Of Israel the Saviour long-foretold.
 Say, shepherd, &c.

3

- 1st. V. :* A Saviour born within a stable !
 This, truly, is a mystery.
2nd. V. : Since God so wills it, I am able
 In Him my God and King to see.
1st. V. : Is it the Child whom prophets in the past
 Have promised to our grand-sires and their heirs ?
2nd. V. : E'en so, methinks ; the Christ is come at last,
 Come, as Jehovah's answer to our prayers.
 Say, shepherd, &c.

4

- 1st. V. :* Behold, at last, the very spot ;
 What ! to be born in such a shed !
2nd. V. : In truth, more wretched is their lot
 Than the Angelic choirs said.
1st. V. : Oh God ! the wind howls, through each gaping rent
 The blast drifts snow, and icy is the air !
2nd. V. : Quick enter, shepherds, here is what was meant
 Behold the Child, than all the babes more fair !
 (*Final refrain.*)
1st. V. : Where, shepherd, where is this Child by Virgin nursed ?
2nd. V. : There, shepherd, there. Which of us two shall greet them
 [first ?
Duo : Oh joy, to gaze on that fond Mother,
 And Royal Babe, throned in a stall !
 O Babe Divine ! my little Brother,
 In worship I before Thee fall ;
 And thou, my good and tender Mother,
 Give Him my heart, my life, my all !



Adapted for the
CANADIAN MESSENGER.

A CHRISTMAS "BLOSSOM."



LICK, click... it was a faint sound, merely the cocking of a tiny revolver John Larmer was toying with, as he sat gazing abstractedly at its elaborate mounting. Even in the cheerless apartment it shone in the dim light of the December evening which was dull and murky, and the gloom was gathering apace. It was a small thing. It might at first have seemed so costly, useless curio, so rich was it with inlaid ivory and silver; some pretty plaything, were it not for a spiteful look, like the look of a pampered toy terrier. It was a highly ornamented revolver, but so small was it that it lay wholly within his palm, — small, but at a man's temple capable of a deadly bark and bite.

Outside, the winter sunlight filtered with fitful effort through the heavy, low-lying clouds, the smoke-thickened air, and the quick-whirling snowflakes. Down in the narrow city street, where the vans and carts and cabs seemed almost to flow with, and borne along by a stream of wintry ooze that hid the pavement, the light was gray and grisly. Above and through the grimy, cobwebbed windows of the large, deserted room, where Larmer sat, just beneath the eaves of one of the tall buildings lining the cramped thoroughfare, it seemed to lose its character of light. There were no curtains, however, to bar its way. The floor was bare. In one corner stood a small square stove; no comforting fire in its barren grate; no welcoming glow between its cold, gray bars; its name, "The Fireside," appearing in raised, rusty letters across its front, read as a grim sarcasm. But the room was not without signs of faded grandeur and comforts of a not very remote past. Upon its walls, hung crookedly an autotype of the angel's head in Botticelli's "Spring," and a reproduction of Dürer's "Melancholia." A large chair, covered with rich but well-worn stuff, stood in front of the grim stove, and in a doorway leading to an adjoining room hung from a broken rod a heavy portière of embroidered

silk. A bookcase of elaborately carved oak rose above the lead-coloured wainscot, its two upper shelves empty; its three lower only partially filled. There was something about the aspect of the case that made it plain to the minds even of those who least understood the untold, that not very long before, the empty shelves had been filled; that the volumes now left were not then deserted by those most saleable of them all. In another corner was a long low, ragged divan, and near it a decrepit chair. Between this divan and the stove lay a fine Persian rug with a stain in one corner and a hole in the other; these and other things evidently appertained to a better life than was possible in such quarters. On the whole, there was scarce an air of squalor about the room, but it was gray in its dusty ceiling, worn as to its broken paper-hanging, neglected, and in its aspect and influence very melancholy.

On the rickety chair and at an unpainted table, its broad top spotted with ink stains, sat the man who looked upon his past life as an abject failure, and on the years which might yet be vouchsafed to him as not worth living. He laid down the pistol gently — almost tenderly, as one would a cherished thing of life, and drawing a few sheets of paper toward him he took up a pen and wrote hastily:

"As you are the only one who has any right to expect an explanation, or to whom I have the slightest desire to attempt justification of what I am about to do, I write to you.

"I do not know that I can justify either myself or my act. The taking of a criminal's forfeited life is defensible; the taking of the life of him who attacks your own may be vindicated. If my life has wronged me, deceived me, threatened me, may I not take it, when it is mine?

"Men affect endurance in mock heroism, and sneer at suicide because they are afraid. I do not shrink from pain — the crash of the marring bullet through the flesh and bone will be but for a moment.

"I might dilate upon the disasters of my life. You know them — my failures, my follies, my fancies, my frenzies — you know them almost in detail. But I am not petulant, querulous, or angry, and I do not do it. I possessed imagination that builded me a house of life, with lofty columns and wide architrave. I had the means to people my house with imagined actualities; but now the frieze lies along the foundation, and my realities have not the substance of dreams. My fortune is gone, and here in this miserable chamber I scrawl words I scarce heed and never shall read; here in poverty, almost in darkness, for the horizon is lost in mist, the west is hung with wolf pelts, and the night — the Night — is at hand.

"The world will dismiss me from thought with flippant condemnation, saying that my ruin is of my own making. It may be, but I am therefore the more worthy of attention. If the world would really know anything of human existence, it must study the life, not of him who has succeeded, but of him who has failed. Success may be an accident, or the point where the chain of events is linked to a necessary result. But a man always ruins himself characteristically, and his failure exhibits his real nature. I am a failure. I have lived after my own fashion, and if I have not achieved happiness, who may? I have ruined myself in my own way. I have missed no chance, neglected no opportunity. Myself and I rejoiced in our youth and my fortune. All is gone. Myself — my last coin — I drop to-day into that slot — the grave.

"I have a few things left whereupon I might realize enough to pay life's wages for some days longer. But why make use of any of these? Why should I take pains to support this clumsy body that gave me so little satisfaction, even when I was not put to such trouble for its keep? A bullet shall close the disjointed phrase of my life; a bullet shall be the period that ends this jargon, unintelligible to myself and to all.

"I go to forget, for I have lost faith in a future; I expect to be forgotten. Pity me, despise me, they bury suicides now at such cross-roads.

"I doubt if I have really said anything, when I wanted to say so much, and that so clearly. I do not even know what I have said, for I am not calm, unimpatient; I seem goaded as with some strange haste. But, fast friend, tried comrade, I bid you a good lifetime. wish me a good eternity.

"LARMER."

The young man paused, and looked up with half bewildered stare. Wholly sane, perhaps, when he began to write, the weight and multiplicity of his thoughts, the stress of time had wrought in him at least something of madness. Intelligence now, for a moment at least, seemed to struggle back to the world of sense. He placed together the loose sheets on which he had written, even numbered the leaves. then folding them carefully, he put them in an envelope, sealed it, and wrote a name upon it — "Eldridge Newry, Esq." — and then an address.

He rose and quickly crossing the room placed the letter on the bare mantel; then drew his watch: "Seven minutes to five. It might as well be at five as any other time," he said, clearly, and unconscious that he spoke. "Seven minutes to eternity," he added, and resumed his seat. He did not bow his head this time. He sat erect, staring

at the dial before him. At first his mind was a blank. It was as if faculty of thought, use of mental processes, were gone. There was nothing left save indifferent recognition of the plain, clear, seemingly quite unimportant fact of life. "I might as well sit here waiting to take some narcotic," he said.

But now came hurrying things — things unconnected, dissimilar, erratic. They came as eager bidders might hasten to the auction of a dead man's chattel's — hasten and jostle on the threshold. He remembered that a Frenchman — that was the first thought that shouldered in — had once said that suicide was ill-mannered, that it was the height of impoliteness to go where you were not invited, and for a moment the grim, facile epigram almost amused him, and he slightly smiled. But quickly hurrying so closely crowding that they overlapped and partly obscured each other, came other thoughts, memories, disconnected, inappropriate — inopportune he would have considered them had he had power of criticism left. He thought of an apple-tree as he had, when a child, once seen it in full blossom, when the pied flowers were as swarms of butterflies alighted all over on its stiff little twigs; now the river before his uncle's country place was as clear as in that summer afternoon when, a boy, he swam the sparkling stream, than which the upper sky could not have been more blue, "more cool, more calm more bright." And then suddenly were prefigured to him the terrible aspects of the tragedy about to be enacted, and of what would follow when the curtain had gone down. The sound of the pistol; the crash of the ball; the blood slowly pulsing in its outflow; the rattle of the fallen weapon; his own duller hearing fail. He can fancy himself lapsing into unconsciousness — to awaken in eternity. But no, a sweet face now rises before him, a mother's — one long since gone and well nigh forgotten. He sees her, such as she was when he, a boy, was tossing to and fro in the burning fever. She is bending over him, bathing his throbbing temples, moistening his lips, Her own part in prayer as she now pins over his heart a little scapular, a Heart upon it — a burning Heart, with encircling thorns, and the legend: "Thy Kingdom come." No, no, not that memory, it is too late! He motions her away. The vision fades, but to make way for another. Oh! why will they come unbidden?

He is kneeling in a chapel, the glow of renewed health upon his cheek. It was the last of his First Friday Communions — communions of thanksgiving, too, — and he had just made his consecration to a Heart, he was told, loved men so much. He believed it then; but was it not all a fond illusion? When, in later years, had he experienced that love? and were not they, who had fulfilled the conditions of the "Great

Promise" to have "their Sacraments" before they died? And he in one moment more would die without them! His determination was irrevocable; away, then, the transparent deceit! Save in words, however, the rejection was less resolute. . . He must put a stop to this. He felt he was weakening. . . it was cowardice, mere childishness to dwell on such empty fancies. — What noise was that in the street? But was it of any consequence to him what noise it might be?

He glanced at that busy labourer, the little watch before him. With steady, sturdy beat it ticked away almost blithely at its work. There, in that place, it seemed indeed alive, and to torment a man with its activity.

The last minute before five.

His hand tightened upon the revolver's small stock. The muzzle touched his temple. Scarce a thread of white still lay between the hour point and the imperceptibly advancing minute-hand. Just then, among the charms, which, with his seal, hung by the watch chain, his eye rested on a little enamel cross, and the same red Heart again. Had he unwittingly been carrying it all these years? He had never thought of removing it. But why should it be there to distract him at this the supreme moment of his life?

Another hasty glance at the dial. Now the finger of the minute-hand touches the lower limb of the X in XII. Now —

Rap, rap, came a faint, fumbling knock at the door.

Larmer instinctively turned his head. The revolver already bore on space.

Rap, rap, once more.

The revolver was slightly lowered.

Rap, and then the knock suddenly ceased, and there was a sort of rustling, brushing noise as if something fell with slow descent, partly sustained by the door.

Certainly this was annoying — and perplexing. There are times when a man has the right to expect to be alone, when any disturbance is intrusion. Can't a gentleman take his own life in peace? he thought, with whimsical exasperation. But then a knock at the door? Even at such a time Larmer was not able to free himself from the unavoidable inclination to answer the call. He placed the pistol on the table, and stepping quickly to the door, unlocked it. It was much darker in the hall than in the room. Glancing down, he saw what seemed a large bundle, so shapeless and still was it. He looked at it for a moment — in the moment recalling staggering, straggling faculties & power to comprehend actual things — and then stooping down, sought by sense of touch to discover what it really was. At first he felt merely a fold of woollen cloth; then what he knew to be an arm; and then soft hair, and a cold, small human face.

"It's a child," he said, "and half frozen."

He gathered the limp body in his arms, and carried it to the big arm-chair in front of the fireless stove. Without hesitation he seized the rickety chair, and raising it above his head he brought it down with such violence on the floor that it flew into many fragments. These, with an old newspaper caught from the table, he stuffed into the grate. A match picked from a scattered dozen upon a shelf in an instant ignited the paper, and the grotesque shadows on the wall began a fantastic dance. There was a little coal in a small box; he rattled some of it down upon the flames, and many of the shadows, as if frightened at the noise, fled out of sight. Then he drew the chair nearer the blaze. Taking off the child's heavy shoes — one heel showed pinkly through a hole in the stocking — he placed a large book upon the hearth and the small feet upon it; then he chafed the little hands, blue with cold, between his own. How strange — and it came in fleeting, transitory thought — that what five minutes before had seemed worse than useless to himself seemed suddenly so inexpressibly precious in this scantily clad child — something to be preserved if human exertion could do it! But the sense of this incongruity was but for a moment; the ragged waif occupied his attention. A bright something ran over the small face, and the large eyes slowly opened in amazement.

"Will I die?" she asked faintly, as she gazed up at the man bending over her. "I don't want to die yet."

"No," he answered, as heartily and assuringly as he could; "not a bit of it."

"I am glad," she said, as her head sank again with a little sigh.

He had not heard his own voice for hours, and now it seemed strained, stiffened and formal.

"You'll be all right soon," he went on, speaking rapidly, and provoked that he could not command an easier and more natural tone. "You are only a little cold," and he grew absolutely angry that, out of practice as he had been, he could not do more in softening his words. "You will be warm in three minutes," he added, a little more satisfactorily — "a minute" would have sounded harsh — "and then you will feel better."

"I feel better now," said the child, quite comfortably. "But don't watch me so. I've a-ma-zing dislike to being watched so."

"You've what?" he asked astonished at the long words, and looking at her even more earnestly.

"A-ma-zing dislike," she repeated, turning a languid face toward him, almost with fine-ladyish air.

"Oh," he said, and began looking at the grate.

"That is a very nice fire," she said. "I don't think I was ever near quite so large a fire. I don't pos-i-tive-ly." And as the word fell very slowly, Larmer turned and looked at her again.

"Didn't I tell you, don't?" she said, with a strange little look of command. "But what a soft chair, and what pretty colours," and with a light forefinger she followed the shape of a spreading leaf woven in the texture. "You must be a very rich man."

If some one had ascribed to him omniscience or omnipresence, the powers of an Indian adept, or the ability of a circus contortionist, Larmer could not have been more staggered. That she had no doubt about what she said, was plain in the wondering, almost admiring glance that she turned upon him.

"It's nice to have money," she said, and she held her small hand before her face, almost as if she were careful of her complexion, and afraid that the fire-light would hurt it. If the broken-winged sparrow



that he had picked up in the gutter a week ago, had bent its pathetic eye upon him and given utterance to some aphorism, he could not have been more amazed. He looked at her attentively. Her cheeks were sunken; her lips were pale; her eyes unnaturally bright. Over her features was the worn, weary look—the look that lies upon features sharpened by the pinch and privation of poverty. But in her case it did not seem unpleasant; there mingled with it no aspect of

unnatural precocity, nothing of the expression of the impish acuteness of too clever children. It seemed only the result of hardship, of experiences that should not have come to one so young. But she was a beautiful child even as she was, with that look of race, or breeding, or what ever it is, that quality of all really fine organisms never wholly lost, no matter in what strait the human or brute creature may be; that something giving assurance of endurance and strength in reserve equal to all assail, and even in defeat not wholly overcome.

"Don't you feel much better now?" he asked, as he looked down upon this calm little creature evidently so self-possessed.

"I think," she said, unhesitatingly, "that I am hungry."

Of course she must be hungry. He was a brute not to have thought of that before. But what could he give her? A man on the point of committing suicide, and in such rooms, would hardly be apt to have a well stocked larder, and to tell the truth, so little had Larmer had of coin or of any currency for the last weeks, that command over food or drink had been but slight.

"I'm afraid," he said blankly, "that I haven't anything." "But I can go out and get something," he added, suddenly remembering the fortune of a few pieces of silver loose in his pocket.

"Please do," she said; "I am very hungry. I haven't eaten anything for a whole, long, awful day. Won't—won't you please hurry?"

A whole day! This child without food for a whole day! The thing was startling; she must have food and at once. He started towards the door, but he did not like to leave her alone, weak as she was. He hesitated, and then suddenly, with glad relief, he remembered that he had some preserved fruit and some crackers purchased long before, when he had yet hope, and thought of making something of his life. He found them, and gave the already opened bottle and the untied parcel to the child. But, he asked himself, had he done rightly? Were strawberries and those dry sweet biscuits really the thing to give to a starving little being like this? But already she had the bottle under one arm, and one of the crackers loaded with the luscious berries at her lips.

"Oh," she said in an instant; and there was ineffable depth of satisfaction, unspeakable ecstasy of gratification, in the half-murmured, half-ejaculated syllable. The countenance of a gourmet were but a blank compared to the child's face as she finished the quick feat of swallowing her first mouthful. But as the second half-cracker and its load disappeared, Larmer wondered if he should not stop her. Famished persons, he had read, should not be allowed to eat so much and so quickly.

"I never, never tasted anything so good," she managed to say. "Do you always eat such good things?" This last, after a large part of a well-freighted cracker had been swallowed in one mouthful. He did not answer. He had unexpectedly made a humiliating discovery. He was very hungry himself — fiercely, ravenously hungry. Whether it was the child's eager voracity or only the nearness of this vivid bit of human life that relaxed the tension of the last morbid days and humanized him into something more natural, he did not take time to think. He was hungry; that was the present active fact. He picked up one of the crackers, and almost hesitatingly took a bite of it.

"Put on some of this," she insisted, with a certain richness in her gobbled words, for her mouth was full.

He did as he was bidden, and, sitting on the arm of the chair, he began eating with as much appetite and almost as much relish as the child herself. It was a close thing between them, first one and then the other at the bottle; and sometimes, when his hand was before hers, she rapped it with a cracker, and insisted that her own should be first.

Soon he laughed.

"Don't," said the child — "don't laugh that way. Aren't you glad?"

He stopped. It was grotesquely ludicrous. A handful of minutes or so ago, and actually he was going to shoot himself, and here he was seated on the same chair with a child on whom he had never laid eyes before, silently and diligently eating "bread and honey."

"What is your name?" he asked at length, as he shook the cracker crumbs from his fingers.

"Blossom," she answered quickly, as she took a bite of the last cracker of them all.

"But that's hardly your real name, you know," he said. "You must have some other."

"Oh yes," she answered, looking into the bottle, where some inches of its contents still remained, and as if the other name was a wholly unimportant superfluity, "I've another — two — Marjory Noel."

"Marjory Noel," he repeated.

"Every one calls me Blossom," she said, indifferently. "I think you'd better call me Blossom."

He did not understand exactly how it was brought about, but from that moment he knew he was enlisted in her cause — had taken her small Majesty's shilling, as it were. Not that her supremacy had been declared; quite the contrary; her dependence had been established, that was all — dependence more masterful than any tyranny.

"How old are you?" he asked, hesitatingly, and almost fearful of appearing rude.

"Twelve and a half," she answered. "Is not that too young?" she added, contemptuously.

"I have known people younger," Larmer answered, with grave politeness.

"It seems strange," she said, but I ought to be older. It seems to me that I have lived years and years.

"And," he asked, taking advantage of the opportunity, for there was a diminutive stateliness, a minimized dignity about this young person that had hitherto led him insensibly to abstain from asking her such questions, although he was desirous of knowing what

had brought her to his door in such condition and at such a time, "have you always lived here?"

"In this city, do you mean, or in this house?" she asked precisely.

"Do you — did you live in this building?" he demanded, in astonishment.

It was a large structure, with many rooms and long narrow halls. Its lower part was used for shops, the second and third stories for small manufacturing work, and the top for cheap lodging rooms. Now, as it happened, Larmer was the only occupant of the cold, deserted upper story, where tenants came and went with such significant frequency.

"A long time," she answered. "The Necromancer and Horatio Nelson and I."

"Who?"

"The Necromancer and Horatio Nelson and I," she repeated.

"The Necromancer was my uncle, Horatio Nelson was the cat, and I was myself."

"Why the Necromancer?"

"Because he used to do such strange things. He made queer little bits of machines, and had queer mixtures in queer glasses. He had a white beard, just like necromancers' in books. He was a great inventor. I wanted him to discover the phi-lo-so-pher's stone I read about, but he wouldn't."

"No?" said Larmer.

"No, he wouldn't"; and she went on slowly, and with a great effort of memory: "he said modern chem-is-try did more than ancient al-che-my ever thought of doing; that no trans-mu-tation was as wonderful as some of the results of e-lec-tri-cal action; that his philosopher's stone would make us as rich as if he could really make gold. I did not understand him very well. Do you!"

"I think so," said Larmer. "And the cat?" he asked.

"The cat was Horatio Nelson, because he could climb so well — and all great sailors climb well," she said confidently.

"How long did you live here?" he asked.

"Years; but not in these rooms. They were too grand for us. We lived in small ones on the other side."

"Why did you go away?"

"The Necromancer died," she answered, with something hushed in her tone. "I found him lying beside his work-bench one day, on the floor, and there was a little spot of blood on his white forehead. They say it was falling on the floor did it. Oh! he was so thin and light that I could have lifted him almost."

Neither spoke for a moment.

"I held his head," she went on, "and screamed and screamed. Then I kissed him on the forehead where there wasn't any blood, and then I screamed again and then people came."

She cast one look over her shoulder into a dark part of the room, and then turned quickly toward the protective light of the coals, now brightly aglow in the stove.

"Then the Furlongs came," she went on.

"Who were the Furlongs?" he asked in a minute.

"They were very nice people," she said, with a quick adaptability; "de-light-ful people. They used to live in these rooms, and that's why I came here to-night. They were just married. They had a rose-bush in the window, and a canary-bird. Horatio Nelson used to come here with me, and when he saw the canary he would roll his eyes around, and just open his mouth a little, so that you could see a little white of his teeth, and I am sure he would have eaten it if he could. Mr. Furlong—she called him Bert, but of course I couldn't do that—was a piano-tuner, and I don't believe piano-tuners are very rich men. But they were much richer than we, and they were so nice to me. They took me to their rooms and kept me weeks.

"And this was a long time ago?" he asked.

"Ever so long ago—in the spring," she continued. "But one day Mrs. Furlong found a letter in one of my old dresses that said that if anything happened to him—uncle—I was to be sent to some cousins who lived in the country, and that they were to take care of me. And so one day Mr. Furlong took me to see them, and oh! they were such strange people!"

"And did you live there long?" asked Larmer, as she paused for a moment.

"Loug!" she exclaimed. "Two thousand years by the parlour clock."

"Well?" he said laughing at last.

"Oh, you want to hear more? We didn't have much re-cre-a-tion there—some of my words I've only read, and I'm not quite sure of the pro-nun-ci-a-tion—in that house. Sunday, that was the worst, for we used to drive to the church with a horse with queer, straight bones like rulers, and sit in straight up and down pews like my cousins' chair backs, and listen to a man who did not seem to me to talk very civilly to the people. But it was not like mother's, nor the Furlong's church. There was no altar; no little twinkling light burning before Our Lord; no Sacred Heart statue with its sad, loving look; no sweet Ma-don-na and no priest like Father Hetherington who came to see mother when she was dying."

Ah! thought Larmer, this little waif is a Catholic, which—God for-

give me—I should be. He longed to hear more of the mother, but through delicacy, dared not yet venture on that topic—nor on the presently more perplexing one of religion.

"But they were always kind to you?" he asked after a pause.

"Oh yes; but there is such a difference in 'kind,' you know. There was the Necromancer's 'kind'—the biggest"—and she held out her arms as if she would include miles of space; "and there was the Furlongs' 'kind,' and then there is your 'kind'—all of them different," and she looked up at him. "What is your name?" she asked suddenly.

"Larmer."

"Yes, Larmer, they were always one kind of 'kind,' but really they didn't know how, and I cried and cried, and thought I should die."

"What didn't you like?"

"The country for one thing. It was awful."

"Oh!" exclaimed Larmer, softly. He had always had a vague idea that children always liked the country, and the answer surprised him.

"It was frightful. Perhaps I should like it if it was more populated, but there was almost no one to see all day long, and almost nothing to do. No swarms of people, no lovely shop windows, no hand-organs—nothing. In the summer it was bad, very bad, but in the winter—oh! It was like being shut up in a cave in the dark, and I was afraid. At night I could only sit and think how it was at home, where the pretty electric lights were shining, and the trolley-cars running, and the people pro-me-nading; and then I wanted to go to God's own Church and ma's. I couldn't stay out there any longer, Larmer, and so I ran away."

"What?"

"Ran away," she repeated.

"When Mr. Furlong went away he gave me—my cousins didn't come to the gate—a little money. He said he thought—he was looking back at my woman cousin, who stood on the steps and held out her hands to see, if it was raining—that I might some time want to buy something, to please myself; for, God bless me! he said, he didn't believe I would have much to please me there. I kept that money for a period of distress, and when I ran away I walked to the station; it wasn't far, not more than fifteen blocks. I stepped up to the janitor of the station-house and said: 'Is that enough to buy a ticket to Montreal? If it is, I want a very good one, please.' 'What are you going to Montreal for?' he asked, while he was pulling a ticket out of a place. 'To see friends,' I said. And that was true, for I was going to see the Furlongs. I got to the city, and then

I had to ask my way, first from one policeman and then from another, and I kept getting hungrier and colder, and then I lost my way, and it has taken me all the day to get here, and the Furlongs are gone, after all, and I'm sure I don't know what I shall do."

There was little of doubt, less of helplessness, and nothing at all of despair expressed in her last words. So far was she from doubt or fear that it was evident that her only anxiety was to obtain the rest of the strawberries without cracker as she was. She tipped up the bottle, and tried to cram her hand down the neck.

"I think," said Larmer, "that perhaps, you know, you hadn't better eat any more of that now."

"But I am very hungry," she insisted.

"Suppose we go out and get something—well—more wholesome," he said.

"And bring it back here and eat it?" she exclaimed.

"If you like."

"Shoes," she cried. "Give me my shoes."

Larmer handed them to her, and in a moment she had them on, and with a quick stamp or two she settled her feet well into them.

The weather had suddenly changed. As Larmer and Blossom stepped out of the building, they found the street and sidewalks white with the new-fallen snow. It had been cold in the afternoon, but it was much colder now, and was freezing rapidly. The city no longer seemed murky, dismal and forbidding, but bright, clean and sparkling. The mud had stiffened, and was hid from sight; the snow had filled the dusky corners and crannies in the forlorn buildings, and lay thickly on the dark, sullen roofs. The electric lights were somewhat dimmed by the thick flakes, but still they managed to light everything very brilliantly, causing the fringing icicles on the window-ledges and eaves to glisten, until it might seem in some places almost as if the houses were illuminated for some festival, with rows of suspended and sparkling lamps. The vehicles in the street were fewer, but the people on the sidewalks were, if anything, more numerous. The dull roar of the wheels was stilled, and a few sleighs were out, making merry music with their bells. The crowds no longer walked as if in treadmill work, but with brisk step, as if freed, at least for a time, from routine and care.

Larmer had not been out for two days, nor had he for a longer time given attention to the things of the surrounding world. Now he noticed the stir, the brilliancy, the thronged ways, the illuminated shops, with some surprise. Was the city always like this, and had he never realize it? Was it his mood or the world that was changed, o both

"Everything seems very gay to-night," he said, as he took the child's hand.

"Why?" Blossom exclaimed, in amazement. "Don't you know?"

"No," he confessed.

"Why, it's Christmas Eve! Didn't you know that? I thought that everybody knew that."

Christmas Eve, and not to know it! He had never felt quite so humiliated in his life. There was not a beggar in the street, not a prisoner in his cell, who did not know it, whose heart was not a little gladder, whose feeling was not a little kindlier, for the knowledge. He was but a drivelling creature, a poltroon. He had gathered up a store of ills, and in his vain desire to put the great scheme of the Creator in fault, had set value by them as a madman might to the pebbles he thought diamonds. So he instinctively felt, as he again walked the world, the keen wind blowing in his face, and the lights about him, and a warm little hand tight in his own. Kill himself! Kill himself! And on Christmas Eve! With a Saviour, who was to bear all burdens, coming into this world! Oh, the horror of it!

Blossom marched on in a delirium of vivid delight. The movement, the general air of festivity charmed her; the noise delighted her; but the windows — the wonderful panorama of the shop windows — filled her with complete and ceaseless satisfaction. The confectioners', where white-capped and aproned men pulled out and about the gigantic skeins of shining candy; the toyshops, where seemed collected the small models from which everything thing had been made; the jeweler's, where the gems glittered on the dark plush cushions only less brilliantly than the now unclouded stars in the winds. Ravens, in the soft, black velvet sky — all were enchanting. But it was before a great jeweller's shop that she paused the longest and looked the most wistfully.

"Oh!" she said, shaking her head slowly, "if I only had one ring, even like that dear little one with the blue flower, I would be happy, — happy — happy!" She turned reluctantly away. "It's nice to look at them anyway," she sighed.

But her beloved and regained city filled her with too great a joy to be easily subdued, and she quickly brightened up.

"I haven't got much money, you know," said Larmer, apologetically, as they went on.

"Oh no," she answered, quickly and cheerfully, as if that of course was everybody's natural condition, and no more to be deplored than the fact that one has no more than ten toes. "But you've got some, haven't you?"

"That's all," and he drew from his pocket a few half-dollars and quarters.

"All that to spend at once?" she cried. "But won't you need it for rent?"

"I think not."

"Surely?"

"Surely."

"Oh, how much we shall buy! Let me show you."

Blossom knew the streets of that quarter or the city as a nun knows her cloister. She knew exactly where she wished to go. Gradually Larmer found his pockets filled with packages, his hands with bundles. Blossom, rich in experience, worked wonders with the small handful of money; never before would he have believed that so little would have bought so much.

"Go to the best, and you'll get the best, and — the most," she said, sagaciously, as they left a huge establishment, where she had judiciously invested twenty-five cents at least.

Every one remembered her; every where she was greeted as an old friend. At the baker's she was treated as a distinguished stranger; at the little French shop selling *charcuterie*, she received an ovation;



at the great grocer's, a triumph. The hurrying clerks in the largest and most crowded places treated her with particular attention. All had missed her, and were glad to see her. The greetings she received affably; the questions she answered briefly. She was very busy, and had no time for gossip now. At last she announced that all her purchases had been made.

As they returned to what Blossom already designated as "home," Larmer felt himself another man. He felt like the others; he too carried bundles as so many did, and dropped them and laughed, and

was laughed at by a companion. How long a way he had travelled in a short time! Human voices rang, but gently, and yet deeply, and with more cheer than any voices he had ever before heard; the crowd was no obstruction, rather something companionable and pleasant; the jostle of a shoulder an informal salutation; every stare a "Merry Christmas!"

How dark it would have been with him! he thought, had his journey not been stopped upon the threshold by a fainting child's hand. He did not realize, even now, that he was being led back to the moorings of his faith; he did not take in all the details of the supernatural guidance of the "Heart that so loved men;" he had not yet formulated the thought that he had not died "Without his Sacraments."

Larmer placed the packages on the table. "We should have got something to light up the place," he said, reproachfully.

"Open the long bundle," commanded Blossom, briefly.

Within were two candles.

"Is it your pleasure that the illumination begin?" he asked.

Blossom nodded.

Larmer placed one candle in a long Venetian glass — a piece of rich, rare, twisted Murano-work — and the other in the neck of a beer bottle, and put them on a small mantel behind the stove.

"The effect," he said, stepping back, is even brilliant."

Blossom undid the other bundles, and spread their contents on the table. There was bread; there were several sausages, very fat and brown; there were some white creamy cheeses; and there was a box of sardines; a Yorkshire pie — purchased at the suggestion of Larmer; and there was a package of chocolate, already prepared for use; and there was another bottle of the strawberries.

"I can get some water in the hall," she said; and seizing a dish, she ran out of the room.

In a moment she had the chocolate boiling on the fire, in a pot that she recognized as belonging to the Furlongs, and that Larmer had acquired with other goods of an out-going tenant, which he had purchased without much thought of what he was getting.

"Now we can begin," Blossom said, finally, when she had set the table to her satisfaction, and when the chocolate was quite ready.

They were very hungry; they were very silent. There are repasts at which conversation is not the most brilliant part of the performance. It was while they were still eating that one of the great events of the evening took place.

"Oh!" cried Blossom, suddenly drawing up her feet. Almost at the same instant a feeble, plaintive "me-ouw" sounded under the table.

"It's Horatio Nelson," she exclaimed, looking down, and immediately she was on her knees with the cat in her arms. "But how he does look!"

Certainly Horatio Nelson did not look flourishing. He was thin to emaciation, his fur was ruffled and soiled, and his ears were torn and scarred. He had evidently encountered disastrous days and stormy nights, and there was a dispirited, not to say a dissipated, look about him that was very shocking. But he did not appear in the least aware of his own shortcomings. He acted quite as if nothing had happened, and as if he were in his best evening dress. He calmly allowed himself to be stroked without any manifestations of undue delight, only purring very loudly, and butting his head energetically against the child's arm. But Blossom was, on the whole, disappointed with the meeting.

"I think you're a good-for-nothing old cat," she said. "You're not in the least glad to see me; but I'll feed you all the same."

At last, between Larmer and herself and Horatio Nelson, almost everything was eaten, and Blossom settled herself back in her chair.

"Wasn't it good?" she said.

"Good?" he answered. "It was ambrosial."

"You were hungry too?" she said, in some astonishment. "Why were you hungry with so much money?"

"Because—I forgot," he answered lamely.

"You must have been very happy."

"Or very miserable."

"That is silly. When we are hungry and cold and alone, we are miserable. But you were not cold, and you had money to buy food, and you were in the city. Don't you know anybody?"

"A great many."

"Then why were you alone?"

"It is good to be alone sometimes," he said.

"Never," she answered, decidedly. "Don't they want to see you?"

"Some do."

"Then why don't you see them?"

"Because," answered Larmer, slowly, "I suppose I am proud, and afraid they might think that I want their help."

"How silly!" said Blossom, contemptuously. "If you want their help, you want it. Why shouldn't people help each other? You've helped me."

"I thought I had gone down too far to help any one."

"Well, you see," she responded, triumphantly. "And if it hadn't been for you, what would I have done? Are you sorry?"

"Very glad."

"Then why shouldn't they be glad? I don't understand you. You are very silly."

It struck Larmer with something of astonishment that really, on the moment, he could not give a direct and concise statement of his woes that would satisfy this direct and practical fellow-creature. There was certainly something wrong. Before this healthy, cheerful little person anything he could have said would have seemed artificial and false.

"I wonder, Larmer," she said, "if you are stupid? You haven't said anything in the least amusing since I have been here, and then to be miserable, and on Christmas Eve! I never heard of anything so silly. Why Christmas is meant to make us happy."

"Yes," said Larmer.

"Of course," she went on, "there was a time, long, long ago, when there was no Christmas. Then the world was not really happy, for then it was only wise; it did not know so well how to love. Then a Child was born, who grew to be a Man, and who taught it new things. People had known a great deal before, but they did not know how to love each other as well as now, for that is what He taught them. And He began suffering for them, even in His little crib; and He died for them; and all who wish it may be happy with Him after their death, after they have suffered a little for Him." And she added, slowly and laboriously. "That is why the Angels sang: Peace on earth to men of good will."

"I have seen pictures of Him many times. They are not always quite the same, but very much alike. In them He is always sad, like in the sweet picture where He shows His Sacred Heart. I wonder why He is sad, since He taught us happiness?" She paused. "And that is what Christmas is — His birthday — the birthday of Our Lord who showed us how to be happy."

Blossom sat gazing into the fire and stroking Horatio Nelson's bobbing head. As she finished speaking she closed her eyes for an instant, and then opened them very quickly. She was evidently becoming sleepy.

Larmer had forgotten her. He was thinking of what he was and what he had intended. That a man should be coward enough to strive to hide himself in oblivion, this was craven *l'èze-majesté* against creation however created. But if there be a God — and no human being has ever been able to show that there was not, and he himself, in his inmost soul, had he ever satisfied himself of God's non-existence? — what then? The self-stultification of setting himself up against the Most High, of nullifying the ordinance of his own life, the insult of throwing back such gift to its Giver, what could such

creature hope in eternity? He thought over his own theory; it had shrunk and crumbled away more quickly before one ray of God's grace than the pinnacles of a Palace of Ice before the early glow of spring. How unsubstantial it all must have been! It had needed but the touch of a child's hand, only a few moments' intercourse with a clear, pure human nature, to reteach him what life really is, to make him breathe its breath again with ample lungs. The old medieval law was right, as it was in so many things that are called barbarous. A suicide's burial should be at the cross-roads, where the earth shall be so trampled that through it no ghost even can arise.

Here Blossom stirred, making a brave struggle to keep awake.

"What have you been thinking about?" asked Larmer, with a start.

"I was thinking that it was Christmas Eve, and I was wondering if I hung up my stocking. . ."

Larmer glanced quickly at her. It was not a matter likely to occur to him, and he had not thought of this very important part in the observance of *Noël*. But he had no money wherewith to buy even the humblest gift, and surely on this night any place where money might be procured, as he had procured that which had supported him for the past days, must in decency have folded its shutters, as bats their wings, and closed its doors for the time. But she *must* have something; Christmas morning should not bring her the great grief of finding herself giftless.

"You might try," he suggested.

She shook her head wearily, but her stocking was already off, and her hand ran into it.

"There is a hole," she said, and with that quick transition from sadness to joy that characterized her, she laughed gaily.

"Here," said Larmer, picking up a piece of twine with which one of the bundles had been fastened; "we'll mend it." Clumsily he tied it around the torn part of the heel. "There!" as he hung the stocking from the mantel.

"The last time I hung up my stocking," she said, "I got this with the other things," and she pulled from out her dress a little gold locket hung upon a worn piece of ribbon around her neck. "Isn't she pretty?" she asked, as she opened it and handed it to Larmer.

"Very," he answered; "but it is very much like you."

"Yes," she said; "it is my mama."

"Oh!" he exclaimed, "Where had he seen the face before — lovely, petulantly attractive, animatedly charming as the child's own? Had he seen it, or was his recollection the memory of some painter's canvas-caught ideal, or the lingering remembrance of some striking

portrait? In Blossom he had once or twice noticed expressions that in the same way seemed to remind him of somebody, or something and the face in the locket, in its more vivid suggestion, only increased his perplexity.

"It was made before she ran away and married papa," went on Blossom.

Might it be possible? The idea was too preposterous even for a moment's harbourage, and yet.....

"Mama ran away just as I have, and they wouldn't see her, and she wouldn't see them, and she died."

He turned over the locket. There was the name still clear in the worn gold, and the date too. And so it was all explained. She was impulsive, resolute, runaway Mabel Newry's daughter.

Blossom, with her head in one corner of the chair, had gone to sleep.

Larmer in the unrest of conflicting emotions had not thought what he should do with her for the night; but now the question, if question there had been, seemed settled. He lifted her from the chair, and carrying her into the next room, he placed her on the bed; then covering her with a blanket or two, he went out, drawing the *portière* behind him.

"He must know — and to-night," he said, pausing again before the fire. "I'll go myself. I'll accept his aid if he offers it. As she says, 'Why shouldn't they be glad?'"

Now the crowd had disappeared, and the streets were almost deserted. As Larmer walked quickly up town, he thought again of the change the last few hours had brought. He had given help to a frail existence that might have been lost without his aid, even when he would have taken his own strong life. Which were the nobler thing? He did not make direct answer to this self-question, but he felt that somewhere in that unuttered response lay the final solution of all his doubts and difficulties.

He was passing before a great church, through whose tinted windows the light shone in soft, subdued colour; from within, the rich, joyful music seemed to press through the pale blue stone walls in a purity and sweetness before unknown to him. The moon swept a cloud away, and shone on cornice, pilaster and frieze, on the wreathed snow that covered it in places with excelling whiteness. Now the organ's sound seemed to burst the great portals, and in grand volume came a pean, an acclaim, a cry of crowd, triumphant joy,

"Adeste, fideles, læti triumphantes...."

Crowds were pouring in, and Larmer allowed himself to be carried along with the human tide. Within, he fell on his knees, and with

head bent against an iron railing, he thought how truth had come to him that night from the lips of a child, and he realized as never before the significance of that Birth more than eighteen hundred years ago. The Midnight Mass began. The solemn chant broke upon his ear,

“Puer natus est nobis. . . .”

Yes, that event had been of more moment to the world than any other since it emerged from chaos, and perhaps it is of more momentous importance to-day, for the revival of nations—than ever before.

The insensate pride of the man was broken. All the horror of his guilty past burst upon him, and compunction filled his soul. God added a further grace which was not slighted, for then and there, a solemn promise, religiously to be observed, was made on earth and registered in heaven, immediately to seek for reconciliation with the Heart of Jesus, who had waited for him so patiently through all those long years of sinful perverseness and neglect.

When Larmer mounted the steps of the great house away up the first slope of the Mountain its whole front was dark, no light appearing except in the vestibule, where the heavy lamp was still burning. But he knew the habits of the inmates too well not to be certain that some one would be awake and on duty. He rang the bell confidently. Newry's own man opened the door, the butler doubtless having long gone to such sleep as a butler's conscience permits.

“Mr. John!” exclaimed the man, starting back.

“Yes, Phipps, it is I,” said Larmer. “I am no Christmas ghost. Is Mr. Newry still up?”

“He is, Mr. John. He's sitting in the library, thinking and thinking, as he's always doing.”

“I'll go alone,” said Larmer, as he walked toward the door he knew so well. The door was partially open, and as he crossed the threshold he glanced around.

Newry sat before the fire, one elbow upon the arm of his chair, his head on his hand.

“Eldridge,” said Larmer.

Newry looked up without start or manifestation of surprise.

“You can leave us, Phipps,” he said to the man who had followed Larmer into the room, and as he came forward Larmer saw how much older he appeared, how changed he was from what he had been when he had last seen him.

“I am glad you have come,” he said to Larmer as he took his hand. “I have hoped for a long time that you would come. Sit here,” and he pointed to a chair opposite the one in which he had been seated.

The two men gazed at each other without a word.

"I have come to ask your help," said Larmer.

"I would have given it without the asking had I known where to find you or how to give it."

"I would not have accepted it then," answered Larmer. "I would not do so now had I not learned much when I thought I knew the most. I have learned to-night life's greatest lesson; in trying to help another I have helped myself. The touch of a hand weaker than mine has given me strength; the gift of one poorer than myself has given me riches. He is an inexperienced fool, Eldridge, who says that he can do without the companionship of his kind; an arrogant braggart who thinks that he can dispense with such aid."

"Have I ever felt that I was all-sufficient to myself?"

"Yes."

"Have I ever held my hand when I could give aid to any I thought worthy of it?"

"You have always been just; but we must be more — we must be generous. Omniscience alone has the right to be simply, severely just; Christian charity must be something more, lest it make mistake; it must be amply generous. The spirit that in your father drove your sister from his house is in you. If he had not died so suddenly can you doubt that he finally would have relented? Do you doubt now what he would have done?"

"Where did you learn what you tell me?"

"From a child."

"From a child?"

From a child who can teach you as much as she has taught me. You need aid of such kind as much as I did, who would have shot myself if it had not come. I bring you joy and grief. Can you bear either or both?"

"The last, yes; the first, I think so. I have not known it lately."

"Eldridge," said Larmer, "she" — pointing to the mantel, where a large picture framed in the marble was partially covered with a curtain — "is gone, but it was her child who saved my life to-night. I think sense of the inadequacy of a life alone — lived for one's self alone — perhaps has come to you before; be helped, as I have been helped, to firther knowledge before it be too late."

The purveyor of light, on the morning of the great Feast, gave it forth with a Christmas prodigality. Its touch gave gladness; wherever it dwelt or lay it seemed a coating for delight. It threw itself, flood upon flood, upon the closed wooden shutters of the room where Blossom slept, and running into and filling their small cracks seemed to drip down like molten solder, part silver part gold. But it was noiseless, and could not break the sleep of the tired child. It was

nearly noon when she awoke. She slowly opened her eyes and gazed about her. That she was puzzled by her surroundings was as evident as that she was wholly undismayed.

A woman of fifty, almost stately in her heavy cloth dress, rose from the chair in which she sat at the head of the bed, and stood before her.

"Where am I?" asked Blossom, amazedly.

"You are in Mr. Larmer's room," the woman answered. I am Mrs. Ferris, Mr. Newry's house-keeper; and here," she said, "is your maid Thérèse."

That she must have awoke somebody else was the first thing that Blossom thought as she sat staring before her, and immediately she had decided that she would not let them know who she really was — not at first.

"Where is Larmer?" she asked.

"Mr. Larmer and Mr. Newry are in the next room," answered Mrs. Ferris. "Will you get up now?"



It was a very different Blossom who drew back the *portière* a little later. A rich dress hung in heavy folds about her; rich furs were gathered at her throat; upon her head was a small marvel of a hat, and on her hands were long wrinkled gloves.

"Oh!" she exclaimed.

Much was in the room that had not been there before. The divan was covered with packages, the table with bundles and cases. The

long-coated footman, who now stood just outside the door, had borne many armfuls from a heavy carriage that was at the entrance of the building.

"Oh!" repeated Blossom.

There were toys, fantastic and intricate; trifles of all kinds, dainty and delightful; there were things wholly unfitted for a child in their rarity and value.

"Oh, Larmer," she said, "how could you have done it?"

"I didn't," he said. You must thank another.

Then for the first time she looked at Newry, who had stood somewhat apart.

"But," she answered stoutly, "you were the first, and I will thank you first." Seizing Larmer's hand she kissed it. With wild cry and exclamation she pillaged the place. When all lay revealed to her, she turned to the stocking that hung apparently as limp and lank as it had the night before. Away in its toe was the blue ring.

"It's all I could give, Blossom," said Larmer. "Will you wear it?"

The price of the weapon that the night before he had held at his temple had bought it.

"Put it on," she commanded. She held out her hand, admiring the effect. "Oh, Larmer," she said, "aren't you glad I came?"

"Yes," he answered; and he shuddered as he glanced about the place, and thought how different a sight might have been there had she not come. But back of what seemed a fortuitous occurrence, Larmer now fully recognized the gentle action of Providence. In after days he oft and oft bemoaned, with confusion and scalding tears, his unworthy scoffing at the failure of the "Great Promise." His sorrow and his desire to make amends transformed him into a true and untiring apostle of the Devotion of Christ's love for mankind.

Marjory Noel, after the Christmas holidays, became a pupil of the Sacred Heart Convent in the great Canadian Metropolis. Her honest, out-spoken nature is being formed for good. Already she has acquired wonderful self-command, despite her impulsiveness. She is a docile little maiden, though not quite demure enough as yet. Her little off-hand ways are gradually shaping themselves more in accordance with the ideal of a Catholic school-girl, solidly devout, and destined one day to take her place in society.

By all those who are familiar with her past, she is spoken of—though not in her hearing—as the "Christmas Blossom." Why should not all blossoms, under the benign and maturing influence of religious surroundings, become, against the harvest time, full, ripened fruit in the Master's garden?



Written for
THE CANADIAN MESSENGER.

A CATHOLIC CHAMPION

— December 29 —

SLIM of growth, and pale of hue, dark of hair, with a long nose and a straight-featured face, blithe of countenance was he ; keen of thought, winning and loveable in all conversation, frank of speech in his discourse, but slightly stuttering in his talk ; so keen of discernment that he would always make different questions plain after a wise manner." This is the description an old British chronicler gives St. Thomas Becket, one of the most heroic martyrs that England ever produced.

Becket was born in London on December 21st, 1118. His father Gilbert was of the conquering race of Normandy, and brought his wife from Jerusalem, whither he had gone on a pilgrimage. By God's designs he became a prisoner of a Saracen emir, whose daughter he converted. This lady then helped him to escape, followed him to England, and having received baptism, was given the name of Maud.

The son's studies were begun at Merton Abbey, near Wimbledon, and continued in the University of Paris. He lost both his parents before the age of twenty-one ; but their solid teachings had taken deep root in his soul. These, together with his love of study, preserved his youthful innocence, while everybody admired his frank, manly character.

A public clerkship was given him after he returned from Paris, and he was thus led into the channel of a worldly career. But a miraculous rescue from drowning, to which he was exposed while in the chase, turned his thoughts from the vanities of life, and he discovered in himself a tendency

towards the priestly dignity. Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury, befriended him and took him to Rome with him on an important visit. A short time after, Becket made another trip to the Eternal City, and by his tact and skill secured for Henry II the right of succession, already assured to him by treaty, to the English throne.

To prepare himself more fully for his diplomatic career, he studied Canon Law for over a year on the continent before he returned to England. He was then ordained Deacon and received from the Crown the Archdeaconry of Canterbury and the Provostship of Beverley, livings which made him one of the wealthiest churchmen in the land.

When Henry came to the throne in 1157, he remembered past favors, and made Archdeacon Becket his Lord Chancellor and bosom friend. His elevation was as rapid as it was unsought. Thomas had practically actual control of England. He had the handling of all the revenues of the vacant bishoprics and abbeys, and the vast wealth that he could dispose of was spent with lavish magnificence. He was, besides, commander-in-chief of the royal forces, and had numberless knights and scions of Saxon and Norman nobility attached to his service. He displayed all but royal state in his surroundings. On his embassy to France he went in princely train. When war broke out he handled arms and fought like a hero.

But under all the pomp that Lord Chancellor Becket displayed before the world, there was a current of holiness that few suspected. Several of his biographers relate the story of the courtier who had come to beg a favour of him. Passing by a church, shortly after day-break, he saw through the doorway a man prostrate in prayer. When he was ushered into the presence of the chancellor, he recognized at once the watcher of the dawn.

Within his own household he lived an admirable life of regularity and self-denial. He practised severe bodily penance, and kept his soul unspotted. He doubled the alms

that had been previously giving to the poor, and each morning before the hours of office, washed the feet of thirteen beggars. He afforded a striking exemplification of how the duties of a high position and one's obligations to God need not clash.

When Theobald died in 1160, Henry placed Thomas Becket over the vacant see of Canterbury. Most unwillingly did he accept the additional burden, knowing that henceforth he must stand against the king in many of his acts. The first gathering of clouds between the king and the archbishop came through the latter refusing to allow his clergy to sign a document wherein certain church privileges were curtailed. The lands of the church, the deposit of private generosity for God's service for the poor and the orphan, had always been the object of greed to kings, and the property entrusted to St Augustine's successors was no exception to this rule. Thomas demanded restitution from the unjust occupiers of these lands, and refused the king payment of an unconstitutional tax. This was one cloud; there were others that appeared, and banishment followed. Becket went to France to ask audience of the Holy Father, whose residence was for the moment at Sens. Notwithstanding the fact that the Archbishop of York and many of the British bishops conspired against him, the saint's defence was so humble and so strong, and his justification so complete, that the Pope, Alexander III, ratified all his actions, and confirmed him in the see of Canterbury.

The archbishop's period of exile was passed in a French Cistercian monastery. His historians tell us that these were days full of delight for the saintly prelate; for he had full scope to practise virtue and acquire that spirit of humility and fearless self-sacrifice that brought him shortly after an immortal crown. In his monastic retreat he had a vision of his future martyrdom, and this only added to his joys.

Henry II visited France, and through the meditation of king Louis, a reconciliation was effected between the arch-

bishop and himself. On the strength of it, Thomas was induced to return to England, but he had some misgivings of Henry's sincerity ; for he told the French king, on taking his leave, that he was going back to his death in England. Becket had with him the papers of suspension and interdict against the Archbishop of York and the others who acted against the interests of the Church. These prelates would not accept the documents, and demanded absolution from any censures incurred. When this was refused, they repaired to the king and renewed the falsehoods and slanderous accusations against the archbishop. Henry flew into a passion, historians tell us, and without fully meaning all his words implied, said ; " Will no one rid me of this turbulent priest ? "

Four courtiers took this half-meant challenge for an order, and crossed over from France to encompass the death of the archbishop. The arrival of these " kingsmen " being pretty well known, it was bruited about that the prelate's life was in growing danger, and his faithful people besought him to flee. But he fearlessly answered : " Do you imagine that I think of flying ? No, I await the stroke of death without fear. " And touching his head where he knew by the vision he should receive the death-blow, he continued, " It is here I await you. "

In this synopsis of the saint's life it is impossible to give anything but the faintest outline. Suffice it to say that the saint was slain by the " kingsmen " in his own cathedral before the altar of St. Benedict. His last words were : " For the name of Jesus, and the defence of the Church, I am ready to die. "

At once the murdered archbishop was acclaimed a martyr. His body was almost immediately glorified by God as a centre of miraculous power, to which the blind, and the halt, and the infirm, came to find strength and health.

The murderers all died within a year, fully penitent ; but none showed more grief than the guilty king, for his was the

sorrow of remorse. Barefooted and as a poor pilgrim, he made a penitential visit to the tomb of the martyr, and there, baring his shoulders, he allowed himself to be scourged by the prelates and monks, and spent the night in prayer at the shrine.

The penitent king was on' one of the millions of pilgrims who, during four hundred years, crossed the Kentish downs to the tomb of the saint to seek temporal and spiritual favours. When the infamous Tudor flung his ashes to the winds, and confiscated the treasures of the shrine, the stream of pilgrims ceased.

But the great archbishop still lives in the minds of men. The name of Thomas Becket has come down to us as a model of fidelity to the interests of God's church in her battle with the powers of earth. A fearless defender of ecclesiastical rights, he stood firmly against friend and foe alike. When their interests clashed with those of the Catholic Church, he sacrificed their friendship and clung to God. In him we have an example from which, even in our enlightened age, much may be profitably learned.

TREASURY, NOVEMBER, 1897.

RECEIVED FROM THE CANADIAN CENTRES

Acts of charity.....	139,250	Pious reading.....	53,510
Acts of mortification.....	\$3,555	Masses celebrated.....	760
Beads.....	211,373	Masses heard.....	60,282
Stations of the Cross.....	49,295	Works of zeal.....	40,188
Holy Communion.....	29,749	Various good works.....	313,970
Spiritual Communion..	217,875	Prayers.....	467,350
Examinations of conscience	69,979	Sufferings or afflictions..	55,067
Hours of silence.....	150,209	Self conquests.....	54,697
Charitable conversations.	136,773	Visits to Bl. Sacrament..	94,615
Hours of labour.....	231,739		
Holy Hours.....	11,979	Total.....	2,482,215



R. I. P.

The prayers of the League are earnestly requested for the following members lately deceased :

Alberton : Daniel McDougall, d. Oct. 8. *Barrie* : Mrs. Catherine Burns, d. Sept. 22; Timothy O'Halleron, d. Sept. 24. *Arnprior* : Mrs. Catherine Murphy, Mr. Patrick Barret, Mrs. Georgina Posey, d. Oct. 25. *Belle River* : Paul Menard, d. in July. *Buckingham* : Alexander Storey, Isabella McGuire. *Chatham, Ont.* : Mr. Francis Gerber, Mrs. Ann Murphy, d. in Sept. ; Mrs. Margaret McLaughlan, d. in Oct. *Cornwall* : Mrs. Shannon, Mrs. Gardiner, d. in Oct. *Greensville* : Mrs. Matilda Larion, d. in Oct. *Halifax* : Mrs. Sarah O'Mullin. *Hamilton* : Bernard McCowell, d. Oct. 2; Miss Gertrude Tracey, d. Oct. 12. *Hastings* : Mr. Bartholomew Crowley, d. Sept. 29; Mrs. Rose Convey, d. Sept. 28. *Head of St. Peter's Bay, P.E.I.* : Daniel McCarthy, d. in Apr. *Hesson, Ont.* : Mr. Patrick Hanley, d. in Aug. *Kingston* : Daniel Brady, d. May 21. *London* : Sarah Kelly, d. Sept. 9; Maggie O'Keefe, d. Sept. 22. *Maidstone* : Leonard McAuliffe, d. Oct. 27. *Merrickville* : Annie F. Brennick, d. Sept. 26. *Montague Fridge, P.E.I.* : Mrs. Angus Beaton, d. Sept. 13. *Montreal* : P. J. Brown, d. Sept. 18; James Burke, d. Sept. ; Mrs. Bourque, d. Oct. ; John Alfred Burton; Margaret Day, d. Aug. 9; Joseph Mullins, d. Sept. 10. *Newcastle* : Mrs. Joseph Major, d. March 3; John Lawlor, d. Oct. 17. *Ottawa* : Cecilia Burns, d. March 27; Mrs. Patrick Brennan, d. Sept. 10. *Parkhill* : Mrs. Margaret Cluney, d. May 3. *Quebec* : Mrs. J. Dignan, Miss J. Coady, Mr. John Dalberg; Mrs. Daniel McAneency, d. Sept. 11; Mrs. McKnight, d. Oct. 11; Miss Katie Kane, d. Oct. 17; Mr. Thomas Kelly, d. in Oct. *Renfrew* : Mrs. Michael French, d. Apr. 6; Mrs. Frank French, d. Oct. 3. *St. Raphael's, Ont.* : Mary Margaret McDonell, d. Sept. 18; Hatty McDonald, d. Aug. 22. *Shamrock* : Patrick Fitzgerald, d. May 5. *Strathmore* : Mrs. John R. McDonell, d. Sept. 9. *Summerville, P.E.I.* : Janie S. Doyle, d. Aug. 13. *Toronto* : Miss M. Laudy; Margaret Teresa Hart, d. Oct. 4. *Walkerville* : Mrs. H. Morris, d. Sept. 30.



Written for
THE CANADIAN MESSENGER.

CHRISTMAS.

BY FRANCIS W. GREY.

Glory to God, the Angels sing ;
In eager haste the shepherds go,
And, in the presence of the king,
They worship, bending low :—
Glory to God ! a King to-day
Is born to rule o'er all the earth.
Glory to God ! His royal sway
Beginneth with His Birth.

Glory to God—though rude and bare
The lowly shelter where He dwells,
Glory to God ! yet even there,
The Angel-anthem swells,
Triumphant, through the silent night ;
And shepherds kneeling, gaze in awe ;
Man never looked on such a sight
As Bethlehem's shepherds saw.

Glory to God !—their flocks may gaze,
Unheeded, on the distant hill,
Glory to God ! they stay to gaze
In loving wonder still :
To them a King is born, and they
Proclaim Him Saviour, Master, Lord ;
The God whom Angel Hosts obey
By shepherds is adored.

Glory to God ! oh King we greet
Once more Thy lowly, mortal birth ;
Hail, once again, with homage meet,
Thy coming down to earth.
Glory to God, to God on high !
Glory to Thee oh Saviour King !
And so shall sound, through earth and sky,
The song the Angels sing.

INTENTIONS FOR DECEMBER

RECOMMENDED TO THE PRAYERS OF THE HOLY LEAGUE BY
CANADIAN ASSOCIATES.

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| <p>1.—W.—BB. Edmond and Comp., M.M. Virtue of justice. 9,526 Thanksgivings.</p> <p>2.—Th.—St. Bibiana, V. M. h. Fortitude. 6,436 In affliction.</p> <p>3.—F.—St. Francis Xavier, C. st. gf. Pray for the Indies. 10,913 Deceased.</p> <p>4.—S.—St. Peter Chrysologus, Bp. D. Despise worldliness. 17,355 Special.</p> <p>5.—S.—St. Sabbas, Ab. st. gf. ri. Temperance. 1,638 Communities.</p> <p>6.—M.—St. Nicholas, Bp. C. Respect children. 5,661 First Communions.</p> <p>7.—Tu.—St. Ambrose, Bp. D. Crush human respect The Associates of the League.</p> <p>8.—W.—IMMACULATE CONCEPTION. st. h. gf. m. p. r. st. Love of purity. 5,333 Employment and Means.</p> <p>9.—Th.—Bl. Peter Fourier, C. h. Holy fear. 2,770 Clergy.</p> <p>10.—F.—Holy House of Loretto. Love of the God-man. 95,545 Children.</p> <p>11.—S.—St. Damasus, P. Zeal for the Church. 2,783 Families.</p> <p>12.—S.—St. Adelaido, Emp. Presence of God. 5,805 Perseverances.</p> <p>13.—M.—St. Lucy, V. M. p. Humility. 3,162 Reconciliations.</p> <p>14.—Tu.—St. Spiridion, Pity sinners. 8,785 Spiritual Favours.</p> <p>15.—W.—Octave Imn. Conception. Réparation. 3,474 Temporal Favours.</p> | <p>16.—Th.—St. Eusebius, Bp. M. h. r. Pray for bishops. 12,954 Conversions to Faith.</p> <p>17.—F.—St. Lazarus, Bp. Rise from falls. 7,175 Youth.</p> <p>18.—S.—EXPECTATION B.V.M. Hope. 1,624 Schools.</p> <p>19.—S.—St. Nemesion, M. Love the Eucharist. 5,204 Sick.</p> <p>20.—M.—St. Eugene, C. Pray for priests. 1,987 Missions, Retreats.</p> <p>21.—Tu.—St. Thomas, Ap. h. m. Pray for infidels. 705 Guilds, Societies.</p> <p>22.—W.—St. Flavian, M. Spirit of faith. 1,769 Parishes.</p> <p>23.—Th.—St. Victoria, V. M. h. Trust in God. 119,06 Sinners.</p> <p>24.—F.—SS. Irmine and Adele, VV. ri. Prepare for Christ. 8,059 Parents.</p> <p>25.—S.—CHRISTMAS. h. gf. m. p. r. st. Renewal of spirit. 2,194 Pious.</p> <p>26.—S.—St. Stephen, First Martyr. Pray for enemies. 1,304 Novices.</p> <p>27.—M.—St. JOHN, Ap. h. gf. m. p. t. Love the Sacred Heart. 1,683 Impenitents.</p> <p>28.—Tu.—Holy Innocents, M.M. Pray for the little ones. 7,657 Vocations.</p> <p>29.—W.—St. Thomas à Becket, Bp. M. Zeal for the right.—The Promoters.</p> <p>30.—Th.—St. Sabinus, Bp. M. h. Generosity. 22,506 Various.</p> <p>31.—F.—St. Sylvester, I. P. Gratitude. The Directors.</p> |
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When the Solemnity is transferred, the Indulgences are also transferred, except that of the Holy Hour.

i=Plenary Indulgence; a=1st Degree; l=2nd Degree; g=Guard of Honour and Roman Arcsopfraternity; h=Holy Hour; m=Bona Mors; p=Promoters; r=Rosary Sodality; s=Sodality B. V.

Associates may gain 100 days Indulgence for each action offered for these Intentions.

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THE CANADIAN MESSENGER OF THE SACRED HEART.

A Business Talk with our Readers.

The CANADIAN MESSENGER will soon enter upon its eighth year. The little MESSENGER of preceding years, which was the outcome of the rapidly expanding Devotion of the Sacred Heart in Canada, made place twelve months ago for the present octavo publication. However far it may yet be from perfection, those engaged on its staff are anxious not only to increase its volume and literary attractiveness but also to embellish its pages with suitable illustrations, as soon as this can be affected without crippling the work financially. In this latter particular, however, they prefer to move slowly and first make sure that their resources will admit of their employing artists of repute so that these illustrations may be in good taste, and be at least an approach to artistic excellence.

While speaking of what is yet in contemplation, it will not be out of place to remind our readers that every improvement carried out has necessarily entailed additional expense, and that, to realize our plans for the future, in view of prosecuting a work whose sole aim is to extend more and more the consoling Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, we must first place our undertaking on a sound financial basis. Meanwhile, we are confident that in this our endeavour we may count upon the active and hearty cooperation of all who have at heart the further diffusion of this admirable devotion.

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The first step to this end is to set the subscription rates of the MESSENGER at a reasonable figure. Not that it be our intention to raise the subscription price higher than it stood originally; but rather to systematize the rates of

reduction which we readily offer to League Centres when several copies are mailed to the same address. Rates would still be reduced in favour of these Centres, not to the extent, however, of jeopardizing the interests of the publication, but so as to leave a slight margin of profit whereby to add to the effectiveness and usefulness of the MESSENGER for the good of souls.

For the last few years the subscription rates stood as follows :

1 to 4 copies	50 cts. a year
5 to 14 "	40 cts. "
15 to 29 "	35 cts. "
30 and over	30 cts. "

Now, the experience of these years has made it clear that the reduction is too heavy, especially when the increase in size of the MESSENGER is taken into account. For that matter, any publishing firm would simply say that it is all but impossible to meet the expense of editing, printing, office work, mailing, &c., in the publishing of an octavo of 40 pages a month, or 480 pages a year, with a subscription of 30 cts. A yearly subscription of \$1.00 is almost invariably asked for similar publications in Canada.

After maturely considering the situation, we have come to the conclusion that some modification must be made, and we have fixed on the following schedule as most reasonable :

SUBSCRIPTION RATES TO THE CANADIAN MESSENGER
BEGINNING JANUARY, 1898.

1 to 10 copies	50 cts. a year
11 to 20 "	45 cts. "
21 to 30 "	40 cts. "
31 to 50 "	35 cts. "
50 and over	30 cts.

These rates hold good for either the English or French edition of the CANADIAN MESSENGER, separately, but do not include the *Monthly Almanac*.

The subscription to the *Monthly Almanac* will be as heretofore, 15 cts. a year.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES TO THE CANADIAN MESSENGER,
WITH MONTHLY ALMANAC INCLUDED.

1 to 30 copies	55 cts. a year
31 to 50 "	50 cts. "
50 and over	45 cts. "

We are inclined to think that these slight changes will scarcely be perceptible in any of our Centres, while for the great Centres, receiving fifty MESSENGERS and upwards, the conditions remain very much the same as heretofore. On the other hand, the change will help us very materially to meet our increasing obligations in the furtherance of our work.



We, moreover, remind our subscribers that the invariable rule followed by all publishers of reviews and periodicals, is to require payment strictly in advance. It is the only sure guarantee of stability. In the future, as in the past, we must conform ourselves to it. Our printers have to be paid regularly every month and it is but right that our subscribers should help us honourably to meet our obligations by following this rule to the letter.

Local Treasurers have a very simple precaution to take so as never to be in arrears in their accounts with us. Let them not send in their orders until they have received from the various Promoters a proportionate sum in payment for the number of MESSENGERS, etc., to be ordered. They will find that the trouble of ordering separately and at different times what has already been paid for, is much less than that of collecting from Promoters who are behind hand in their payments for MESSENGERS received.

Henceforward, therefore, we shall cease sending MESSENGERS to those who are in our debt. We are willing, however, to be less exacting in the case of those who have shown themselves reliable in the past, but who may find

themselves temporarily embarrassed. These will kindly advise us to that effect, and we shall endeavour to act for the best.

* **

All Promoters and Associates of the Apostleship are earnestly requested to show an increase of zeal in securing new subscribers to the MESSENGER. Though the consciousness of thus contributing to propagate most effectually the Devotion to the Sacred Heart should be a sufficient incentive, we are, nevertheless, willing to make special and more favourable terms with all who are ready to share in this praiseworthy undertaking. We refer here to *individual subscriptions* and lot to the copies of the MESSENGER which are distributed among Members of Circles *as such*, for Local Treasurers, who order the MESSENGER for Promoters of Circles, already benefit by the special rates mentioned above.

CLUB RATES

10 to 20 subscriptions,	5 cents commission on each,
21 ,, 30	10 ,, ,, ,,
31 ,, 50	15 ,, ,, ,,
50 and over	20 ,, ,, ,,

Canvassers for clubs will, therefore, kindly send us, together with an exact list of their subscribers, the sum of the subscriptions, less their commission according to the above tariff. On notifying us beforehand of their intention to start a club, we shall be happy to send them a specimen copy and blank forms for their lists. Club subscriptions are accepted for not less than one year, and should, as much as possible, start with the January number.

Address Correspondence, etc., and make Money Orders payable to

THE CANADIAN MESSENGER, The Gesù,
Bleury street. P. O. Box 2431. Montreal, Canada.

Business communications should not be written on the same sheet as matter intended for publication in the MESSENGER.