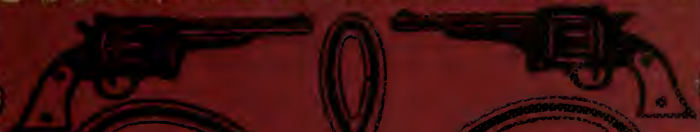
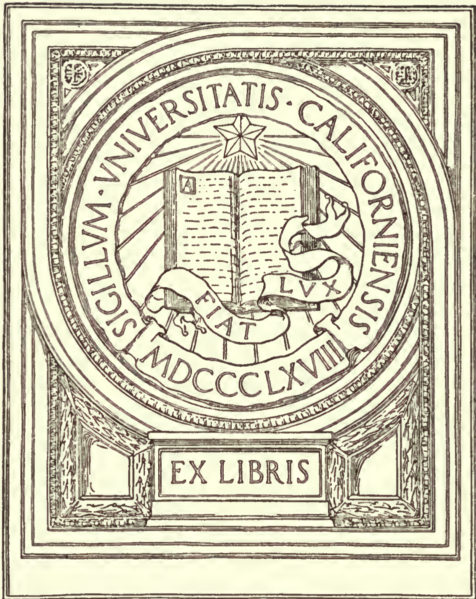
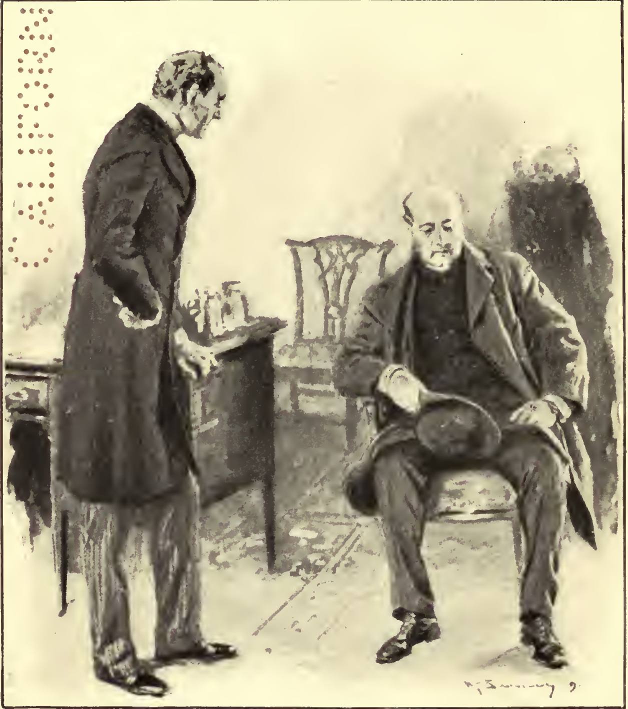
THE BISHOP

CYRUS TOWNSEND BRADY





955
B815
b



[See page 110

"THE BISHOP RECEIVED THE NEWS IN THE SILENCE WITH WHICH STRONG MEN FACE DANGER AND DISASTER"

THE BISHOP

BEING
SOME ACCOUNT OF HIS STRANGE
ADVENTURES ON THE PLAINS

BY

CYRUS
TOWNSEND
BRADY

ILLUSTRATED

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

NEW YORK AND LONDON
HARPER & BROTHERS
PUBLISHERS ✠ 1903

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

Copyright, 1903, by Harper & Brothers.

All rights reserved.

Published April, 1903.

PS
1120
B5
B5
1903
MAIN

TO

MY SISTER

SUE B. ASHBROOK

A DAUGHTER OF THE WEST

M18193

PREFACE

MOST of the incidents hereinafter related are literally true. Notably is this so of "The Forgiveness of Creegan" and "The Bishop and the Fool." I cast no discredit upon the others by thus particularizing, but these two are so incredible that I am fain to give the specific assurance lest they be accounted efforts of the imagination—which would be a pity. Creegan's unheard-of action and the results of King's strange baptism are too remarkable and valuable for any doubt as to their reality to be allowed to remain undispelled. There are many persons who will recognize them under the names I have given them.

Some of the adventures that follow happened to the Bishop himself—there really was such a man—and he told them to me; some of them, as Harmar's story and Parker's, I

heard from other men of action; and of the remainder, may I say, humbly, *pars parva fui*, to alter the ancient line.

In these pages are depicted scenes and conditions which are not likely to recur. Here are exhibited characters and situations which it is now difficult, and soon will be impossible, to duplicate. Times have, indeed, changed since the Bishop and his brethren worked together for good in the West—changed for the better. There is no longer a frontier. The cow-boy is vanishing; the military posts on the prairie are abandoned — the army is in the Philippines in the far East — the rude towns have become well-ordered cities; the desperado, the savage Indian, the gambling-hell, like the court of Judge Lynch, have given place to law and order—civilization.

But the broad-prairied, sun-flowered West is still the same under its sunny skies. It still brings forth men like the little Bishop, who can fight for God and man, for light and liberty, for truth and righteousness; men who can forgive like Creegan, conquer like Johnstone, and love like Marvin. It still brings forth women who can endure like the Spartan,

peace to her memory, serve like plucky Jessie Browning, or sacrifice themselves like poor little Alice Harden.

These are the true children of the West, indeed. I love them; I honor them. I am happy to be able to chronicle their doings; glad that I knew them, served them, worked with them.

The little Bishop is dead long since. You may read further about him, if you will, in my *Recollections of a Missionary in the Great West*. He rests from his labors. Many of those whose names are in these pages are with him. He did a great work, with them to help him. The Church in this land has always "blazed a trail" for civilization. Her part in the "winning of the West" has been no small one. By that token, the Bishop was one of the greatest of the pioneers.

If I have made you see him and love him as I did, as we all did, I shall be more than content.

CYRUS TOWNSEND BRADY.

BROOKLYN, N. Y., *April, 1903.*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter I — PAGE

The Bishop and the Fool 1

Chapter II

A Whirlwind Wooing 26

Chapter III

How Brother Pidgley Saved the Day . . . 46

Chapter IV

In the Box Cañon of the Gila: an Army Tragedy 61

Chapter V

Love on Lost Mountain 84

Chapter VI

A Spartan 104

Chapter VII

When the Bishop Appealed to the Pope . . 128

Chapter VIII

Death, Love, and the Fire 147

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter IX — PAGE

The Forgiveness of Creegan 167

Chapter X

Marred or Made, a Romance of the Navy . 183

Chapter XI

The Mark of Cain 202

Chapter XII

The Last Lynching in Cimarron 224

Chapter XIII

The Bishop's Dilemma and the Soldier's . . 248

Chapter XIV

How the Bishop Came to the Plains . . . 263

Chapter XV

"Love Divine all Love Excelling" . . . 277

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

By W. T. Smedley

"THE BISHOP RECEIVED THE NEWS IN THE SILENCE WITH WHICH STRONG MEN FACE DANGER AND DISASTER" . . . . . *Frontispiece*

"THE SHARP CRACK OF THE TWO REVOLVERS RANG OUT AS ONE SOUND" . . . . *Facing p.* 28

By E. Hering

"'ONE OF THE BEST IN THE TWELFTH CAVALRY,' SAID THE GENERAL" . . " 66

By W. T. Smedley

"JANET IN THE BIG LEATHER CHAIR ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE OLD MAHOGANY DESK" . . . . " 106

By E. M. Ashe

"'K Y, K Y, K Y' CLICKED OFF THE WIRE. IT WAS HER SIGNAL" . . . . " 148

By W. T. Smedley

"'SHE TOLD HIM FRANKLY WHO SHE WAS: THAT SHE WAS A REBEL'" . . . . " 198

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

By E. Hering

"HE LED THEM ALL INTO THE HOUSE" . *Facing p.* 240

By W. T. Smedley

"'I HAVE PRESENTED LARGE CLASSES IN LATER YEARS'" . . . . " 272

THE BISHOP

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

THE BISHOP

CHAPTER I

THE BISHOP AND THE FOOL

"DURING the singing of this hymn," said the Bishop, "those who are to receive confirmation will please step forward to the chancel-rail."

The little frontier church was crowded to its utmost capacity with a varied assemblage of Indians, cow-boys, ranchers, and soldiers, with a sprinkling of government officials from the Territorial capital in which the church was located, and officers from the fort near by. Many of the men were accompanied by their wives, sturdy women, cheerfully sharing with their husbands the hardships and dangers of frontier life; and as children are everywhere, thank

God: they were not lacking in the congregation.

As is usually the case, there was much curiosity in the church as to who, in the vernacular, "had got religion this time." The lusty way in which the congregation, in which men largely predominated, roared out "Nearer, my God, to Thee," did not prevent it from taking the keenest note of each successive figure which detached itself from the mass and stepped forward, timidly or boldly, according to temperament, to the communion-rail.

In the confirmation class there were the usual sprinkling of boys and girls, one rather hard-featured, rude-appearing woman, a soldier, two Indians, a negro, and the lonely Chinaman who ran the village laundry; but the interest culminated in a perfect wave of excitement when from the front pew the Governor, tall and splendid, rose and moved forward until he took his place in front of the Bishop, before the motley representatives of the inhabitants of the Territory over which, in the name of the United States, he ruled.

"Has the old man got religion?"

"Is he goin' to join church, too?" whispered one to another, in sudden surprise.

The Indians from the agency, whose periodical outbreaks he had repressed with a heavy hand; the cow-boys, who had been his companions on many a wild ride on a round-up; the Territorial officials, who knew him as a manipulator of practical politics unequalled in his sphere; the officers from the army post across the river, whose gallant companion he had been in many a hot game of all-night poker—all marvelled at the sight of the Governor standing in the chancel. Indeed, they hardly believed the evidence of their eyes until they saw him kneel down with the others, as humbly and simply as the youngest child in the class, to receive the laying-on of hands.

Then they saw that it was indeed true, and they realized it more thoroughly when, after the function was over, he turned and faced the congregation with the Bishop's solemn words of exhortation and the life-text he had given to them floating through the building like a benediction, "*I will go*

forth in the strength of the Lord God; I will make mention of Thy righteousness only."

There was a solemnity, a dignity, in the Governor's face and presence which bespoke a full realization of the serious nature of the step he had just taken.

As the cow-boys expressed it, "he's got it hard," which is a good thing to say of one when it is true.

One of the good Methodists in the congregation—the Methodists, like the children, are everywhere, too—remarked that the Governor "looks as if he were a thoroughly converted man."

"It will be hard lines for the devil if he meets the old man with that look on his face," whispered one of his political associates to another, and a soldier voiced the general sentiment by remarking, *sotto voce:*

"He's goin' to stay with the game, sure."

But the mystery as to the cause of the effect at which they all marvelled was not made clear by these comments, and until the Governor told it himself in after years no one knew the reason.

This is how it came about: One morning,

several weeks before, the Bishop, who had just returned from a two-months' visitation in the more remote quarters of his large missionary jurisdiction — only a Territory then, a great and populous State now — was seated in his study seriously thinking of the Governor. As he sat alone in the room surrounded by his books, the only luxuries in which he permitted himself to indulge, at first sight he seemed singularly unfitted for the hard, rough work of a missionary bishop in the distant West.

He was a little man, with the broad brow and scholarly face of a student and thinker, a Yale man, a Berkeley man, a Heidelberg man, and Heaven knows where else, with a string of initials after his name as long as your arm, and a corresponding acquaintance with learned societies and great men all over the world. A student in philosophy and a master of the same, some of his friends thought that his great powers were wasted on the wild frontier; but that same culture and that deep thinking enabled him to express great truths with a simplicity and force which carried conviction to his primi-

tive flock wherever he was heard. When there were found, added to the greatness of his cultivated mind, a purity of heart and a sweetness of soul and a humility of spirit as rare as his culture was deep, it can be well understood why the people among whom he ministered—who are, after all, the best judges in the case—declared with delightful unanimity that he was exactly the right man in the right place.

High and low, rich and poor, gentle and rough, red man and black, yellow and white, they all respected their Bishop — nay, they did more, they loved him. He had at times a trick, or habit, of obliviousness to things about him which people — unthinking people, that is — called absent-mindedness; but when you saw him with his face upturned and his lips slightly parted, a dreamy, expectant look in his deep-set, blue eyes, it was not so much absence from earth as nearness to heaven he suggested. To him that morning entered the subject of his thoughts.

The Governor of the Territory, in his way, was as remarkable as the Bishop, and possibly the fact that one was the anti-

type of the other had long since served to develop an unusually warm friendship between the two men. The Governor, who was much younger than the Bishop, had been born and bred in the Territory over which he ruled. He was a typical Western man. Tall, broad-shouldered, quick, keen-eyed, alert, essentially a man of affairs and accustomed to handling men, he was remarkably fitted for the position he held.

To the very great grief of the Bishop, he was not a "professing Christian," his attitude towards Christianity being that common and largely increasing one compounded of dense ignorance and personal indifference, coupled with much outward—and perhaps inward, too—respect for it as a thing more or less necessary for the good of the world, chiefly held by old people and young children, which he would possibly investigate at a more convenient season. He would listen with grave attention to the Bishop's reasoning on the subject, and he much enjoyed his sermons, but "smiling, put the question by" whenever the attempt to make any personal application was made,

Just and upright in his administration, fair and equitable in his private affairs, generous and cheerful in his disposition, he used to say that somehow or other he guessed he would worry along and get there all right in the end. From somewhat different premises, the Bishop arrived at the same conclusion, and, like the wise man he was, did not preach out of season, and consequently retained and increased the hold he had upon his friend.

"Good-morning, Bishop," said the Governor, looking unusually worried as he spoke.

"How do you do?" said the Bishop, rising and shaking his hand warmly. "Sit down. I am very glad to see you again. How is the new capitol getting along?"

"Oh, it's all right," answered the Governor, "I am awfully glad to see you, too—in fact, I have been wanting you the worst kind lately."

"Yes?" said the Bishop, interrogatively.

"You know King, one of my cow-boys—Dave King—Bishop?"

"Yes," was the answer; "that is to say, I have heard of him."

THE BISHOP AND THE FOOL

Every one on the frontier had heard of King. "Scar-faced King" they used to call him. He had the reputation — which he fully deserved — of being the quickest man on the draw, the straightest shot, the roughest rider, the hardest drinker, and the wickedest tough in the Territory.

"Yes," said the Bishop, again. "I don't know him personally, but I am somewhat familiar with his reputation," he added, smiling.

"Well, that is pretty bad," said the Governor, uncomfortably, "but I must admit that it is deserved. He really has only two good qualities: he is the best cow-puncher this side of the Indian Territory, and, when he is sober, he is devoted to me, and has been ever since I have known him—and that has been nearly thirty years—and that's why I like him, too, in spite of everything."

"Your sentiments do you honor, Governor, and I am glad to hear that your friend has some good qualities," said the Bishop, politely, "even though they only appear in his infrequent intervals of sobriety."

"He's sober enough now," said the Gov-

ernor, with a look of deepening trouble on his handsome face, "and he's likely to stay so, and that is what I want to see you about. I have just come from him this morning. He is in one of those little houses of mine on the other side of the hill, where they are putting up the new court-house, you know."

The Bishop nodded, and the Governor continued: "He has quick consumption—so Dr. Bermingham says—and he can live but a few days more. He has been an awful heathen, like most of us out here; and while I don't care much for those things myself, you know," he went on, flushing a little as he spoke, "yet I thought he ought to see some minister, and I have persuaded him to see you. You know I believe in you, any way."

"All right," said the Bishop, "I will go right down and see him."

"Thank you," said the Governor, turning to the door. "I knew you would. Good-bye."

"Won't you stay a little and have a cigar before you go?" said the Bishop.

"No, I thank you. I am calling on a lady this morning, and I can't. By-the-way, I forgot to tell you that since he has been sick King has become almost stone deaf. You know he has always been hard of hearing since he was shot in that fight with the Sioux. Well, good-bye again. I will look in soon and see how you made out with him."

As the Governor swung himself into the saddle and galloped away, the Bishop set forth on his visit to Mr. David King. He did not look forward to the proposed interview with any degree of cheerfulness. It is difficult to talk of spiritual things when every word has to be roared into the dull ear of a deaf man; and when to this disability there is added that congeries of qualities which rumor—in this instance correct—had ascribed to the subject, the difficulties become well-nigh insuperable; but the Bishop, beneath his gentleness, had the spirit of the soldier, and he was firmly resolved, if he had to fight the devil and "Scar-faced King" together for the latter's soul, to make the fight a hot one. He formulated no particular plan of assault, but determined to be governed

by the circumstances which the case presented.

He was met at the door of the cottage by a rather hard-featured though neatly attired young woman, who explained, after the Bishop had introduced himself, that she was the daughter of the object of his visit. She spoke after this fashion:

"I don't live in this town. I wanted to get as far away from him yonder"—with a contemptuous backward wave of her hand towards the interior of the house—"as I could, so I live in Denver. But when I heard he was sick and dyin', with nobody to tend him, I felt as if I was bound to come up and do what I could for him until he—he went over the range, you know."

"That is very praiseworthy of you, I am sure," said the Bishop, kindly. "'Honor thy father,'" he continued, softly.

"No, I don't. I don't honor him one bit, and I don't love him neither," she interrupted, with bitter emphasis. "He used to starve and beat me when I was a child, especially when he was drunk, and that was all the time mostly. He never let me go

to school and get any education; raised me like a heathen, he did. He broke my mother's heart with his carryin's on. He's done 'most everything that is bad, I guess. I used to hate him, but now he is old and dyin' and alone here"—she stumbled and hesitated —"you see. I feel same as I ever did, but somehow I had to come and stay here and do what I could for him; but I don't like him no better than I ever did."

She snapped out the words, and then turned her head away and looked far across the squalid huddle of huts which filled the poorer quarters of the straggling town to where the broad, rolling prairie stretched away to the southward. The sharp face of the girl softened in spite of herself, and her eyes swam with tears, which she did not allow to fall.

"My dear young lady," said the Bishop, with all the courtesy of his ancient race taking the hand of her who was all a woman in spite of herself, "God bless you! Shall I go in now?"

"Whenever you like, sir," she answered, compressing her lips; "but I don't know

what he will say to you, I am sure. Why, he used to tear the leaves of mother's Bible and light his pipe with them. He says he hates pious people and religious persons."

"I can quite understand the feeling; I've had it myself," said the Bishop, smiling.

"Yes?" said the girl, somewhat bewildered by this astounding statement, adding, "You know my father is deaf, I suppose?"

"I was told so. Can he hear anything at all?"

"Oh, he'll hear you fast enough if you only holler good and loud. Can I come, too?"

"Certainly," replied the Bishop, bowing her through the door, and together they entered the room.

It was bare to a painful degree: there were none of the usual comforts and conveniences of a sick-room; the furnishings comprised a dirty cook-stove, a pine table covered with a great heap of unwashed dishes, two chairs, a rude bed, and a canvas cot for the girl. Three or four gaudy, indecent pictures—mainly advertisements of beer or tobacco — were tacked up on the

wall; a pile of cow-boy horse equipments in one corner was surmounted by a lariat and the inevitable Winchester, and in the far corner, stretched upon the bed, under an old gray army blanket, lay the emaciated form of Mr. David King.

If you take the roughest and boldest and hardest of all the men so faithfully and accurately depicted by Mr. Frederic Remington, and stretch a broad, livid scar across the cheek, you will have some idea of the man. Drink, dissipation, hard out-door life and exposure, ungoverned temper, and disease had each marred the once handsome face, and together had wrecked the once splendid man.

And yet, as he lay there, old, broken in body, and unrepentant in spirit, looking at the Bishop with a keen, fierce, unflinching gaze, with his lips set straight and firm under his grizzled mustache, there was something still to admire; fast bound in the grip of inexorable death, neither the past nor the present seemed to have power to break his unconquerable resolution. The evil past had taught him no lessons, the bitter present held

no joy, and in the future lay no hope. Yet he lay there grim, undaunted, and in a certain way admirable.

The Bishop drew the chair to the bed and sat down by him.

"Father!" shouted the girl, "here is the minister."

"What in hell does the damned hypocrite want here?" he answered, in his rough, raw voice.

The Bishop immediately screamed out, in reply:

"You told the Governor you would see me, and I must first of all insist upon being treated like a gentleman. Do not swear at me again, if you please."

The Bishop returned with equal resolution the astonished stare of the ruffian on the bed. The cow-boy knew a man when he saw one, even if he did wear the cloth; he had been accustomed to deal with men.

"Go ahead," he growled, ungraciously. "Say what you got to say and get done with it. I'll listen."

"I want you to answer as well as listen," said the Bishop.

"I'll answer, and I'm no liar neither," said the man, defiantly.

Then he went off into a frightful spell of coughing, while the daughter (and the Bishop noticed that she did it tenderly) administered a soothing medicine. The perplexed clergyman wondered how on earth he could get at the man before him. What ought he to say to him? When the coughing-spell subsided he plunged at once *in medias res*. He was ever economical of words.

"Do you know that you are going to die?" he shouted.

"Yes," said the man, grimly.

"Do you believe there is any future life for you, or do you think you are going to end it all now, like the beasts you have herded?"

"I don't know. What do I know about it?"

"Do you believe in God, then?"

"I don't know. There might be, but I never saw Him."

"Do you believe in Jesus Christ?"

"No."

"The Bible?"

King smiled sneeringly as he answered, with emphasis, "Hell, no; it's a humbug!"

The Bishop looked at him long and earnestly. There was a smiling, half-amused, half-contemptuous look on the cow-boy's face that seemed to say:

"Now, partner, that is my highest trump card. What are you going to do?" The Bishop overtrumped him at once.

"My friend," he cried in the man's ear, to make sure he heard and understood, "you are a fool!"

"Well, I'm damned!" was the reply.

"Yes, that is what you will be," rejoined the Bishop, calmly.

"What do you mean?"

"I mean just what I say—that you are a fool! I am not calling you names for lack of anything else to say. You are a fool, and I can prove it!"

"I'd like to hear you prove it!" exclaimed King, angrily.

"You say that you do not know whether there is a future life or not. You say you do not know whether there is a God or not, and by that confessed ignorance you imply that there may be one. Now any man who fails to make provision for a staring possibil-

ity is a fool, whether in business or anything else. You have failed to make provision for a staring possibility, which you confess, and therefore you are a fool!"

The Bishop paused and wiped the perspiration from his brow, staring hard at the astonished cow-boy before him.

"If I had my gun," said the man, nervously fingering his left side with his lean hand, "you wouldn't call me a fool. No man ever done that and lived."

It was bravado—a bluff pure and simple—but well done.

"What nonsense!" said the Bishop, calmly; "I would say it anywhere, if you had a hundred guns."

"By God! I believe you would," answered the man, wonderingly. "Well, what next?"

"Nothing next but for you to die and have done with it," answered the Bishop. "I thought I could do something for you when I came in here, but I cannot, I fear; no one can—unless it be God Himself."

"Do what? What did you think you could do?"

"Baptize you."

"Go ahead and do it; I don't care."

Was the logic working?

"I cannot," said the Bishop; "it would do no good, and, thinking as you do, it would be wicked. I'll pray with you, and then I must go. Pay attention now."

Then the sad-hearted Bishop knelt down and prayed as he had never prayed before for a light to be set in the darkness of the soul of the man by his side. When he arose from his knees the hand of the cow-boy was lying across his face. The Bishop bade him good-bye and turned away. As he reached the door the gruff voice from the bed called out:

"Say, pard, come in to-morrow."

The Bishop nodded assent. As he stepped out of the door the girl, who had followed him, laid her coarse hand upon his arm and shook it roughly.

"How dare you call my father a fool!" she said, bursting into tears.

When the Bishop thought it all over in his study at the close of his long day's work, he felt distinctly discouraged, which was most unusual to one of his optimistic nature. The man attracted him intensely, but he

had no hold upon him whatever, and saw no way of gaining one; there appeared to be nothing in his soul upon which to build—no faith, no repentance, no fear, no love even; the man was doomed. With something like despair in his heart the Bishop, after long hours of deep thought, went to bed, but not until, at the last moment, he had finally determined upon his course of action.

The next morning, bright and early, the Bishop visited King again. He had, after most careful consideration, decided to baptize him willy-nilly, since the man was practically *in articulo mortis*. The cow-boy smiled grimly when the Bishop announced his intention, but made no objections, and lay entirely unresponsive during the service and the subsequent explanation of it, which appeared to make absolutely no impression upon him. With a vivid remembrance of that mocking sneer the Bishop, sadder than ever, left him again for the day.

The next morning the Bishop picked up a crumb of comfort when he noticed that the room looked different, and found out

before he left that it was because the disreputable pictures had been removed. In the conversation carried on between the two men that day King gave another somewhat significant indication of the trend of his meditations.

"Don't feel no better since that baptizin' foolishness than I did before," he said.

That also cheered the Bishop, who talked and prayed with him. It appeared as if the cow-boy had wished or expected some unusual consequence from the service, but the impression made was not very evident, and the only actual encouragement the clergyman received of any ultimate success with the man lay in chance sentences like that quoted.

For instance, on the next day the cow-boy, who had grown weaker, pulled the Bishop's head down to his lips and whispered, hoarsely, this little story:

"I was a sailor once when I was a boy, and I was on a ship loaded with missionaries on the coast of Africa, and there was a terrible storm, and the ship was about to be dashed to pieces on the lee shore, and them

missionaries was scared to death. They was all afraid to die, but I wasn't."

He said it with an evident air of triumph, but in spite of the man's iron will the Bishop's heart was thrilled at the words—the leaven was working. The fear, or the thought of the fear, of death, which might be the beginning of wisdom to him, was in his heart surely! The next day the Bishop was, unfortunately, called away from the town by a pressing demand and did not see his patient.

The morning after his brief absence, when he had just entered his study, the Governor hurriedly rushed into the room in great agitation.

"How is King?" asked the Bishop.

"He is dead," answered the Governor, solemnly.

"Poor man," said the Bishop, sadly—"poor man."

"What did you do to him, Bishop?" the Governor demanded, looking at him almost fiercely.

"Nothing. I could of mine own self do nothing," was the reply. "I did baptize him

and pray with him, and left him to God; that was all."

"What did he say or do?" asked the Governor, persistently.

"Nothing of moment except to mock and sneer—at least while I saw him—though he did say one or two things. Why do you ask, Governor?"

"Do you not know how he died, Bishop?"

"No, I have not heard. How was it?"

"My God!" said the Governor, clinching his hands; "he died praying—and praying for me!"

The Bishop was too wise to say a word; he laid his hand on the Governor's shoulder and closed his eyes; when he opened them again his friend was gone; but that was the beginning of the Governor's conversion and that was the end of "Scar-faced King."

A question of King Solomon's came into the Bishop's mind as he mused:

"*And how dieth the wise man? As the fool!*"

Had the Bishop won the soul for which he had fought so bravely? As he thought upon it he had another visitor—King's daughter came into the room. Her face had some of

the hardness of her father's. She sank down in the chair and leaned her elbows on the desk and looked defiantly at the Bishop.

"Father's dead," she said.

"Yes," answered the Bishop, tenderly, "I have heard so."

"Do you know how he died?" she asked, and before he could answer she added: "He died praying for me and the Governor. I am a fool, like my father." She dropped her head in her hands and wept bitterly.

The Bishop said nothing, but patted her gently on the shoulder, and in the silence, broken only by the woman's sobs, a verse of poetry which he had heard somewhere rose to his lips, and with it he made a prayer as fervent and humble as any ever offered, which comprehended the Governor, the cowboy, the girl, and himself:

"*Lord, be merciful to me a fool!*"

And that is how the girl followed the Governor on the confirmation day.

Chapter II

A WHIRLWIND WOOING

THOMAS MARVIN and Henry Winthrop were engaged in an altercation. When it is stated that the cause of their difference was a woman whom they both loved, the intensity of the argument can be imagined. The fervor with which each maintained his cause was in no way proportioned to the size of the issue, for pretty Alice Grier was a delicate slip of a girl, apparently as out of place in her Western environment as a transplanted wood-violet in an acre of sunflowers. The affection of each contestant for her, however, was inversely proportioned to the size of its object.

Thomas Marvin was a product of the West; he had been born there, lived there all his life, and expected to die there — an expectation which, at the moment the story opens, was not

without promise of immediate fulfilment, for he was facing a large Colt revolver of the army pattern in the steady hand of Henry Winthrop. Winthrop was a college man who had been born in Philadelphia, and had lived there until the last two years, when he had come out West to seek his fortune, and had begun the process by falling in love. He, too, was confronting sudden death, for he was viewing life opposite the muzzle of Marvin's "gun," a revolver similar to his own.

Alice Grier, Thomas Marvin, Henry Winthrop, the Bishop, who played a minor but very necessary part later on, and a brewing cyclone that struck the major keys heavily constitute the *dramatis personæ* of the tale. The cyclone had a voice audible enough, but its language cannot be recorded. Not that it was profane—oh no! It filled the part of Dan Cupid—or, I should say, Hymen the matchmaker—in this little romance of the plains.

There was quite a clump of trees, almost a grove, down on the bank of the Washita River. The country in the vicinity was unusually broken, cut here and there by deep, yellow ravines separating the rolling hills which away

to the south and west softened out into the level prairie. Mr. Henry Winthrop, who had forsaken Greek roots and the theory of least squares for the probabilities of the Texas steer, and who was the owner of numerous cattle bought by the money of his thrifty Massachusetts ancestors, was riding down towards a farm-house standing on one of the hills a couple of miles away. It was late in the afternoon, and as he gently loped along the river-road—said river being but a shadow of things to come, for at present it was as dry as a bone from bank to bank, or what would have been banks if there had been water —he was suddenly interrupted in his passage by the advent of Thomas Marvin.

Thomas Marvin was not a cattle-owner, but a cattle-puncher. He and his bronco came crashing through the underbrush, and as Winthrop rounded the bend he found the way barred. With that quickness which had made him a first-class quarter-back, his pistol was out and up. For the thousandth part of a second the two men, motionless as statues, eyed each other. Then the sharp crack of the two revolvers rang out as one sound. Marvin's

"THE SHARP CRACK OF THE TWO REVOLVERS RANG OUT AS ONE SOUND"

horse swerved, and the bullet from Winthrop's pistol made a nice round hole in the cowboy's hat. Winthrop had fired high, perhaps because at the moment that he pressed the trigger, by a powerful jerk of his arm he had thrown his own pony into the air, and the bullet from Marvin's pistol, better aimed—accurate shooting being instinctive with the West and acquired with the East—buried itself in the breast of the cayuse.

Winthrop was on his feet and behind a tree in the twinkling of an eye. Marvin was no less quick in alighting and taking shelter behind his restive pony. There was a pause in the hostilities, then the cyclone took a hand.

Away off to the southwest the clouds had been banking fearfully, and from where they stood, if they had not been so personally engaged, they could have seen the cyclone forming. The afternoon, though lowering, had been perfectly still, but now a puff of wind, almost a gust, in fact, swept through the stubby trees like a deep and mighty sigh. A few drops of rain fell at the same time, and the smoke of battle was blown away instantly. At the ominous sound both men

glanced towards the southwest. What they saw for the moment drove every thought of personal animosity from their hearts and filled them with terror and foreboding. Reversing his weapon, Marvin held it up by the barrel above his horse. At the same time Winthrop, emulating his movement, stepped out from the shelter of the tree.

"Look at that!" cried the Western man. "It's a cyclone, an' comin' this way! She probably won't know nothin' about it. I'll gallop over to Bixby's ranch and warn 'em. We'll call this thing off fer the present, but I warn you to look out fer yourself! I'll shoot you on sight the next time I see you. The earth's not big enough to hold the two of us and that girl!"

He swung himself into the saddle as he spoke.

"All right," answered Winthrop, calmly, "I'll be ready for you. Now ride hard."

Marvin, waving his hand, wheeled his horse sharply and galloped down the road, perfectly confident that his antagonist would take no advantage of his turned back. The two men had known each other for some time. They

had been attracted by common qualities which the wild, free life of the plains had heightened in the one, and which the restraints of the East had not been able to stifle in the other; they had been, in fact, "chums," as the Eastern man expressed it, "pals," in the language of the West, brothers in arms, as it were, in many a hard round-up and many a wild stampede, consequently each had a perfect trust in the other, which not even the fierce rivalry consequent upon the advent of the district school-mistress from Illinois had shaken.

Winthrop, thrusting his pistol into his holster, watched Marvin gallop furiously down the road. Aside from the rivalry, he had no animosity towards the man, but as he thought of the probable consequences of their next meeting he smiled bitterly and wondered what Rittenhouse Square, which locality typified Philadelphia to him, would think of his present situation. The next moment he turned, and his glance swept the south. The clouds were being driven about in silent but terrific turmoil. The cyclone was visibly forming.

He prayed that Marvin might get to the ranch in time. He remembered that he had

met Bixby and his wife in town that morning, and that the school-mistress, who was boarding with them, would be there alone. A stranger to the weather indications of the locality, she would probably be unaware of the threatening danger. Winthrop pictured to himself Marvin riding madly up like a hero of fiction, summoning the young girl, and bearing her away to one of the gullies, in which alone could be found safety if the cyclone took their direction.

In spite of himself a fierce pang of jealousy shot through his heart, and he raged at the unlucky incident which had deprived him of his horse, although, had it not been for the slain animal, he would have felt no pangs of jealousy or anything else—hard, cold lead in the shape of conical bullets in the heart being an effectual stifler of everything.

The rain was falling faster now, and the wind was blowing a small hurricane. Down in the southwest it was roaring as only a tornado can roar. The prairie was covered with clouds of dust. The cyclone was moving. As he watched it, it suddenly flashed upon him that the girl might not have gone to the farm; that

she might be at the school-house, though the session of the day was long since over. The school-house lay off to the southwest, not far from the path of the storm. His face turned white. He sprang down the bank of the dry river in an instant, ran rapidly across it, scrambled up the bluff on the other side, and disappeared over the nearest hillock.

The school-house was situated on a little plateau on one of the hills about a quarter of a mile away. It was surrounded by trees, and was in full view as he ran down the hill. He had been an athlete in his college days, and he had not forgotten how to sprint. Weighted with heavy boots, canvas riding-trousers, his ".45" and cartridge-belt, he yet ran as he had never run on Franklin Field. The storm was before him. He could see that besom of destruction bounding over the ground. Fences here and there were scattered like matchsticks; a deserted cabin vanished as he ran. It was miles away, of course, but sweeping around towards him in a great parabola. It might be deflected by the contour of the ground and blow itself out harmlessly on the open plains, but if it continued its present

course it would infallibly sweep over the school-house; and then, if she were there—God help her!

He ran like mad, the cyclone coming nearer and nearer. Presently he reached the door. Without waiting to unlatch it, he flung himself against it and burst it open. The girl was alone in the room; she was seated at her desk by the window looking at a small photograph. She sprang to her feet with a scream as Winthrop burst into the room. Instinctively she slipped the little card into the bosom of her dress. In two leaps Winthrop was by her side. Seizing her by the arm, he exclaimed:

"Come! A cyclone! We must run for life!"

She was half dazed by the suddenness of his entrance, and he almost carried her to the door. The heavens were black with terror. The gloomy, funnel-shaped cloud of the cyclone was roaring like a volcano, through which a strange, shrill crackling could be heard. Lightning flashed from it, and the air was filled with muttered thunder, whose faint reverberations were drowned in the deep diapason of the storm. Around the foot of the cloud, perhaps a mile away, the dust and dé-

bris of the earth hovered in a ghastly cloud of whirling white and gray.

Winthrop threw one glance at the approaching tempest. The girl screamed and shuddered. He picked her up in his arms and ran to get out of the path of the tornado if possible. Though he knew that the effort would be fruitless, it was better to move on than to stand still. The storm was now scarce a mile away.

Before he had gone forty feet, Marvin galloped up on his horse. He had reached the farm, and finding no one there had raced for the school. The bronco was panting like a steam-engine; he had been ridden nearly to death. His flanks were covered with blood, and his foam-flaked chest was heaving and quivering in a struggle for breath. There was no time to be lost.

"Give her to me," cried Marvin.

It was the only chance, and Winthrop lifted her up instantly, thanking God in one breath for her safety, and in another that he would not live to see her belong to Marvin.

Alice Grier hitherto had been hesitating between her two suitors. Neither could say that

he had won her affection. Perhaps she could not have chosen herself before that moment. As she heard the colloquy, however, her heart decided.

"No!" she cried, clinging frantically to Winthrop; "I cannot leave him!"

Marvin acted promptly. He flung himself from the saddle and nodded to Winthrop. The Eastern man hung back.

"It's her only chance!" exclaimed Marvin. "Hurry!"

There was no time for argument; appreciating the situation, Winthrop sprang into the saddle, lifted the girl to the saddle-bow, and stuck the spur into the bronco. There was a wild ride for a moment or two, a horse that stumbled on the edge of a deep gully, two people thrown to the soft earth and rolled heavily to the bottom, unhurt, and the storm was upon them.

It was as black as midnight and as still as death at the bottom of the ravine where the two crouched in each other's arms; above them, the roar of an Inferno. It was gone as quickly as it came. They could hear in the distance the crash of the broken trees as the

storm struck the forest on the banks of the Washita, and then everything was drowned in a downpour of rain.

The cloud-burst was like a deluge. What had been dry river-bed was now raging torrent, the "coulée" was bankful in an instant, and Winthrop, who had fought man and storm for the girl he loved, who now clung desperately to him, was swept away by the foaming torrent. He kept his wits, however, and presently managed to catch an old tree-root projecting over the edge of the ravine, and by superhuman exertion draw himself and the girl in safety to the prairie.

They lay there drenched and panting. The rain ceased after a time as suddenly as it had begun. The cyclone had battered and blown itself away. The sun came out. Winthrop rose to his feet and assisted the girl to hers.

She had recovered from her terror, but was pale and shaken by the tremendous experience she had undergone. In tender compassion he looked at her sodden, shivering figure. They had literally passed through death unto life, and the appalling horror of it was still

upon them, therefore his first remark was a trivial one.

"What were you looking at when I broke into the school-house?" he asked.

"A picture — a photograph — two photographs."

"Mine?"

"Yes; yours and Mr. Marvin's."

"And you left them?"

"I left one," she answered, reluctantly; "the other I brought away."

He bent towards her anxiously.

"Let me see it," he cried.

She would fain have denied him, but after what had happened she could not, so she turned aside a moment and drew it out from the bosom of her dress.

"It is mine!" he cried, as he took it from her trembling hand. "Did you mean that?" he questioned, after a moment, drawing nearer to her.

"Mean what?" she asked, with downcast face.

"What you said just before the storm."

"I—I don't know what I—I—"

"You said you wouldn't go without me," he interrupted, softly. "Did you mean it?"

She nodded her head in the face of his commanding gaze.

"We will be married to-day," he said, gravely, drawing her towards him and turning her face up to his own. He pressed a long, fervent kiss upon her sweet lips, which brought the color back to her face like a flame.

"Come!" he cried, after a moment; "how thoughtless of me to keep you here! We must get on. I am afraid we shall have to walk back to town."

"Don't reproach yourself," she said, smiling at him. "I—I like that sort of—thoughtlessness."

Thus encouraged, he kissed her again, lifting her slight form in the air the better to do so.

"Oh, don't!" she cried, instinctively; "somebody might see us!"

"My darling," he answered, "there is no one here. The cyclone has swept the earth."

"Mr. Marvin!" she suggested.

"I had forgotten him," he exclaimed, contritely.

"Let us seek him."

"It will be useless, I fear," answered Win-

throp, mournfully. "Why, even the horse that carried us here is gone, you see."

"Mr. Marvin gave his life for us," she murmured, with a sob.

"Yes," responded Winthrop, as they turned towards the place where the school-house had stood. "Yes, he loved you, and he was my friend," he added, forgetting the little episode of the revolvers.

"And you forgot him!" cried the girl, reproachfully.

"Yes; it is a shame."

"But we were together, and I forgot him too," she said, with love's selfishness. "We will share our shame together."

The trunk of a fallen tree blocked their path. The cyclone had torn it from its roots. As they stepped lightly over it they saw Marvin stretched out beneath it. He was lying face downward in a little hollow in the ground with the tree across his legs. The girl screamed as Winthrop sprang towards him, her heart in her throat. Marvin lay so still that they both thought he was dead. But when he heard the human cry he turned his head slightly towards them and smiled. It was a

cheerful smile in spite of the pain which convulsed his face.

"Not dead, thank God!" cried Winthrop.

"I'm all right, ol' man," answered Marvin, "'ceptin' fer this tree across my legs."

They wasted no more words then. Winthrop bent down and encircled the tree-trunk with his mighty arms, and struggled with it like a Titan, lifting it a little, while Alice, with a strength no one would have imagined in her slender form, drew the prostrate man from beneath it. They turned him over on his back in the wet grass.

"Whiskey," he whispered, feebly, turning very white with the pain of the movement.

Winthrop felt for his flask. It was gone.

"Mine's there, all safe," said Marvin, pointing towards his hip-pocket. The long draught he took did him good. "It takes mor'n a cyclone to part a Western man from his likker," he remarked, grimly. "An' it took all of the cyclone to give you the girl, Winthrop," he said. "She's yourn, ain't she?"

"Yes, she is," answered Winthrop, briefly, feeling very guilty and uncomfortable, he hardly knew why.

"I thought so," said the other, "when I found this lyin' under me when I come to."

"This" was his own photograph which Alice had left behind. The cyclone, in one of its freakish moments, had gently restored it to its original owner.

"How did you escape?" asked Winthrop, breaking the unsupportable pause.

"I jist laid down in this holler an' let her go," answered Marvin. "An' somehow er other she jist lifted herself over me, an' if it hadn't been fer droppin' that tree onto my legs, I'd 'a' been safe. That put me out. I guess they're both broken, but I'll be all right yet. Now, Miss Alice can't walk back to town. You go an' git a wagon to take me and her back there. Legs or no legs, there's going to be a weddin' in town to-day, an' I'm goin' to be best man, too, or give the bride away, or somethin'." He said it bravely and gallantly, though it required all his resolution to stifle a groan. "You kin leave the girl to me; I'll take care of her. You can trust her to me, ol' man."

"I can trust you with anything, Marvin,"

said Winthrop, bending down and taking the cow-boy's hand in his own.

"I seem to have lost my gun in this yere deal," remarked Marvin, feeling at his belt; "you better gimme yourn. Hol' on, though! You remember I said I'd shoot you on sight, so p'r'aps you'd better be careful how you give up your weepon."

"Here it is," answered Winthrop, presenting the revolver to him. "You saved my life —saved both of us, in fact—and mine is yours to command."

"Don't be a dern fool, Hank," said the cattle-man, smiling again. "Go git that wagon an' a parson."

The Bishop happened to be in town that morning: he had appointed services for that night. Winthrop hunted him up and told the story. The Bishop got into the wagon, which had been provided with mattresses and blankets. They picked up a doctor and two or three cattle-men on the way, and hastily drove over the prairie. There, where Winthrop had left them, were the two figures, the girl wet and cold, but kept up by the excitement of the moment and a liberal dose of the whiskey

Marvin had compelled her to drink, and the cow-boy supine upon the ground.

"It seems to me," said Marvin, after they had reached him, "that we better have the weddin' right here an' now, so long's the Right Reverend is with us. I don't know as I'd feel very much like playin' a part on this yere festive occasion after you fellers git me in that wagon."

Alice, woman-like, demurred, but her objections were silenced by the would-be "best man," who surely had a right to speak on this occasion.

"Jist do it fer me, Miss Alice," he said; and so, in the presence of that assembly of cattle and ranch men, Henry Winthrop and Alice Grier stood up before the Bishop and Marvin, who lay at the feet of the young couple, and were made man and wife. It was Marvin who gave the bride away.

After the wedding, when the Bishop had congratulated the bride, Alice bent down over the prostrate form of the man who had lost her. She shot an inquiring glance at her husband, who nodded his head. Then she bent lower and kissed Marvin fairly on the lips. The

man shut his eyes and for the moment forgot his broken legs.

"By gosh!" he cried, "you're a lucky dog, Hank! That one was sure worth a bunch of steers, let alone a cyclone!"

When he was put in the wagon Marvin promptly fainted, very much to his subsequent disgust, but he recovered, and as the whole party drove back to the town, Winthrop and Alice, in spite of the cow-boy's protestations, rehearsed the story of his heroism to the Bishop, who did not tire of hearing it.

"Well," said the Bishop, at last, "this is certainly a case where it took a cyclone to make up a woman's mind."

Chapter III

HOW BROTHER PIDGLEY SAVED THE DAY

"THE prospects for re-establishing the services of our Church at Hawker City are not very bright, I think," I said to the Bishop, who had sent me up there to look over the field. There had been a meeting of the Standing Committee that night, and we were all seated around the big table in the Bishop's study, chatting a little before going to bed.

"Why not?" asked the old man.

"Well, Bishop, you see there are only six hundred people in the town, and there are seven Churches already in the field. Naturally, all of them are having a desperate struggle for existence. I only found two Episcopalians there, and they had more or less strayed from the fold. It's too far away from any other place to combine for Sunday services, too."

"What about a week-night service?" asked the Bishop.

"I thought of that, and made some inquiry, but most of the Churches have a week-night prayer-meeting, and the other nights are taken up with lodge-meetings. I never saw a town that had so many lodges or organizations of some kind or other, and every one of them is in duplicate. For instance, the Order of the Western Moon will meet on Monday night, and on the same evening the sisters, or daughters, or mothers, or some other feminine auxiliary to it, will meet at another place at the same time. I mentioned every day in the week, and I declare that every one of them is the night for the meeting of two or three different sets of orders. As one of the men explained to me, they quarrel all day Sunday between the different Churches and make it up in harmonious lodge-meetings during the week, for everybody belongs to everything — they only differ in religion."

"It is rather hopeless, isn't it?" said the Bishop. "And what a pity it is, too! I know all about those little towns. When I was a

young man just ordained I had a parish in a similar little town."

He settled himself back in his chair, stretched out his feet before him, and lighted his infrequent cigar. We knew the story-telling mood was upon him, and we would not have interrupted him for the world.

"Well, naturally, being fresh from the seminary, I was filled with that consciousness of power which very young ministers exhibit until they wreck a parish or two and get on the ecclesiastical bargain-counter, and I resolved that I would promote with all my heart and soul the cause of church unity in the place to which I had been sent. Like many another beginner, I rather was of the belief that the divine plan of salvation was in accord with my own particular interpretation of creed and Scripture, and though I trust I was charitable—horrid word to use for that spirit of comity which should exist between differing Christians—I felt in my heart a sincere conviction that the only way to promote this church unity and bring it about, as it were, was to convert every one to my own way of thinking—a common mistake that, gentlemen.

"I thought it would be easy enough to convert the lay people of the town, but realized, of course, that the ministers would be a harder task. I remember one of the first sermons I preached with that idea before me. It was a hot summer day, and a gentleman very much under the influence of liquor slid into the rear part of the church and went to sleep. It was somewhat disquieting at first, but I soon warmed up to the subject and forgot him. What happened has always been a warning to me against very loud preaching—I waked him up. My vehemence so disturbed him that he arose, walked unsteadily up the aisle, and stopped in front of the pulpit. I was very much embarrassed, I remember, but I retained sufficient presence of mind to take what I thought was an efficient and brilliant means of bridging over the gap, for, of course, I had stopped preaching when he stood still and looked at me. Leaning over the pulpit I remarked, suavely:

"'I perceive that my good brother is ill. Will some—'

"Before any one could move, however, he lifted his head and, fixing his blinking eyes

upon me, remarked, in perfectly distinct tones, heard throughout the church:

"'I sh'd think such preachin' 'ud make everybody ill!'

"Well, that was a set-back," continued the Bishop, joining in our laughter, "but I got along very nicely. From the smallest we became the largest congregation, and I began to look forward with feverish interest to the visit of the Bishop for confirmation. At the same time it occurred to me that it would be a wise move on my part—in pursuance of my cherished dream—to assemble the ministers, that we might meet together in a friendly way and talk over things; so, though I was the youngest and the newest member of the ecclesiastical body, I boldly plunged in.

"I visited all my brother clergy and got them to promise to come to my study on Monday morning and talk over matters. They were a very nice lot, indeed, and they came, and came again. Presently the Monday meetings became a fixture and we got to know one another very well, and our interest in each other's work deepened. By-and-by the Bishop set a date for his visitation, and I

began the preparation of a confirmation class, in the course of which on successive Sunday evenings I delivered a series of lectures on the Church, her teaching, etc., in which I laid great stress on the apostolic succession, the orders of the ministry, and so on.

"As the preparation of the confirmation class—which included a number of people who had hitherto been regarded as affiliated with other Churches, though I solemnly affirm, gentlemen, that I made not the slightest effort to proselytize, notwithstanding my feelings about getting hold of everybody — continued, the reports of my lectures and the position I assumed began to be bruited around, and a slight coolness, not very tangible but still perceptible, was evidenced in the so-called clericus, or Monday meetings. However, there was no open rupture or break until the last lecture and the Bishop's visitation, which occurred in the same week. Then the affair came to a head.

"The innocent factor in the settlement of the question was the Baptist minister. The Baptist church had been closed for some time during a temporary interregnum, and the

present incumbent had only reached the city the week before the meeting of the clericus to which I refer. Though I was very busy with the approaching confirmation and other things, I called upon him at once to extend to him an invitation to come to the meeting at my house on the following Monday. Brother Pidgley, a pleasant man, greeted me very kindly and appeared glad to see me, but demurred at attending the clericus.

"'For,' he said, 'I am a new man in the community, the youngest in point of service, therefore, of the whole ministerial body. None of the other brethren have called upon me, and I think perhaps it would be well for me to wait a little longer until I have made their acquaintance.'

"All this was reasonable and proper, of course, but my good angel must have been at my elbow, for I urged him not to insist upon that point but to waive ceremony and come. I pointed out to him that the ministers of the little town were all very busy men—some of them, unfortunately, had to combine secular with religious work in order to procure daily bread—that they were very sociable

and pleasant, and would undoubtedly call upon him in due course. I said that I, myself, was especially occupied at this juncture, and perhaps I would have not called so soon had I not been the host of the weekly meetings. In short, I prevailed upon Brother Pidgley to come.

"Friday night was the last lecture. I came out strong. Sunday night was the Bishop's visitation, and the confirmation class came out strong too. I think we had forty-two, a perfectly unheard-of number not only for the town but for the diocese as well, and quite half of them were from other Churches.

"Monday morning came the clericus. We assembled in my study, and after our Congregationalist brother had led in prayer we settled ourselves down for the usual discussions and exercises. The Methodist minister, a venerable man whom we all loved, was to read a paper that morning. While he was fumbling for his glasses the Presbyterian brother, whose Church had been rather hard hit by the confirmation class, arose and stated that he had a communication which he desired to read before we entered upon

the regular work of the day, and as I was, by common consent, the chairman of the assemblage, I could make no objections, but at once expressed our willingness to hear him read his paper and offer his resolution.

"As he rose I detected a slight frown on his forehead and a rather intense gleam in his eye that apprised me that his own apostolic succession was up and that there was going to be a storm. While he was standing on his feet, Brother Pidgley, who had come modestly late, slipped in and sat down next to me.

"'Brethren,' said the Presbyterian, 'I have a little paper here which I should like to read to you, which I think would greatly promote the cause of church unity in this vicinity, facilitate our deliberations, and enhance the value of our efforts for the religious betterment of the community. We have met here pleasantly and informally as the guests of our dear young brother—' I knew there was something up when he called me his dear young brother in that tone, but I held my peace and listened intently with the rest to see whither this matter was tending.

"'We have met here, I say, pleasantly and

informally, without any definite association or articles of any kind to bind us together, and I, for one, think, in view of certain circumstances'—oh, those lectures and the confirmation class, brethren!—'that it would be better to see where we stand. Therefore, I propose as a first requisite for our further deliberations the following:

"'"*Whereas*, The undersigned ministers of the vicinity, in order to promote that fraternal feeling which should subsist between all God's people, and especially those that He hath set apart as leaders in His Church, do hereby express our belief in the equal ecclesiastical and ministerial authority of one another in the Church of God."'"

"Bless me!" exclaimed the president of the Standing Committee, "that was a posing document, Bishop. How did you get over it?"

"I didn't get over it at all," answered the Bishop, laughing. "As you say, it was a poser. It put me between two horns of a dilemma at once. If I should refuse to acknowledge the coequal ecclesiastical and ministerial authority of all who were present a great blow would be inflicted upon my grow-

ing popularity, I should lose many members of my congregation, and place myself before the community in the light of an offensive partisan. All of those dreams of church unity which required everybody to come into the Episcopal Church would be rudely shattered.

"On the other hand, if I did sign the document I would be stultifying the theory of orders held by me and my Church, and I would be flatly contradicting everything that I had said in my lectures, which had caused all the trouble. It seemed to me that I could do neither the one thing nor the other. All this, of course, passed through my mind as he was reading and in the dead silence which followed the closing of his resolution. He was an able man in his way—Presbyterians generally are, I find—and, having exploded his bomb-shell with great effect, he sat down.

"They all looked at me, and I felt it incumbent upon me to speak. Indeed, it was sound policy for me to say what I had to say before any of the others committed themselves to the Presbyterian proposition. In utter despair I rose to my feet, when my eye fell upon the excited face of Brother Pidgley.

Joy filled my heart! He had saved me! I have loved Baptists ever since that day."

The Bishop paused and looked ruminatingly into the fire before him.

"How did he save you, Bishop?" I asked.

"What did you say?" continued the treasurer of the diocese.

"I pointed out to the assembled brethren," resumed the old man, gravely, but with a twinkle of merriment in his eye, "that we had met together heretofore as brethren and friends, without question of equality or inequality; that we had found much we all held in common, and our effort had been to emphasize the unities of our faith rather than our differences. Of course, we were radically at variance on many points, but as we had kept them in abeyance heretofore I trusted that we might continue to do so, and I hoped that my good brother would withdraw his proposition.

"He shook his head at me," continued the Bishop, "and opened his mouth to speak, but I went sternly on without giving him time to interrupt. 'In fact, brethren,' I continued, 'these resolutions are particularly unfortunate at this time, for we have with us to-day a new

member of our clerical family, Brother Pidgley, who comes to take the vacant pastorate of the Baptist Church. Knowing the spirit of harmony and comity which has been exhibited among us, I took upon myself to go to him and extend to him an invitation to meet here with us. I told him, of course, that nothing would be required of him that would do violence to his ecclesiastical beliefs or convictions; and now, brethren, the first time he comes here we meet him with this document!

"'Gentlemen, I appeal to you! Brother Pidgley is a Baptist. He believes in but one form of baptism. According to his teaching, those of us who have not been immersed have not been validly baptized. I am one of that number, my Presbyterian brother is another; in short, I venture to say, that none of us, in Brother Pidgley's eyes, have been properly baptized. How, then, in the name of all that is just, can we expect Brother Pidgley to put his name to this document recognizing the equal ecclesiastical authority of those who, in his judgment, have not even received valid baptism?

"'Gentlemen, though I am sure the resolution has been thoughtlessly laid before the meeting, if it be pressed, Brother Pidgley will be prohibited from meeting with us in this pleasant way. In the interests of harmony and unity, therefore, I again express the hope that it will be withdrawn.'

"'May I say a word, gentlemen?' said the Baptist minister, rising to his feet, with his face full of emotion. 'What my young brother has said, and said so well, expresses my view exactly, and I thank him for saying it for me. I came here not to discuss questions of church polity, or to commit myself to the recognition of any existing forms of church government, or to argue about the dogmas or tenets held by any special body of Christians regarding orders, but simply as a man who loves to meet other men who, however mistaken their ideas are—as he sees them—yet are one with him in their aims and aspirations. If the paper be pressed, I shall, of course, have no option left but to withdraw.'

"'Do not go, Brother Pidgley!' said the Methodist minister, entering the discussion at

this point; 'we quite understand your position. Believing as you do, there would be no other course left for you if the paper were pressed. Gentlemen and brethren, I think we have discussed the matter long enough. We are all agreed, I feel certain, in the premises. I am sure our Presbyterian brother sees the result of his proposition also and will withdraw his resolution. And as time is pressing,' continued the Methodist, 'I think it would be better for me to read my paper.'

"The Presbyterian, in the face of this overwhelming sentiment, at last nodded his head in answer to the Methodist's appeal, though he did it with evident reluctance.

"Gentlemen," said the Bishop, "my heart gave a great leap of joy, though my emotions changed in a moment when the Methodist minister continued, as he took out his bulky manuscript:

"'Of course, Brother Pidgley could not sign that paper.' Then he stopped, looked at me shrewdly over his spectacles, and added:

"'And come to think of it, my young Episcopalian brother, you could not have signed it either.'"

Chapter IV

IN THE BOX CAÑON OF THE GILA: AN ARMY TRAGEDY

AFTER service one hot Sunday night in August a little party of us gathered on the porch of Harmar's quarters overlooking the parade-ground at Fort Carpenter. The Bishop had, as usual, preached an excellent sermon at the service in the little old stone chapel — one of the oldest churches in the West, by-the-way—and as it was still early, and too hot to think of going to bed, we accepted the captain's hospitable invitation—he was a bachelor—and sat down for a pleasant chat before sleeping-time. It was a broad, pleasant porch, full of easy-chairs, mostly wicker and cane, and soon every one was comfortably stretched out, even the Bishop. He knew how to lay aside his episcopal dignity on occasion; indeed, it usually sat lightly upon

him, though there was never any contempt-breeding familiarity about him. A decanter, sundry bottles, and glasses in which ice tinkled alluringly in the heat, sat on a convenient table, with cigars for those who cared to smoke.

General Blythe, the colonel of the garrison regiment, the Twelfth Cavalry, and the commandant of the post as well, a white-mustached, eagle-eyed veteran, presently strolled up the walk and joined the party. He appeared to be suffering from a bad cold, for he coughed and cleared his throat rather emphatically as he sank into a proffered seat. He seemed to have been affected that way before, for, without having recourse to the surgeon, Price, the adjutant, found a satisfactory remedy for hoarseness on the table. The general took his nip like a man and a soldier, and, lighting his cigar, waited in silence for the opening of the conversational campaign.

The Bishop began it. The Bishop did not lack initiative, for all his modesty.

"General," he said, "something has been troubling me about the chapel yonder."

"What is it, Bishop? If it is in the power

of Uncle Sam, as I represent him in this post, we'll fix it for you."

"It is that inscription, you know, on the wall of the chancel, just over the cross."

"What's the matter with it? Anything wrong with the spelling, or shall I have the painter touch it up?"

"No, no; it's not that, but the words, '*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?*' are so inappropriate for a church, at least for my idea of a church," added the Bishop, apologetically.

"Oh, is it?" remarked the general, blankly —he was not as well versed in Scripture as in tactics. "What does it mean, anyway?" he questioned.

"'My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?'" answered the Bishop, softly.

"You don't say so!" exclaimed the soldier, in surprise.

"Yes."

There was a little pause, finally broken by the general, who had been reflecting deeply.

"Well," he said, at last, "I rather hate to change the old church; those words were there since my father commanded this post, forty years ago, and, to be frank, I never did

know what they meant; no one knew it, I guess. Did any of you fellows know it before?" he asked of the interested group of listeners.

A chorus of dutiful and tactful "No, sirs," rose at once, although some of the officers, too wise to know anything in public of which the commanding officer was ignorant, discreetly remained silent.

"There, you see," continued the general, turning to the amused Bishop, "no harm's been done as yet. However, since these young men all know it now, it will be all over the post to-morrow. Adjutant, make a note of this, and have them printed out, and—er—I feel my cough coming on again."

"Thank you," said the Bishop, as the general reverted to his "cough-mixture" once more.

"I suppose there was a time when the—er—motto—was appropriate, though," broke in the major. "They say that in early days this was the most God-forsaken country, the Indians raising the devil on every side. I expect the little garrison then often felt just that way."

"I suppose you have all had some interesting experiences with the Indians on the frontier in earlier days," said the Bishop, looking reflectively at the little group of men on the porch.

"Well, rather," answered the general, promptly; and then, as his glance fell upon Harmar, the host, who commanded the two companies of infantry attached to the post, he continued, "all except Harmar, that is; he belongs to the infantry, and it's generally the cavalry that tangles up poor 'Lo,' you know."

From the assembled cavalrymen there was a general, if good-natured, laugh at the general's pleasantry about the lonely "beetle-crusher."

"General," remarked the infantryman, calmly ignoring the jest, and not referring to the old antagonism between horse and foot in the army, "you never heard of my Indian campaign on the Gila, did you?"

"Never," remarked the general, tersely. "Never knew the Twenty-sixth Infantry ever made an Indian campaign."

"Tell us about it, old man," said Dr. McKibbin.

"Let us have the story, captain," urged the Bishop, as he poured himself a glass of Apollinaris.

The Bishop was a man of action himself, and he dearly loved stories of that kind. Before Harmar began, however, a smart, erect, soldierly looking sergeant of cavalry came round the corner from the barracks, walked rapidly to the foot of the porch steps, clicked his heels together like an infantryman, saluted, and delivered a message to the general. Receiving a reply, he turned sharply on his heel and walked rapidly away.

"What a fine-looking fellow!" remarked the Bishop, as they watched him disappear in the shadow.

"One of the best in the Twelfth Cavalry," said the general. "Go ahead, Harmar."

"As you say, general, he is a good soldier, and he belongs to the story—" Harmar began.

"I thought you couldn't get up an Indian campaign without a cavalryman, Harmar," laughed the general, "and there he is."

"He was an infantryman then, sir, and the best I ever saw, except in one instance, perhaps. What he did then I— But you can

"'ONE OF THE BEST IN THE TWELFTH CAVALRY,' SAID THE GENERAL"

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

judge for yourselves, gentlemen. Here's the story:

"When Miles and Lawton were trying so desperately hard to round up Geronimo and his band of Apaches, four companies of my regiment were garrisoning Fort Yuma — the cavalry being busy elsewhere. Some of you fellows, perhaps all of you, know the famous spring—a regular well it is—just under the end of the Superstition Mountains, where the San Pedro comes rushing down the Santa Catalina Valley and joins the Gila. Well, it was a favorite stopping-place for war-parties in those days, and I was sent out with a sergeant—that man here a moment since was he—and sixteen men to hold the position, and incidentally gobble up anything in the shape of an Indian that presented itself."

"A fine time you would have had if Geronimo and his gang had come along!" interrupted the general. "They'd have eaten up your handful; the gobbling would have been the other way."

"Yes, sir," assented Harmar; "quite likely. Still, we would have made it interesting, I think. We covered the spring with a breast-

work, and with that in front of us, and the mountain behind us, it would not have been too easy a job.

"Well, sir, we had no adventures of any sort—none worth mentioning, that is—for a long time—did not even catch a Gila monster. We kept a good watch, but never saw an Indian. The men amused themselves hunting, fishing, and so on. It was awfully boring to me, I must confess. My sergeant was a treasure—he'd been with the regiment for years—and he kept the men busy and in good spirits, and I did not have much to do. He was a queer fellow, too. There was a girl—"

"Ah!" said the Bishop, smiling, "there is always a girl — even in an Indian campaign."

"You're right, Bishop," answered Boyle, of the artillery. "If you had seen the girls—squaws, of course—lying behind bowlders and pumping lead from their Winchesters into the old Twelfth at Wounded Knee, you would have seen girls in a new light, I'll warrant. I commanded the Hotchkiss gun there, and I could see them."

"I expect Methuselah in his thousand years

of experience did not exhaust the differing kinds of women," remarked the Bishop, who was not without experience himself.

"Go on, Harmar," said the general. "If we get on the subject of women, we'll never hear the end of your campaign."

"Well, Sergeant Boyd was in love with this one. Her name was Bridget Sullivan. She had been a maid in the major's family at Yuma. How she ever got from Ireland to that God-forsaken spot I don't know. But there she was, a black-haired, fair-skinned, blue-eyed, light-hearted Irish girl. Boyd was not alone in his admiration. All the unmarried and some of the married men in the battalion were his rivals. He fought his way to the supreme position in her good graces, however, and seemed to be in a fair way to win the prize, when along comes a well-to-do, good-looking young ranchman and whisks her away under his very nose.

"Boyd took his medicine and faced his disappointment like a man and a soldier, and, though he had been hit hard, he bore no ill-will to his successful rival. The men chaffed him at first, but he found means to settle that,

and things soon resumed their usual state of depression—hot depression at that. You know, Bishop, that Yuma is the hottest place this side of—of—"

"I can imagine your standard of comparison," said the Bishop, smiling again.

"Not unless you've been there," the general broke in. "I mean Yuma, not—" he added, in some confusion.

"You have to feed the chickens cracked ice to keep them from laying hard-boiled eggs," remarked Howard, audaciously.

"There is only one thing makes that story incredible," said the paymaster; "the country's too hot for ice."

"Well," resumed Harmar, "all this love-making and giving—or taking—in marriage took place about two years before we were ordered to hold that spring. The Gila there flows through a box cañon. It was summer, and the river was almost dry. You know, Bishop, a box cañon is a sort of valley with a —a flat bottom and perpendicular sides; the river flows through the middle. It's like a long box with the lid off, for all the world. Sometimes the box is wide enough to admit

of a little farming being done under the walls on either side.

"There were several settlers in the cañon, but they had all been warned that the Apaches might be down on them at any time, and they had abandoned their ranches and had gone to the settlements for protection, with their families and such goods as they could take with them. All but George Isles, that is. He it was who had married Bridget Sullivan. He had refused to come in. Said he'd always treated the Indians right, that he knew many of the principal Apaches, and he didn't believe they'd hurt him or his. He'd risk it, anyway. They had a baby just beginning to toddle, and a fine ranch as well, just where a deep creek tore through a great gap in the mountains and opened out a wide — well, as I am a Carolinian, I'll say—savanna in the cañon. He had a good house there too; properly it was two one-roomed houses connected by a wide, open porch, which was dining-room, parlor, and general store-house as well.

"So he stayed and took the risk, and a fearful risk it was, as I told him, and as Boyd and

other experienced men warned him on one Sunday afternoon when he drove down to the camp with his wife and baby to make us a visit. He laughed at us as he drove away, I remember. The boys wanted to abandon the spring and camp near the ranch, to guard Bridget and the baby — she looked prettier than ever with the little baby in her arms, it seemed to me, and I guess the men thought so too. I should have preferred to go up there myself, but of course my orders would not allow anything of that kind. So we stayed where we were, and hoped against our better judgment that Isles might be right and we wrong.

"Early one August morning, Sunday, and hot, too, like to-day, Bishop, a mule came limping down the cañon towards the camp. The men promptly rounded him up without much trouble; indeed, the poor brute was about done for. He had been shot in the flank, and his hind quarters were covered with blood. It was one of George Isles' mules; we recognized his brand, and some of the men swore they recognized the mule as well.

"It was evident some one had shot him. That some one could only be an Apache. There was no one up the cañon except Isles and his family, and he certainly would not shoot his own mule. The men gathered in a little group about the mule, the sergeant in the midst of them. There was a hurried examination, an excited discussion, and then Boyd and one or two others came towards me. The faces of the men lighted up as they saw me buckling on my revolver—my mind was already made up. Boyd saluted, and began:

"'Lieutenant, we think from the mule that them Apache hell-hounds—'

"'All right, Boyd,' I answered, for time was pressing, and I had divined his thought, which, indeed, would have come to any one, however stupid. 'All right. Detail a corporal and five men to stay here and hold this place, and the rest of you get your rifles and canteens and fill your belts and come with me. We'll push on up to the ranch at once and see what's the matter.'

"They were ready in the twinkling of an eye, gentlemen, and after cautioning Corporal White and the men left behind—who were as

eager as the rest to go, by-the-way—to keep close in the fort we had built, and keep a bright lookout for Indians, for if the Apaches were in the cañon they might pay us a visit, we set forth, promising to be back by noon.

"We did not advance up the cañon, which would have been the easiest way, but followed a mountain-trail I had discovered, which no horse that ever lived could have managed: that's one for you gentlemen of the yellow stripe."

"I've got a mare that would do it all right, I'll wager," cried Michelson, the boldest rider in the regiment.

"Oh, shut up, Mick," said Roodruff, the artillery major; "we know all about that mare of yours. Go on, Harmar."

"This mountain-trail led over the bluff on the south side of the cañon till it struck the creek which flowed into the Gila at Isles' ranch. We hoped by following it up till we reached the creek, and then by descending its banks, to strike the Indians in the flank, if there were any there, and by taking them at a disadvantage make up for our small force.

They naturally would not expect any attack from that direction.

"We travelled that trail at a breakneck speed, recklessly scrambling over everything in the way: those of you who have been there know what those trails are, perhaps. Finally we struck the creek and scrambled down the steep sides into its rocky bed. Fortunately the water was low and we could get along. The nearer we got to the Gila the more anxious we became. As we approached the place where the creek entered the cañon, I halted the men, formed them in some kind of order, and gave them their instructions. We looked to our arms, and then softly made for the big bowlder which lay at the opening. We hoped to hear the crack of Isles' rifle, or some noise to show that he was holding his own, but there was not a sound of any sort in the cañon. It was a quiet morning, and not a breath of air broke the stillness. With beating hearts we crept around the bowlder. I led, of course, and Boyd was right by me, and the rest close up. I had to hold Boyd back by main force; he was mad to get on.

"When we gained the open we didn't see a

soul nor hear a sound. The house was standing all right. There wasn't an Indian anywhere. We did not see Isles or his wife or the baby. Presently I caught sight of a little column of smoke drifting up in the utterly still morning from behind the house. We stopped a second, called to Isles, and then broke and ran recklessly towards the house. We should have approached with caution, I know, general, but I was as guilty as the rest.

"You see that girl was so pretty, and—Well, we ran like fiends, forgetting our fatigue and everything else but what was before us. When we turned the corner of the house, this is what we saw on the other side:

"Isles had been stripped and tied to his wagon-wheel; he had been shot and scalped, and was stone-dead, but while he was still alive the red brutes had kindled a slow fire under him. In his dead face was such a look of horror, of agony, of despair, as I never want to see again. I can see him now. A few feet away was Bridget, his wife. She—she—"

Harmar paused; his voice sank to a whisper; the porch was deadly still, the men on

it sat leaning forward in their chairs, their neglected cigars in their hands.

"She— But you understand. She was dead—and the baby, too, thank Heaven!—but, strangely enough, there was a little smile on her face, and—"

He stopped again, and passed his hand nervously across his forehead, as if to brush away the terrible recollection.

"Good God!" burst out the general, amid the deep breathing of the men around him.

Presently Harmar resumed the narrative:

"Bridget and the baby had both been scalped. The men cursed and swore and raved and blasphemed. The cold sweat stood out on their faces. Some of them threw their guns on the ground and tramped up and down like caged tigers; others shook their fists in the face of the sky in blind rage. As for me, I remember I trembled and shook as if I had a chill. Boyd turned as white as the moonlight yonder, but he said nothing. He picked up the dress they had torn from her, though, and covered her over with it.

"It had been a complete surprise, evidently. The ground was covered with pony-tracks;

we judged there might have been a hundred in the band. They had been gone for hours, apparently; by this time they were miles away. There was nothing we could do—nothing. We were helpless, and that was the hardest part of it. We were crazy; murder, revenge, everything in our hearts. I think if the men had come across a thousand Indians then, I could not have prevented their attacking them—perhaps I should not have tried it. Don't call it glorifying ourselves or boasting—it's the way we felt then.

"I got them quieted down after a while, and we dug a big grave and buried all three of them together. We washed their faces and straightened them out and wrapped them in blankets before we put them away. It was all we could do. I'm not much of a praying man, Bishop, but I said such things as I could remember from the prayer-book service—and some other things—while the men stood bareheaded around me. Some of them were crying. They fired three volleys over them, to do the thing up properly, they said, and then they covered the grave with a great heap of stones. I expect it's there yet in

that lonely cañon, to mark that ghastly tragedy."

"Is that all?" asked the Bishop, as Harmar stopped.

"No, sir, it is not. We stopped a moment by the grave and then moved off down the cañon. On the way down the river towards our camp we were so excited that we disdained cover and kept in the middle of the cañon. A few rods from the clearing a shot rang out from a nest of bowlders under the north bluff right in our path.

"No one was hit, and the men, entirely reckless, ran towards the smoke. No foot-racers ever went faster. A second shot hit one man in the arm, but that did not stop the rest of us. I went with them as before; in fact, being younger and in better training than most of them, I outran them all except Boyd. There was an Indian behind the rocks, a greasy, dirty, drunken Apache warrior. He had got drunk that morning, wandered away from his party, fallen over the cliffs, and broken his leg. He had been unable to rejoin them, and his fellow-braves had ridden off and left him—forgotten. At least, I suppose all this. We

were heading for him, and his discovery was inevitable, or he would not have shot at us.

"Boyd had his gun up to beat out the Apache's brains when I caught the descending stock in my hands and called him to attention sharply. He was too good a soldier to fail to obey after a momentary hesitation. I drew my revolver promptly and forced the men back—all their excitement had returned, and I had some little difficulty before I could get them in hand. They wanted to tear him to pieces, and so on. I did not blame them. But of course, being an officer, I could not allow anything of that sort, although, frankly, I'd have liked it as much as the rest.

"Well, we made him a prisoner, and I was in a quandary. What to do with him I did not know. It was afternoon now; I was very anxious to rejoin the men at the spring; I could not tell what had happened there. We had no horse, and how to get that lame devil along I could not see. Finally, Boyd and another man volunteered to bring him in, and let the rest of us push on towards the post.

"I think I only gave Boyd one order. 'Don't let him escape,' I said. I can remem-

ber how he smiled at me when he said he would not. It wasn't a pleasant smile, either.

"Well, we got back late in the afternoon, and found everything safe at the spring. We thought we heard a couple of shots back in the cañon after we left Boyd, but we were not sure. That evening Boyd and the other man came in—alone.

"'Where's the Apache?' I asked, sternly, as he reported to me.

"'He escaped, sir,' answered the sergeant. He seemed strangely calm.

"'Escaped!' I cried.

"'Yes, sir,' he replied, looking hard at me. 'He won't trouble you again, sir,' he added, after a pause.

"'Oh,' I said; 'very well.'

"Boyd turned and walked away, and I learned afterwards that he had given the Indian the other man's rifle, because he could not kill even a wounded Apache in cold blood, and at a distance of ten paces had exchanged shots with him. The Apache's bullet went wild, but Boyd's aim was truer. They left the Apache in the cañon with the top of his head blown off. He had nothing to complain of.

He had been shot like a gentleman—and by one. It was rank disobedience and everything else on Boyd's part."

"What did you do to him?" asked the Bishop.

"Nothing—nothing at all. I never reported it or mentioned the subject again. Boyd was a changed man from that hour. A few days after, Lawton's command came along, and I let Boyd go with them, he begged so, and Lawton was willing; he loved men, and Boyd was a man. So that is the way he became a cavalryman. Not even Lawton himself pursued those Apaches with more grim determination and relentless energy than that sergeant of infantry. He was in at the round-up with his new commander. That is the end of the story, gentlemen."

The general finally broke the silence.

"Well, Harmar," he said, "as you remarked, it was disobedience of orders and all that, and the man should have been court-martialled. Yes, certainly—"

There was another pause, while we waited, breathless.

"By-the-way, Mr. Price," he continued,

turning to the adjutant, "the death of Sergeant-Major Vance leaves his position vacant. Will you make out an order to-morrow morning appointing Sergeant Boyd sergeant-major of the Twelfth Cavalry?"

The Bishop rose from his seat, stepped across the porch to the general, and solemnly wrung him by the hand. The rest of us applauded enthusiastically.

CHAPTER V

LOVE ON LOST MOUNTAIN

THE Bishop was surprised one morning in his study when he received the following telegram:

"Will you arrange to be home Wednesday night at 7.45? Wish you to marry me to Jessie Browning. Answer, Lost Mountain, Colorado."

The signature, "Henry Raymond," told the Bishop nothing. Of course he knew Jessie Browning. She had been the honor girl at Bethany two years before, and during her stay at the college, the diocesan school, which was at the same time the Bishop's pride and his greatest care, he had confirmed her. Not only had she excelled in scholarship, but he remembered with pleasure her handsome face, her vigorous, healthy, joyous personality, her sweet disposition.

So she was to be married. Well, that was a fate to which the petticoat half of humanity inevitably looks forward — persuaded thereto by the trousers moiety, of course. The Bishop wondered, naturally, if Mr. Henry Raymond was a good enough man for her. On general principles he realized that no man—or of few may it be said, at least—is good enough for a good girl; but as the world goes, he hoped that Raymond approximated his obligations. He recalled that Jessie's father was a man of humble extraction, illiterate, uncultured, but possessed of a full quota of the rugged virtues of the West.

He was a railroad engineer, left a widower with this one daughter. An Episcopalian by birth, although, as he said himself, he was not "doin' much at it," he had placed the girl in Bethany College, and there she remained until she had graduated. She had the sturdy virtues of her father, and the Bishop, and those who labored with him, had shaped and directed her native refinement until she had become a cultivated, well-bred young woman — one altogether charming.

When she had left them, two years before,

the Bishop had wondered how she would fit in the life which she would have to share with her father; what associates she would be thrown among; where she would find congenial companionship. He had faith, however, in her good common-sense, and he felt that she would adjust herself to the unusual conditions, and triumphantly establish and maintain a proper place.

Love, though, was a queer thing, and no one knew it better than the Bishop. Not from experience—oh no, but from his attrition with different couples in various amatory dilemmas through the diocese, and as he wired back to Mr. Henry Raymond at Lost Mountain that he would be in readiness to receive him, he could not help a feeling of misgiving. Who on earth that would be worthy of her would Jessie Browning meet in that section of the country among her father's friends?

It was with some anxiety, therefore, that the Bishop came down to his study Wednesday evening when the expected visitors were announced. First entered Jessie. She had always loved the old man — everybody did. She ran towards him, clasped his hands, and

almost hugged him in her joyous enthusiasm. He had never seen her look so well or so pretty. It was evident that she, at least, was perfectly satisfied with the situation. Back of her came her father, a sturdy, grim old man, hard-featured, stern, yet with sparkles of humor in his eye and lines of kindness, as well as of care, in his face.

"I'm glad to see ye," he broke out, locking the hand of the clergyman in his own huge palm and squeezing it with terrific pressure. "An' yet it's a sorry errand I'm come yere fer, arter all. Ye see, Jess, here, is agoin' to git hooked onto another engine an' leave me to run the division alone."

"Now, father!" interrupted Jessie.

"Never mind, girl," continued her father, "it's all right. The young ones has got to make homes of their own—hey, Bishop? I 'ain't got nothin' to say. I done it myself, an' 'twas the blessedest thing I ever done in my life. Witness Jess, here. An' ye know she jest wouldn't be content to have any man 'cept yourself to do the job, so here we've come over a thousand mile to have the couplin' made."

"I am sure I am very glad indeed," said the Bishop; "but you haven't introduced me to the young man."

"Come forrard, Henry," said the engineer, turning to a tall, athletic young man, who had kept himself modestly in the background, "an' lemme interduce ye to the Bishop. Bishop, this is Henry Raymond. He's a tenderfoot, but he's a man, an' if he serves long enough he'll make a good engineer."

One glance at the clean-cut, well-set-up, self-reliant young fellow explained Jessie's joy and satisfaction, and relieved the Bishop's anxiety. The Bishop's eye caught sight of a little pin.

"You are a fraternity man, I see," he said. "Your college was—"

"Yale, sir."

"That's my college, and my fraternity, too. I'm glad to know you," continued the Bishop, "and I congratulate you upon the wife you are to have. I have known her for years, young sir, and I know no better, no sweeter maiden," he added, in his gracious, old-fashioned manner.

"Thank you, sir," returned the young man, with becoming deference and gratitude.

"Well, Miss Jessie, if you are ready," continued the Bishop, "I will put on my vestments, and we will go into the chapel of the college and perform the ceremony. You have the license and the ring, of course, Mr. Raymond?"

"Certainly, sir; here they are."

"Hold on a minute, Bishop! There's somethin' I want to do before you begin. Jess," said the engineer, "you've been a good daughter to me, an' I want you to start fair. I've always had this minute in mind—this or my death—" he continued, gloomily, "which is much the same thing—"

"Oh, father!" exclaimed Jessie.

"Hold on, now! Put on the air and slow down while I deliver my freight. I've been savin' up for ye fer a long time. I reckoned it might come in handy if I died, but I think it 'll be better to give it to ye now. You see, Bishop, Henry's salary ain't none too great. They'll have some trouble in gittin' along on it, an' if any kids comes—well there, I'll say no more," he broke out, hurriedly, at the sight of his daughter's face, "but I'll jest hand you this as a weddin'-present."

"This" was a bond for five thousand dollars. When Jessie saw what it was she dropped the bond and flung her arms around her father's neck.

"This is very nice of you, Mr. Browning," said the Bishop, picking it up. "I am sure the young man is deeply touched by your generosity."

"I am, indeed, sir," said Raymond, smiling, "and I suppose, since matters have gone so far, before the wedding takes place I might as well deliver to Mr. Browning a paper that I have for him."

"W'at's this?" exclaimed the old man, taking the envelope which his prospective son-in-law handed to him.

"Look at it, sir," responded the latter.

Disengaging himself from Jessie, the engineer opened the envelope and drew forth a slip of paper.

"Why—why—" he cried. "'Superintendent of Motive Power of the D. K. & E.' W'at does it mean? And w'at name is this at the—Why, it's yours! Is this a joke, young man?"

"No, sir. It means just what it says. You are, from to-day, the superintendent of mo-

tive power. The old superintendent died three days ago, and I have appointed you to take his place."

"You have appointed me? Why—why—I— Who are you, anyway?"

"I am the owner of the road," calmly returned the young man. "When I graduated from college I wanted to learn the whole business from the ground up, so I came out here and began 'firing,' and I did not tell any one who I was except the general superintendent."

The engineer stared at his young companion in utter bewilderment. The Bishop chuckled with delight at the pretty dénouement.

"Never mind, Harry," said Jessie, "I'll love you just the same as I did when you were only a fireman."

"Well, I s'pose it's all right," said Browning, at last; "but there's the makin' of a good engineer about to be sp'iled in ye; but go on with the weddin'! Lord! Lord! Him the owner of the road and me the superintendent of motive power! Who'd 'a' thought it? Well—I'll be—I—er—blessed!"

It was not until after the ceremony had

been performed and Jessie Browning had become Jessie Raymond that the Bishop learned how it all came about, and this is the way of it:

When she left school and went back to her father, she naturally found that the circle in which she was expected to move was hardly congenial to her. Indeed, her father had few friends. He was too blunt and too independent to attract the attention of those above him; he cared little for those about him, and life was lonely for his daughter. Being as independent as her father, she finally decided, much against his wishes, to learn telegraphy. Having mastered the intricacies of the delicate art, she had been appointed day operator and agent at a lonely little station on the slope of Lost Mountain.

Her father ran the fast freight over the Lost Mountain division, and the freight always stopped at the little station. It was there that Jessie had met Henry Raymond. He was "firing" on her father's engine. A more disgusted man than old Browning had been when the young college man from the East had been assigned to him as his helper it would

be hard to find; but the young fellow had worked himself into the good graces of the hard old man, and had shown himself respectful, capable, and willing.

In spite of his rough garb, Jessie had detected the note of distinction in the young fireman, who had been introduced to her by her father, and common interests, common love of good books, had thrown the two young people much together. The young man had been much surprised at the rare qualities of the young woman, which their ripening acquaintance had revealed, and he had not been a month on the division before he had fallen madly in love with pretty Jessie. His delight when she had admitted the existence of a similar feeling for him in her own breast was overwhelming. Together they had repaired to her father with that demand which is as hard to make as it is hard to grant.

At first Browning would have none of it. He had cherished higher ambitions for his cultivated daughter than a mere fireman on a fast freight. Then, when Raymond informed him that he had been promoted to an engine, and was to do the doubling up on Lost Mountain

when the expresses required double-headers to draw them up the heavy grades, he changed his tactics. Finding the ground cut from under his feet in that direction, the old engineer became stubbornly obdurate in another. Such rapid promotion was preposterous. He had fired three years before he was given an engine. Here was this young sprig from the East after six months promoted to such a position!

"Well, sir," asked Raymond, adroitly, at last, "do you not believe me capable of running an engine after six months of your teaching and example?"

"Oh, you're capable enough," answered the old man, mollified a little by the compliment, "with such trainin' as you had, but it's agin all rules to put a youngster like you on an engine. I won't hear of it!"

But the persistence of the young lovers carried the day—as it usually does—and Browning at last gave a grudging assent; to which, however, he attached certain conditions.

"I'll tell ye w'at it is," he said. "I don't want my daughter to marry no freak nor no failure. If you can run an engine for six

months without wreckin' her, why, I'll say yes; an' if ye can't, there's an end on't."

"Those are very hard conditions," returned the young man; "engines are sometimes wrecked in spite of the best endeavors and the greatest care of their engineers."

"That's all right. I'll play fair," answered the engineer, "an' the things you can't help don't count. If you don't do it by yer own carelessness or yer own act, why, you git the girl; an' if ye do, ye don't git her. That 'll do."

Five months and twenty-nine days after this ultimatum, Raymond was standing at the step of his engine at the little station on Lost Mountain. He had just pulled the limited over the mountain, and was going down the other side to take up the Eastern express, which was heavy enough to require a double-header. He had stopped at the station for water when Jessie came rushing from the door, an expression of wild terror in her white face.

"What's the matter, Jessie?" he cried, looking at her.

"The operator on the mountain-top has just

wired that No. 19, father's train, is running wild! He has lost control of it, and it is coming down the mountain! The despatcher says clear the track for her. Two miles beyond is the curve. There must be twenty cars in that train! They can't take that curve at the speed they will be running then. What shall we do?"

"I'll stop the train," cried Raymond, instantly, "at the siding just before the curve. Thompson," he said to his fireman, "run forward and throw the switch. Let me get on the main track, and then close it again. Don't try to get aboard; we've steam to go that far, and there is no sense in risking two lives. Lively, man! Nineteen will be here in three minutes! I'll stop her with this engine. Good-bye, Jessie."

As the fireman started towards the switch, Raymond snatched a kiss from the girl and sprang into the cab. Water from the coal had slopped on the iron plate, and in his hurry his foot slipped. He fell into the cab, striking heavily against the sharp corner, cutting a deep gash in his forehead. He lay there still and senseless.

The fireman was half-way down the track. On a curve of the mountain above them on the other side of the valley Jessie caught a glimpse of the fast freight. It was rushing with terrific speed down the slope. Her father was racing to death on that engine. She knew him too well to dream that he would abandon his post. Her lover lay senseless in the cab. She did not hesitate a second. Murmuring a prayer that included all, she leaped into the cab, stepping over to Raymond's prostrate form.

There was no time to be lost. She had a theoretical knowledge of an engine. Springing up to the engineer's seat, she opened the throttle almost to the limit, and shoved forward the lever. As the steam rushed into the cylinders the wheels of the startled locomotive spun madly on the track, and then the great passenger-engine sprang forward. It was no slow, gradual, scientific start, but almost in a bound high speed was attained.

As the locomotive clicked over the switch-points the astonished fireman saw, instead of the engineer, the form of Jessie Browning, white-faced, peering out ahead. Before he

could attempt to board the engine it had passed him, running madly down the track, increasing its speed with every yard of distance. Close at hand on the mountain he saw the fast freight rushing towards him. There were twenty heavily loaded cars, a passenger-coach, and the caboose. The train was rocking fearfully on the rails. One glance told the fireman what was the matter. As it had started down the mountain the air-brakes had evidently refused to work, and, through no fault of his own, Browning had lost control of his train. It was running down by the force of gravity, increasing its speed, already terrific, with every second. The cars were swaying so that no man could have stood upon them to apply the hand-brakes. There was nothing that humanity could do on that train but let it go.

As the fireman swung the switch to keep the main line open he caught a glimpse of the stern face of old Browning in the cab. The train dashed by him with the roar of a tornado and its swiftness as well. A few miles down the road lay Rainbow Curve. The road there swerved sharply around the spur of the moun-

tains. If they struck that at such a speed they would leave the rails and plunge a thousand feet into the valley below. Sick at heart, the fireman started down the road after the flying freight.

What had become of Raymond? He knew, of course, what the young engineer had intended to do. He would run his engine ahead of the jeoparded train until he came to the siding, which had been built upon a little plateau on the side of the mountain just before the curve, and there he would slow down and permit the freight to run into him. The train would be wrecked, of course, but there would be some chance of salvation for the crew and the passengers there, and absolutely none at the curve. Browning and Raymond would probably be killed, but the rest would be saved. Raymond intended to risk his life for this purpose, but how came Jessie there? That question the fireman could not answer.

The rapid motion of the engine, and the water splashed upon him from the full tank, at last restored Raymond to consciousness. He opened his eyes and lifted his head. Where was he? How came the engine to be going

down the mountain at such a pace? Who was that at the throttle? A woman! Good Heaven, it was Jessie! He rose unsteadily to his feet.

"What are you doing here?" he asked.

"You hurt yourself. Fainted," she cried. "I know how to run the engine. There was no time to be lost. I came to save father. Look back!"

A few rods behind them came the fast freight. They were going at a fearful speed, but she was overhauling them. A few rods farther ahead of them lay the siding in the open meadow; beyond that was Rainbow Curve. If the freight was to be stopped it must be there. She, too, had divined what Raymond had intended doing. She began to shut off steam, and reached out her hand to set the air-brake. Raymond saw her action. He forgot the flying freight. He forgot duty, everything, in the realization that the meeting of the two engines meant death for the young "engineer" he loved. He staggered towards her, and strove to tear her hand from the throttle; he struggled to prevent her from setting the air-brake.

"What would you do?" she cried.

"I won't let you do it!" he answered. "It will be death to you!"

"I must! I will!" she answered, struggling with him.

He was weak and unsteady from the force of the blow, and had lost much blood. Determination lent her strength. She pushed him from her, shut off the steam, and set the brake. They were right at the siding now. She had just time to jump from the seat when the fast freight was upon them. She closed her eyes as the crash came. Raymond, seeing the inevitable collision, caught her in his arms the moment before the impact, and leaped far out of the cab; fear for her gave him strength.

The two engines were utterly wrecked. The first freight-cars were smashed into kindling-wood. Many of the others were hurled from the tracks to the siding, but the caboose and passenger-coach were left on the rails; their occupants were badly shaken up, but not otherwise hurt. Fortunately, Raymond had leaped clear of everything. He had alighted on a grassy bank, and as the speed of his own engine had been greatly diminished before the

collision, beyond a severe shaking up he and Jessie had sustained no injuries.

By a miracle, too, Browning had been thrown clear of his ruined engine. He lay senseless on the ground when Raymond and Jessie came to him. His arm was doubled beneath him, and, in breaking, it had evidently broken his fall. The train-men and the few passengers in the coach came swarming up to the little group.

Water and whiskey, one taken externally, the other internally, soon revived the old engineer. His head was in Jessie's lap, and the first face he saw was that of Raymond.

"The air wouldn't work," he whispered. "Is anybody hurt?"

"No one, except you. You have broken your arm, but nothing else, I hope," answered Raymond.

"So 'twas you on the engine ahead there, was it? You done it, did ye? Well, sir," the old man said, grimly, "them six months ain't up till to-morrer, an' I told ye if you wrecked an engine before that time you couldn't have Jess."

"Father," said the girl, bending over him,

"Henry did not wreck that engine. I did it myself."

"An' it was the derndest, pluckiest thing I ever seen done, Jess! I'm proud of ye, girl! My, w'at an engineer you'd 'a' made! Take him if you want him. You got her, Henry. I've got nothin' more to say," added the old man, faintly, closing his eyes.

Chapter VI

A SPARTAN

ONE of the interrogations which might with propriety be added to the canonical questions to which the assent of the bishops-elect is required might be couched in this form: "Will you faithfully and obediently answer all your letters?" And the promise of compliance ought not to be made without due consideration of the tremendous labor involved therein. Volumes of humor and pathos, wisdom and folly, might be made out of letters written to the ordinary bishop; and when, as in this case, the bishop was an extraordinary one—well! The care of all the churches is a heavy burden to lay on any man's shoulders, but the care of all the letter-writers is heavier. The wise and the foolish—pen and ink make them both of a size.

The Bishop early realized that a secretary

was an indispensable necessity. He tried, with unwearying patience and undiminished faith in womankind, various aspirants for the responsible position who presented themselves in successive lines of failure. If by chance a capable one was found, she was inquisitive, in that she wanted to know what it was all about; or indiscreet, in that she told other people what her deductions had been; or advisory, in that she knew so much better than the Bishop how things ought to be said; or original and filled with irrelevant ideas which struck her in the midst of some serious discussion. Sometimes officially one would be everything that could be desired; socially, the reverse. Sometimes they got on the Bishop's nerves. He was by nature a very equable man, but the hurry in which he lived, the stress and strain under which he labored, the heart-breaking problems he habitually faced, made him realize the value of that rare thing, a restful personality in his office.

But the Bishop's patience was at last rewarded by the best secretary that ever fell to the lot of mortal man. She was never irritated, never worried, always comprehensive,

never talked, never suggested, never told anything—in fact, she was ideal. For the rest, she was a well-bred, slender slip of a woman, about twenty-four years old, with blue eyes and soft, brown hair with a glint of gold in it, which she brushed simply back from her pale, low forehead. The Bishop, being a man, was not insensible to æsthetic considerations, and he liked to see her pleasant face and trim figure, always neatly gowned, opposite him in the big leather chair on the other side of the old mahogany desk—a gift discarded from the East—under which the Episcopal legs of several generations of prelates had been thrust. Mrs. Bishop and the little Bishoplets were all equally fond of her, and her position in the house became gradually that of a confidante and friend. More and more the Bishop devolved his detail work upon her, as time tried her qualities, and with more and more confidence she became not merely his secretary, but his associate and fellow-workman.

There were but two disadvantages connected with her: for one, she was not strong, and she had the thin chest, scarlet lips, and high color of those who fight against the ghastliest

"JANET IN THE BIG LEATHER CHAIR ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE OLD MAHOGANY DESK"

disease that breaks humanity. The disability was potential when she came, not actual, for she was a girl of such indomitable will and heroic resolution that she allowed nothing to interfere with her duties. They had been associated for several years before the Bishop, usually so keen, discovered that Janet was hovering on the border-land of consumption.

The other disadvantage was that she was engaged to be married. The engagement had been entered upon long before she became the Bishop's secretary, and she had frankly told him of its existence when she applied for the position; but she explained at the same time that there were dependent upon her a widowed mother and a younger sister, and that Ralph Henley, a young college man who had chosen journalism for his profession, and was now reporting on the *Daily Capital* for the munificent sum of fifteen dollars per week, must establish himself on a sound financial basis before she would feel safe in marrying him. The engagement had been made before Ralph went to the university, and had continued throughout his course, and for the time which had elapsed since his graduation.

While she was not a demonstrative girl—else she would not have made a good secretary, by-the-way—and the course of her love affair apparently ran placidly on, her devotion to her strong, handsome young lover was as intense as every other act of her life. It was her one weakness, the Bishop thought, but he realized that strong natures are not less strong in their weaknesses than in their other characteristics.

As for Ralph, he accepted it all as a matter of course in his lordly way, and thought but little about it; and there was much quiet happiness in the little home which a modest income and the earnings of Janet enabled her mother to keep up. Josephine, the other daughter, was several years younger than the secretary, and her opposite in everything but goodness. She had just graduated from the normal school, and expected to teach. Her twenty years had been pleasant ones, and she looked at life with a smiling face. She was as full of fun as youth, black eyes, red cheeks, good health, and a clear conscience have a right to be.

She and Ralph had been the best of friends always; in fact, to the keen eyes of the Bishop

their friendship seemed to be a little too warm for the situation; but Josephine was as innocent as she was pretty, and Ralph, apparently secure in an affection which practically always had been, laughed at the Bishop's gentle warning. Other people had laughed at the Bishop's warnings before. Matters drifted along in this state until the day of the great blizzard.

When the temperature drops to ten or fifteen degrees below zero—at that stage a few degrees more or less are immaterial—and the air is thick with snow that falls in masses like a cloud that has not burst, and the wind comes sweeping over the prairies from the northwest with a velocity of fifty miles an hour—that is a blizzard. The unsheltered horses and cattle on the prairies perish, the people who are exposed to the storm struggle on until they die, and wise men stay at home, if they have a home at which to stay. Foolish persons who have high ideas of duty and honor and pride in letting nothing prevent them from doing what they imagine themselves obliged to undertake do not stay at home, and suffer accordingly.

The Bishop was blockaded three days out on the prairie in a snow-bound train, and when he arrived home he found by inquiry (for that was the kind of thing Janet never told) that, storm or no storm, she had been regularly at her place during those three terrible days. The effect of her exposure was apparent. The Bishop sent her home in a cab at once, and followed himself the next day with Dr. Bermingham. He made proper examination, and told the Bishop in his office the following day that he would have to get another secretary, for Janet's tour of duty was ended.

The physician told the story as gently as he might, but no embroidery could hide the nakedness of the grim and bitter fact. The Bishop had grown to love the girl as his own daughter. He received the news in the silence with which strong men face danger and disaster. In his heart he prayed to that God whom he served that this thing might not be.

The doctor waited quietly before him until the Bishop spoke. The Bishop was not a rich man, but he was not without means, as many of his hard-working clergymen in their priva-

tions and hardships knew to their joy, for all that he had was at their service. He told the physician that if there was a place to which Janet could be sent, any remedies or appliances which could be procured, he would attend to the expense. After a moment's reflection the doctor said:

"Well, Bishop, there is a chance, and it is in Arizona. If we could get her there, the progress of the disease might be arrested, and she might live a long time. It is more than possible—it is probable; but the trouble is this, the disease has been in her system for several years—"

"How can I forgive myself for not having noticed it before?"

"Well, you would not be likely to recognize it unless you were a specialist," continued the doctor; "her exposure in the week of this blizzard has really brought about a crisis. It seems to me that she is much worse than she has ever been. In fact, I might almost call it what is popularly known as galloping consumption, and she is now so weak that the labor of preparation and the hardships of the journey would probably — er — negative any

benefit which we could hope to derive from the change."

"What do you propose to do?" asked the Bishop, helplessly.

"I shall try to check the progress of the disease temporarily, then build up her strength by every means, and get her away in the spring-time."

"You have not told her?"

"Of course not, and I would not advise any one to do so. It would probably kill her at once, and would serve no good purpose."

"No," said the Bishop; "if I ever saw anybody on earth who was fit for heaven, it is she."

"You will have to tell her something, though, of course," continued Bermingham, "and you would better tell her mother about it. Then, too, it might be well to let her realize that she is to be sent to Arizona when she gets better in the spring, and that a sojourn there will probably put her on her feet again, and so on. You see, it will be a great advantage to get her own co-operation; so much depends upon that."

The Bishop had a bad quarter of an hour

in the little house on the side street when he told Janet that for the present she could not come back to the big leather chair on the other side of the old mahogany desk in the office where she had done her work so cheerfully and well; and he tried to impress upon her that the same determination and energy which had enabled her to master the intricate details of his work should be applied to the effort to regain her strength. In spite of her disappointment she promised to try, like the man and soldier she was.

Being a man, he could not forbear a reproach, albeit a gentle one. "Why had she gone to the office and subjected herself to that blinding storm?" He did not learn until afterwards that it had taken her a half-day almost to go and come. She sealed his lips with that word which he had so often heard before as justification for folly, "duty," and he was not sure whether or no, in her case, as it had been many times in his own, the word were not synonymous with pride.

The hardest part of the Bishop's task, however, came later, when he told the little mother the true state of affairs. Janet had

been the life principle of the household; Janet was its strength, and Josephine its laughter; Janet had kept the accounts; Janet had paid the bills; Janet had relieved the bewildered little mother of every care, and Josephine had brought fresh air, sunshine, and enthusiasm into their quiet life. The two girls complemented each other, and both surrounded the little mother with such an atmosphere of love and devotion as made her feel that heaven was within the four walls in which they dwelt. It was not deemed wise or necessary to tell Josephine of the dread contingency at that time, so the two older women played out grim tragedy with each other in the face of the first secret which had come between them, and the younger, lifelike, added to the drama the comedy touches, not unkindly, but from pure, girlish spontaneity.

Ralph came as often as his duties permitted, and when a headache, a fever, a hard coughing-spell, or the necessity for rest shortened his time with Janet, he passed it very pleasantly with Josephine. He was greatly concerned over Janet's illness, but, manlike, failed to realize its seriousness, and rather calmly

acquiesced in the Arizona plan. It had some fascinating elements; he suggested that they could be married in the spring, and go out there together and begin life in the untrammelled regions of that new land. At least, that is what he said. He was a well-meaning young man, whose engagement had been so long established that it had become a matter of habit with him.

Janet smiled and discussed, but gave no decision, and as the days of the winter sped away she steadily, if gradually, grew worse, though her spirit was not abated, and she seemed determined to get well. She never lost sight of the proposed plan, and there were many conversations between mother and daughter as to what they would do in Arizona. How much of the truth she realized about herself at this time no one ever knew, for she kept her own counsel in that as in other things, and struggled on like a hero. The Bishop, who was a frequent visitor, sometimes thought that she was quite sure that she would never leave the room again, and that all the talk of going to Arizona in the spring-time was merely a blind to keep up the spirits of

the mother, who hoped against hope, and who, with the same realization, tried to ignore the progress of the disease and to build up the health of her daughter.

Meanwhile the visits of Ralph to the sick-room were shorter and less frequent, and the time spent with Josephine longer and happier. He had not meant to do it, he never realized how it was done, but one morning in the parlor he caught her in his arms and kissed her. Surprised, half frightened, wholly in love, the girl returned the caress. It was such a kiss as he had never given Janet, such a kiss as he had never inspired Janet to give to him. It was all out then. The love which unconsciously and without effort or premonition on his part had been generated in his heart through months of companionship with the beautiful girl before him had at last broken forth and swept everything away. He had been a boy when he and Janet had plighted their troth together, and a boy he had remained, but at the touch of Josephine's lips he became a man.

With the man's passion instantly came the man's realization of what he had done, and as

it came upon him, in his horror he spoke it forth honestly. It was characteristic of the innocent girl before him that when she realized the meaning of his words, and heard him accuse himself of dishonorably betraying the affections of her sister, though he swore that until that moment such an idea had never entered his head—and surely not her head either—she had no place to go, no haven of refuge, but in his arms.

It was a glorious sunny morning in early March, and Ralph finally tore himself from the arms of Josephine, and went outside to wrestle with himself in the loneliness of the crowded street, until he could regain his self-command and determine what to do. Poor Josephine sank down on her knees and buried her pretty head in her outstretched arms upon the sofa in the parlor, striving to stifle her sobs lest by any chance they should reach the ears of Janet in the room above.

But as she lay there desolate in the quiet room a gray little figure, with her hand clasped at her breast to stifle that cough which she would rather have died than give utterance to then, came out of the next room, where she

had heard everything that had been said, stole noiselessly across the apartment, crept up the stairs, threw herself upon the bed, and gave way. It was Janet! Tempted by the sunshine of the spring morning, with her indomitable resolution, she had, unknown to Josephine and her mother, crept down-stairs to try her strength and get out of the room which was fast becoming a prison to her, and there she had heard the story.

Her mother was out, and the awful fit of coughing called Josephine, tear-stained and nervous, to her side. Janet, smiling at her through her tears, gasped out between the paroxysms that it was "nothing—nothing"; and as her mother came in a moment after, she asked the terrified and remorseful sister to leave them alone.

The little mother took the thin form in her arms and drew the tired head to the breast upon which it had lain as a child, and, resolutely forcing back the tears from her own eyes, whispered words of comfort and love as only mothers may. Janet lay there perfectly quiet, listening to her mother's crooning, and only said, after a long time,

"Mamma, I will be better—when I get to Arizona."

Ralph came back presently, and then he and Josephine went to her mother and told the whole story. He took all the blame upon himself. They did not know what to do. There was no doubt of the genuineness of their affection for each other, and, in spite of the fact that they had drifted into the matter almost without volition, the pangs of conscience had made the situation unendurable.

"Why, I am afraid," remarked Ralph, remorsefully, to the mother, who had grown to love him as a son—"I do not wish to be conceited, but I am afraid the news will kill her."

"Kill her!" said the woman, breaking down in turn and looking aghast at the pair before her; "don't you know—don't you realize that she is dead already? That no power on earth can save her? That she has had for two months quick consumption? Can you not see that she has gone to nothing? That the hand of death is upon her? Oh, my poor child! Her heart will break when the knowledge of this comes to her!"

"But I thought when she got to Arizona—"

"Arizona!" said the little mother, fiercely, all her softness gone in the face of her loss; "she will never go to Arizona! She will never get from the four walls of that room—until—until—"

"Oh, what can we do? Mother, mother!" cried Josephine, sinking on her knees before her, "do not turn away from me! Do not look at me in that way! I am your daughter too!"

"Yes, yes," said the mother, "I know. I do not blame you, dear, but it is different. You have youth, strength, and health, and Ralph, and she—she has only me."

"My God!" exclaimed Ralph, white-faced and haggard, "I cannot tell her! I do love her; I think I love her as much as I ever did, but—but—it is different. What shall I do?" He walked up and down the room in impotent irresolution. The mother felt room in her full heart even for him.

"Go and see the Bishop," she said, finally; "ask him. Both of you go."

The Bishop was not surprised when the two young people came into his study. He heard the story in silence, and when Ralph finished

it with these bitter words of self-accusation, "I feel like an infernal scoundrel!" he had no word of reproach for the sentiment nor for the words.

You see, the Bishop loved that girl as if she had been his daughter. Josephine and Ralph and all the other people connected with her sank into insignificance where her happiness was concerned. Yet the Bishop was a just man. Ralph's honesty and sincerity were so marked, his remorse and anxiety were so evident, that the Bishop could fully understand his position. And poor Josephine? In all her witchery was she not an excuse for the change of heart that had come to Ralph?

"What are we to do, sir?" asked Ralph. "I cannot tell her. I would rather die than tell her now—now—that she is going to die. The idea is simply impossible! I do not mean to say that I do not love Josephine, for I do, but I cannot tell Janet. Would it be very wrong to go on and pretend, sir? It is such a little thing, and—and—such a little while."

"Pretence is always wrong," answered the Bishop.

"But you are doing it yourself, you know,"

he continued, aptly—"her mother, the doctor, and every one. You are all pretending she will get well."

"Yes, we have been; you are right," admitted the old man.

"Oh, Bishop," broke in Josephine, "if you only think it is right, we will not see each other; we will not speak to each other—Ralph and I, I mean. I—I—don't know how I came to do it. I don't understand it. I never dreamed of such a thing, and I did not know she was so ill, or—or—we would not have been thinking of such things," she went on, incoherently. (Ah, truly, love is blind!) "I wish I could die in her place! Indeed I do; I wish I could let Ralph have her!"

"But, Josephine, it is you I want, and that is the misery of it," said Ralph.

For once in his life the Bishop temporized. He was going away that morning on a visitation for a few days; he promised to think the matter over and tell them on his return. Meanwhile nothing was to be said.

"Do not think," he said, as he bade them good-bye, "that I do not sympathize with you. It is a sad beginning to your love affair. I be-

lieve what you say, Ralph; I knew your father; he was the soul of honor; and Josephine is only a child—"

"A woman since this morning, sir," said Josephine, looking wistfully at him.

"Ah, yes," continued the Bishop, "a woman, perhaps, and introduced to all a woman's trials and troubles at the very beginning."

He hesitated a moment, took the two young people by the hand, and knelt down with them by the old mahogany desk. He prayed for them and for Janet, but his thoughts went to the big leather chair on the other side—empty.

One accident after another kept the Bishop away for three weeks. When he returned, he hastened at once to the little house. Alas! poor Janet! The strength of her resistance was gone—broken. The life had gone out of her. The end had been approaching; now it was at hand. For three weeks she had been failing; she seemed to have given up the struggle. So the doctor told him; then he went into the room. She lay in the bed, a broken wreck. People who do not know dream that those who die of consumption fade away like

a flower, and none but those who have seen it can realize the frightful wrestle with death that usually takes place. The racked frame, the wasted body, the sleepless hours, the lost breath—the horror of it all! Janet had fought a good fight, and it was almost over. The Bishop found her in the agonies of a paroxysm. He knelt down beside her and took her hand. He heard her agonized whisper,

"When will it end?"

His hesitation was gone. He told her the truth, as the doctor had told him, that but a few hours remained to her, and his words seemed to carry such comfort to her that a little expression of peace stole across her tired features.

"Is it consumption?" she whispered.

"Yes," said the Bishop.

"Have I had it long?"

"Yes."

"All the time?"

"Yes."

"Did mother know?"

"Yes."

"All the time?"

"Yes."

"Poor mother! And Ralph—and Josephine—did they know?"

"No," said the Bishop.

"I'm so glad," she whispered—"I'm so glad that they—did not know. And will you tell me the truth now—in everything?"

"Yes," answered the Bishop, nerving himself for the question he thought inevitable, "the whole truth."

She faced death like a soldier. She asked question after question. She opened her heart to him. She planned for the future of her mother. She sent messages of farewell, and gave away her pretty little trinkets to the Bishop's children and to others whom she had loved. No one was forgotten. She mentioned Ralph by name, but through all that long hour she made no reference to the secret which she had overheard, and which had killed her. "Josephine had been so faithful"; "Ralph had been so kind"; that was all.

The Bishop watched by her bedside while the light of the early spring day faded into twilight, and then darkness drifted down. She was so tired that night; no sleep for days had

come to knit "the ravell'd sleave of care"; it would not come.

"Will I live to sleep? Will I live to sleep?" was the one last pathetic question that exhausted nature rang out in heart-breaking iteration in the strained ears of the loving watchers.

Presently Ralph came in. He and Josephine stood together at the foot of the bed. The little mother leaned across the pillow on one side, stroking the soft brown hair, the golden light quite gone out of it then. The Bishop sat at the other side. On the table there was a bunch of Resurrection lilies. Easter-day was dawning faintly through the closed blinds. The life was ebbing now, and the tide was almost out. The little return waves beat back upon the sands, but only for a moment. She had not spoken for a long time. When she opened her eyes she looked at the two.

"Josephine," she whispered, "and Ralph—together."

Then she turned to the Bishop. He understood her wistful gaze, for he knelt beside her and bent down to her lips.

"I want you—to know—I know," she whispered, brokenly.

Then she turned to the little mother, and that was all.

The Bishop went back to his office. He sat down at the old mahogany desk and looked a long time at the big leather chair on the other side—that empty chair. The Bishop was an old man; he had seen much, heard much, learned much, and loved much.

"Oh, love," he whispered, as he took up his pen and resumed his work, "how many hearts are broken in thy name!"

A year after, Ralph and Josephine were married. The little house was sold, and they took the little mother away, but before they left the town the two went to the grassy place on the sun-kissed hill where they had laid her away. They stood hand in hand before the little mound.

"Thank God!" said Ralph, fervently, from the bottom of his heart—"thank God, she never knew!"

Chapter VII

WHEN THE BISHOP APPEALED TO THE POPE

SHE was an old-fashioned, unlettered Irish Episcopalian, bred, ecclesiastically, in a hot-bed of Low-church Protestantism in the Emerald Isle. Consequently she was thoroughly imbued with the bigotry of the Puritan, to which, by her natural constitution, were added the resolution of a hero and the virtue of a saint. When religion hits that kind it hits them hard. These magnificent qualities were devoted to two objects, one worthy and the other the reverse. The worthy object was the hard and humble daily labor by which she supported her husband in idleness; that husband was the reverse. He was nothing in particular in the religious line. He had been a Roman Catholic in the beginning, but when he married Bridget, becoming excommunicated

thereby, he had drifted away from it altogether; and out in the little Western town in which they had settled down—Heaven only knows why!—he had grown still further from his early religious affiliations. Still, as in the case of almost every child of his ancient Church, the seed was still there—fortunately.

His lack of religious principle was a great pity, for he had no ethic system upon which to fall back, he knew no scheme of philosophy by which he could inculcate morals—or pursue them—consequently he was not a valuable member of society. He was not so much bad or vicious as he was idle and worthless. When he could wheedle any money out of his wife—which was about as often as she happened to have any; he had the cunning tongue of his race, and had not only kissed a blarney-stone, but he appeared to have swallowed two or three—he would go off and indulge in a spree, strictly proportioned in violence and duration to the contents of his purse. He lied, he gambled, he did everything on earth but work, yet he never got into jail, which, failing the Church, was the proper place for him. In some way he always man-

aged to escape that last resort of his kind, and he had a holy horror of it, perhaps from his unfamiliarity with the "pent-up Utica" of a cell.

He had come perilously near it several times, however, and he had only escaped through Bridget's intercessions, pleadings which were always backed by voluble promises of reform on his part — promises, it is needless to say, which were never kept. He had but one redeeming quality: when he was sober he honestly seemed to love his wife. Whether it was gratitude for what she had done for him —and was doing and would do—or not cannot be told. At any rate, he clung to her like a limpet to a rock—and the simile is apposite. He never abused her unless he was very drunk, and when he was sober—between payments—he was good to her, as goodness goes with people of his station.

The same qualities that made her stern and zealous as a church-member tended to make her consecrate her life to this worthless specimen. If, in accordance with her kind, she lacked charity for other sins and sinners, she could always find excuses for Mike. Bridget

was a great friend of the Bishop's. She did the Episcopal washing, and the Bishop, who was a connoisseur, said he never saw any one do up lawn sleeves as she could.

The Bishop realized that not only was he the bishop of all sorts and conditions of men, but as well of the infinitely greater variety of women about which the prayer-book, perhaps in despair of prospective inadequacy, says nothing. He took occasion, whenever he was at home, to enjoy a little chat with her at her weekly visits to bring home the wash.

The discussion was mostly theological. Why is it that no one ever seems to think a clergyman would like to talk about other things once in a while? She was a keen critic of his sermons, too, and one day, when the Bishop had been preaching on the love of God, she met him with this sort of query, which showed the working of her mind and her feeling for her husband:

"You say that God loves Mike better than I do, sir?"

The Bishop had not said anything of the kind, but as it was merely a concrete applica-

tion of the theory of his sermon, he waived the point and affirmed the statement.

"Well, your Reverence," said the woman, "Mike behaves pretty bad sometimes, as we both know. I don't talk about it generally, but there is no use keepin' it back from you. Now, if he was to die in one of them drunken sprees, he'd certainly be lost, yet, if I was doin' it, I wouldn't damn him. You see, he's my husband, and I love him, so it seems to me I care more about him than the Almighty does. How's that, sir?"

"Now," said the Bishop, gravely, "I see your point, but, you know, I don't believe that God would condemn him either."

"Wouldn't he be damned at all, then, Bishop?"

"Well, that may be or may not be. I have lived long enough, Bridget, never to say with assurance that anybody is damned—or saved either, for that matter—for I know nothing about it, and if he were to be condemned he would damn himself, and he would do it in spite of God's love."

"Now, will ye just explain that, sir, if ye please?"

"Just as he damns himself in spite of your love," continued the Bishop. "When he is sober he is always nice, isn't he?"

"He is that, sir."

"And the more you love him the worse he feels after his—er—aberrations?"

"'Tis true for ye, sir."

"Well, that's the way it is with God, I think. A man damns himself, Bridget, and when he's done wrong the love that God bears him only makes the damnation harder for him to bear, for he's damned himself in spite of God, you see. It is a mighty lucky thing if a man doesn't damn somebody else when he is trifling with his own soul," went on the Bishop, softly.

This was a sample of the conversations that frequently went on. Bridget invariably worked around to the subject of Mike's salvation, and usually left the Bishop's presence with rather gloomy prospects, in spite of his cheering words.

Now, there was in the town a free library, recently opened. The Bishop, with his broad catholicity of view of his relation to society, was the president of the library board, and the

Deus ex machina of the institution. Of late a number of volumes, principally books of reference, had been missing, and as the place, perhaps on account of its novelty, was usually thronged with people, it was almost impossible to find the thief. Several valuable sets had been broken, and the directors were keenly desirous of apprehending the guilty persons. The general public as well was equally anxious and interested.

One evening about seven o'clock a large parcel was left at the door of the residence of a policeman, Barney Rafferty, who lived just around the corner from the Murphys. It was deposited on the steps by a woman, who glanced furtively up and down the street as she dropped the bundle, pulled the door-bell violently, and then started to run away. Fate played her a scurvy trick, for Rafferty himself happened to come around the corner on the instant, and he at once seized the fleeing woman. She made frantic efforts to escape, which naturally induced the officer to hold her more tightly than ever. Then, as his eye fell on the bundle on his door-step, his suspicions being awakened by the whole performance, he led her

into the house and there opened the parcel. It contained several of the books stolen from the library!

"Why, Bridget Murphy," exclaimed old Barney, who knew her well, "where did you get these books?"

No answer.

"Come, now, Bridget," urged the policeman, kindly, "I don't believe that you ever stole these books. Why won't you tell me where you got 'em?"

The woman looked at him wildly, then sat down, threw her apron over her face, and broke into a storm of sobs and tears, rocking to and fro while weeping.

"Here, here!" exclaimed the officer, "this will do you no good! Where did you get 'em? I don't want to run you in, but if you don't say something I'll have to."

"I—I took 'em," answered Bridget, forlornly, dropping her apron and looking at him through her tears.

"What!" gasped the other. "You don't mean it! I never thought you were a thief, Bridget! Tell the truth, now, you didn't steal 'em?"

"Yes, I did," answered Bridget, desperately.

"What were you doing here with 'em, then?"

"I wanted to give 'em back."

"Well," said the officer, regretfully, "I'll have to take you to the station. I don't see any way out of it."

That night Bridget Murphy slept in a cell in the calaboose of a frontier town. Her horror at the situation—respectable, God-fearing woman that she was—can scarcely be imagined. In the morning the Bishop was sent for, and he immediately bailed her out, the magistrate expressing as much surprise as every one else at the situation.

Bridget had stubbornly persisted in her story that she had stolen the books, and the severest questioning to which the Bishop could subject her failed to elicit any other statement. She wouldn't tell him when she took them, why she took them, or under what circumstances. There was to be obtained from her nothing except that she had taken them, was sorry, and was trying to restore them. Her trial was set for the following week, and one of the lawyers in the Church agreed to defend her. He got no more out of her than the

rest. He told the Bishop there was nothing to be done but to plead guilty, and implore the mercy of the Court on the ground of her previous good character and the fact that she was engaged in an act of restitution when she was apprehended.

The Bishop was intensely moved by the situation. Bridget's sad, despairing face haunted him. He knew the woman through and through, and he was morally convinced that if she had taken the books she had done so under some irresistible appeal. In fact, he did not believe that she had taken them at all, and naturally his thoughts turned to Mike. He ascertained that Mike was on another spree and had not been seen for two or three days, and though he caused diligent search to be made for him, he was not to be found.

The morning of the trial at last came around. The Bishop was just starting for the courtroom, where he felt it his duty to be present, when Mike Murphy came into the study. He was sober at last, but pale, weak, trembling, and terrified. Yet he faced the Bishop boldly enough.

"Your Reverence," he said—"I beg your

pardon, your Right Reverence—I've got somethin' to say to ye. I want to make a confession to ye."

"Well, Murphy, what is it?" asked the Bishop, his heart leaping with joy.

"Why, you know them books, sir?"

"Yes, I know them."

"I—er—Bridget didn't take 'em."

"I know that, too," said the Bishop, quietly. "Who did?"

"Well, that's another question, sir. What I want to say to ye is that Bridget never took them books. I'm willin' to go into court and swear to that."

"Have you been home yet? Do you know how the case stands now, Murphy?"

"No, sir, not yet. I've been on a spree for ten days, an' I 'ain't heard much about it, 'ceptin' she's charged with stealin' of 'em."

"Well, sir," said the Bishop, sternly, "your wife was caught last week at Policeman Rafferty's door with a parcel of books which belonged to the free library, and she says she took them herself. She offers no excuse, and makes no statement save that she was sorry and was restoring them. Her trial is set for

this morning; in fact, it will begin in a few moments."

"My God!" exclaimed Murphy, in blank dismay. "I didn't know it was as bad as that! I swear to you that she didn't steal 'em!"

"I quite believe you, Mike," said the Bishop, steadily, fairly looking through the nervous wreck before him; "but I don't see how your swearing that she didn't steal them will help her case unless you know who did—and will tell."

"Can't you get her out on the strength of my swearin' that she didn't take 'em? You've got some influence with the judge, haven't ye?"

"No," said the Bishop, "I can't do anything. If you will tell me who did steal them Bridget will be cleared, and if not—"

"An' what 'll they do with the man that did steal 'em?"

"Oh, it was a man, was it?" said the Bishop, quickly.

"How do I know who it was?" answered Murphy, his face flushing. "I only know she didn't take 'em."

"Well," said the Bishop, "if that's all you

know—or perhaps I should better put it, if that's all you are willing to tell—you might as well say nothing. Bridget will have to go to jail. She has spent one night already there."

"May the saints preserve us!" answered Mike, in dismay.

"Have you nothing more to say, Murphy?" asked the Bishop, eagerly, while his heart was beating furiously with hope and expectation. "If not, I shall go up and see Bridget sentenced. Will you come along?"

"I daren't!" murmured Murphy. "I am afraid to go to court. I never was arrested in my life!"

"You coward!" cried the Bishop, in swift indignation. "You miserable, wretched coward! You will go to court with me, and you will go now, and when you get there you will tell the truth! I believe you stole those books yourself and will let that woman take the punishment, just as you have allowed her to support you all these years, you wretched, good-for-nothing reprobate!"

The Bishop did not often get angry, but when he did he was like the little girl with the famous curl on her forehead. Murphy

backed over against the wall in front of the threatening finger of the little Bishop, whom he overtowered, and looked down with a face distorted by fear and shame.

"Pick up your hat," ordered the Bishop, seizing him by the arm, "and come along, and don't you try to run away, or I'll—I'll—"

The Bishop didn't really know what he would do, so he left the threat in the air in that way; it was sufficiently terrifying to serve, especially as he never let go of Murphy for an instant.

Presently the two reached the court-room. The trial had already begun. In fact, it was practically ended. Bridget had repeated her plea of guilty, and the lawyer was appealing to the mercy of the Court, when the Bishop interrupted the proceedings.

"May it please the Court," he said, "here is a witness who wants to testify in this case, and I ask your honor that he may be heard. No, you don't!" continued the Bishop, resolutely, clutching Murphy by the collar as the man made a last attempt to get away.

"Certainly, Bishop," said the judge, "we will be glad to hear him. Let him be sworn."

"Your honor," screamed Bridget, "I don't want him to testify! I don't want any witnesses. Don't say nothin' at all, Mike!" she cried across the room to him, where he stood in the witness-box in terrified misery.

"Silence!" cried the judge, sternly, looking in surprise at the agitated woman.

Meanwhile the Bishop, presuming upon his position, stepped over by the unwilling witness.

"Mike," he said, "if you don't tell the truth now you are damned forever in the sight of God and man."

But when Murphy was sworn all that could be extracted from him was that he knew Bridget did not take the books. After unavailing questioning the judge turned to the Bishop, saying:

"You see, Bishop, there is nothing to be got from this witness. I shall have to proceed with the sentence. Murphy, you may go. Bridget Murphy, stand up."

Bridget rose, smiling at Mike. He looked from her encouraging face to the gloomy countenance of the Bishop. His eyes swept around the court-room, filled with spectators, to whom

the excitement of the moment had been communicated. Every one felt sure that the woman was not guilty, and that she was shielding her husband, but, in the face of her refusal to testify, there was nothing to be done. The Bishop, by the indulgence of the judge, made one last appeal.

"Mike," he said, "for God's sake tell the truth! Look at that woman! She is about to sacrifice herself for you." It flashed upon him that the man was born a Roman Catholic—once one, always one. He bent towards him, caught him by the shoulder, and whispered in his ear. All his strong personality expressed itself in the threat in his voice. "If you don't speak, I'll tell the priest, the archbishop. I'll tell the Pope himself, even!" It was the final appeal.

"May it please the Court," said Mike, nerving himself under this, to him, fearful threat, "I'll tell! I took them books myself."

He broke down and sobbed bitterly. The Bishop lifted his head in triumphant relief.

"It's a lie, your honor!" screamed Bridget. "He didn't do it! He's no thief! He never stole nothing in his life—when he was sober."

"That will do, Bridget," said the judge, quickly. "I did not believe you before, and I do not believe you now. I know this man took the books; I felt it all along."

"It's true, sir. I took 'em," said Mike. "I never done such a thing before, sir. I was drunk, an' I brought 'em home, an' she was there. I was goin' to take 'em off, too, to sell 'em, but she wouldn't let me. She said they'd got to go back. We had a fight—that is, I struck her; then I took what money I could find an' went out. I went away. I didn't know nothin' about it till this mornin', yer honor."

"Please let him go, your honor; I done it myself. Oh, your honor, please don't send him to jail!" sobbed Bridget.

Mike lifted his head at this plea.

"I never was in jail before, your honor," he murmured, weakly; "please don't send me this time, an' I'll never—"

"That will do, Murphy!" said the judge. "You have admitted your guilt, and you have admitted that you behaved like a blackguard. I have no mercy for you. I sentence you to thirty days in the county jail at hard labor,

and when you come out may you be a better man."

"I suppose that me soul is in danger of bein' lost, your Reverence," said Bridget to the Bishop the next time she brought around the weekly wash—"I lied so in the court."

"Yes, Bridget, you certainly did, but—but —I guess your soul's all right. I don't believe that it will be charged against you," said the Bishop, dodging the question in casuistry. "If a lie is ever right, yours was a noble one."

But Bridget was not at all satisfied with the assurance.

"No good 'll come of it, Bishop, I'm afraid. The trouble with me is that I am not a bit sorry for it; in fact, I'd willingly do it again. To think of poor Mike, that I've kept in comfort all his life most, livin' in that jail! Pray for me, Bishop, I'm a sinful woman."

"If you are a sinner, Bridget," said the Bishop, "I'd like to see a few of the saints; and that jail may be the best thing that ever happened to Mike. It will do him good, perhaps."

But the Bishop was very doubtful, at any

rate until Murphy was released. The first thing he did then was to come to see the Bishop, and the gist of his conversation lay in this one announcement.

"Your Right Reverence, if hell is any worse than that jail, I believe I want to be a Christian, an' I'm goin' to the priest to get him to help me to try to be one."

Then the hope of the Bishop turned to belief, and as the years fled away and Mike settled down to work, and remained settled, the belief became a reality. Even Bridget was almost convinced at last that good had come from the circumstances, and perhaps her soul might be saved, after all, though she was greatly troubled to think, when she learned it later, that it had all been brought about by the Bishop's appeal to the Pope!

CHAPTER VIII

DEATH, LOVE, AND THE FIRE

GEORGE MASON, Annie's father, was the railroad agent at Kyote, and Annie was the day operator. Unfortunately the night operator had chosen this unpropitious time to get laid up with the ague, and Annie and her father necessarily divided his duty between them; at least until some one could be sent from the division headquarters to take the sick man's place.

Annie had counted upon the company of John Sadler for that evening. John Sadler was a young man who had graduated from the State university, and had determined to achieve fame—and, incidentally, fortune—as a railroad man. At first he had labored for his own sake, but latterly for Annie's. He had commenced—and so far continued—his brilliant career in the humble situation of pump-

man at Big Spring Station, some ten miles down the road from Kyote.

After restlessly walking up and down the room for a few moments, looking wistfully out towards Lafferty's Hall, to which the whole town had gone to hear the Bishop, or down the track towards Big Spring, the girl sat down before the table, drew a book from the shelf, and began to read. The instruments kept up a continuous clicking, but, with the ear of long experience, she paid no attention to them, for they did not sound her own call. She read quietly for a few moments, when something caused her to drop the book, spring to her feet, and lean over the table.

"K Y, K Y, K Y," clicked off the wire. It was her signal. As she listened the letters changed to "B S." That was Big Spring Station. "B S" was sounded once or twice, and then, "Robbers . . in the . . sta . ." and the message suddenly ceased.

Her hand flew to the key. She called "B S" over and over again, but could get no answer. Certain that something alarming had happened, and with love to supplement her instincts of duty, she called up the despatcher at the other

"'K Y, K Y, K Y' CLICKED OFF THE WIRE. IT WAS HER SIGNAL"

end of the division, and wired him the message so far as she had received it. The despatcher found it equally impossible to get Big Spring, and at once realized that something was seriously wrong. He acted with the promptness for which men of his class are famous.

"Load . . . posse . . on special," he telegraphed the waiting girl at Kyote; "make quick run . . for . . Big Spring."

There wasn't a soul in the office, or in the waiting-room, when she received the message. She sprang towards the door, and then, without hat or jacket, tore up the cold street towards Lafferty's Hall. The Bishop was in the midst of his sermon when the white-faced girl burst into the room. She hesitated a second as to what she would better do, and then ran fleetly up the aisle towards the platform upon which the Bishop stood. Seeing her anxiety and perturbation, he stopped and bent towards her.

"They're robbing Big Spring Station," she cried, breathlessly, the whole assemblage listening with strained attention. "A special will be along in ten minutes. The despatcher says

get a posse . . . John Sadler is there," she added, faintly.

The Bishop, who knew the little romance, as did every one else in the village, caught her by the arm, and held her up. A moment served to restore her composure.

"The congregation is dismissed," he said to his startled flock.

The men were already rising to go out. The town marshal, who was in the audience, immediately began assembling a little party of resolute men, who marched down to the station, where the agent had preceded him. Presently they were joined by the Bishop and Annie.

And then the special came steaming into the station. It had not been scheduled to stop at Kyote, and the president of the railroad and other high officials, who were on board, came swarming out on the platform to see what was the matter. A few words put them in possession of the facts. The president, old General Dodge, who had been a soldier in the Rebellion, at once assumed command of the party. Directing Mason to stay in the office and keep a sharp lookout for suspicious-look-

ing strangers, he took Annie, the Bishop, and the posse into his private car, and the special was soon tearing down the road. About a half-mile from the station there was a deep cut. It was the plan of the president to stop the engine in the cut, let the men get off and sneak down to the station, to which, after a lapse of sufficient time, the special would make its way, the supposition being that the robbers intended to hold up the train at Big Spring.

The plan worked admirably. The train stopped; the men dismounted and started towards the station. They had gone scarcely a rod from the engine, however, before they ran into three men, who endeavored to make off in the darkness after a futile exchange of shots. But the fugitives were all apprehended and brought back into the private car. Before the president they vigorously protested their innocence. They said they had no intention of robbing the train; they had placed no obstructions on the track, and they even had no knowledge that it was coming.

This seemed entirely reasonable, and the officials were in something of a quandary as to what they should do with the men, until one

of the posse, who had lagged behind, came into the car with an express package bearing the seal of Big Spring Station, which he had stumbled upon in the darkness when the prisoners had been seized. The president tore it open and found it contained money.

"Oh, that is what you were up to, is it?" he remarked, grimly. "Robbing the station, eh? Not the train. Well, the game's over, men. You have been caught red-handed. You might as well tell us all about it."

The men stood silent before him. They were cattle-men and cow-boys of a low type, one of them somewhat the worse for liquor, and all of them under its influence. They refused sullenly to say anything, and the president finally gave the order to start the train for the station. As he heard the old general's words, the drunken one, less cautious than the others, recklessly hiccoughed out that there wouldn't be any use in going to the station, for they wouldn't find any station there.

"Why not?" asked the president, suavely.

"Well, it mought have been a cyclone that tore it up, but I reckon it was jest a can of powder," answered the man, insolently.

"And the men who were there—the operator and the pumper?"

"Blowed to hell, where they belong."

Annie shrieked and fainted. An ominous silence succeeded for a few seconds, and then a sullen, growling sound ran through the brilliantly illuminated car. Revolvers were drawn, and the posse surged towards the trio.

"Lynch the infernal cowards!" shouted Hank White.

"Hold on, men!" cried the Bishop. "Stand back! We do not know what's happened. You cannot take the word of a half-drunken brute like this. Marshal, look to your prisoner. You represent the law, you remember."

"Yes," said the president, quietly, pulling out his revolver, "and we are here to back up the law."

There was a flash in the steel-gray eyes of the old soldier which quite matched the ominous look of his army ".45." The posse fell back, and the prisoners were securely bound and guarded. Meanwhile the Bishop and the porter turned their attention to the fainting girl, and by the time they had revived her the engine drew up at the station.

"Thank God!" cried Annie, peering through the window at the dark little building, "it is still there!"

The three prisoners looked very much surprised, but said nothing, as the whole party but the guards swarmed out of the palace-car.

John Sadler and Jim Rogers, the night operator, were alone at the Big Spring Station. The town of Big Spring lay two miles from the station, an unsettled difference of opinion between the railroad and the town resulting in the persistence of this solution of continuity, which was a cause of great inconvenience to everybody. Late in the evening a heavy cattle-shipper, in default of the bank long since closed, had brought a big roll of bills, amounting to several thousand dollars, to express East on the Limited. Rogers had received and receipted for the money, and after chatting a few moments the cattle-man had mounted his horse and ridden away.

The operator had just completed sealing up the package preparatory to putting it in the safe until the train came up, when three masked men entered the station. Obviously they

had been following the cattle-man, for their movements showed that they were thoroughly conversant with the situation, and they lost no time. Two of them covered Sadler and Rogers through the bars of the ticket-window with their guns, directing them to throw up their hands—a command they obeyed with the promptness of people who live on the frontier, who realize that a man behind a gun generally means business—while the other man strove to burst open the spring-locked door from the waiting-room to the office.

As the door gave way, Rogers took advantage of the sudden commotion, for, with a quick move, he swept the single lamp in the room from the table. Fortunately it went out as it fell. At the same time, Sadler, realizing his purpose, leaped at the man entering through the broken door. In the darkness two shots rang out in the room, but neither of the men was hurt.

"Hold him, John, while I wire!" shouted Rogers, feeling with eager fingers for the key of the sounder.

Sadler had a desperate struggle with the man in the doorway, who was immediately

joined by the other two. They dared not fire in the darkness, but they speedily overbore him, and the leader rushed towards Rogers, bending over the key-board and sending like mad. Two revolver-shots rang out again, and Rogers fell forward on the key-board with a bullet through his lungs, and a great, gaping wound torn in his breast by the heavy shot fired at short range. The sending of the message stopped instantly; nothing more was to be feared from that quarter.

While the two men held the struggling Sadler, the other lighted the spare lamp. In the mêlée the masks of two of the assailants had been torn off.

"I recognize you," cried Sadler, as the light fell on their faces. "By Heaven, you will swing for this!"

"Oh, we will, will we?" answered the first of the three burglars, sneeringly. "Well, you kin recognize us all right, but you won't live to tell the tale."

He pointed his revolver at Sadler, but before he could pull the trigger the second ruffian interfered.

"Hold on, Bill!" he said. "I know a trick

worth two of that. We'll git the money first."

"I've got the money all right," cried the third, taking the package from the desk. "Here it is. What are you goin' to do?"

"Why, we'll jest put one of them cans of powder from that minin' shipment we seen in the freight-car under this chair, then we'll lash this fresh kid to it, an' we'll take one of them slow-burnin' fuses an' put it to the can, an' git out before he goes to where he belongs. Besides disposin' of him, we'll blow up the station, an' it 'll ketch fire, an' nobody 'll know what's happened."

"That's a trick worth knowin', Gus!" said the first man, smiling appreciatively, and proceeding quickly to make the necessary arrangements to carry out the demoniacal plot.

"What about t'other man, though?" exclaimed the third desperado, as they made ready to leave with their booty.

"Bill" turned to look at the prostrate form of Rogers. Stepping towards him, he kicked him heavily in the side; the brutal attack only evoked a feeble moan.

"Oh, I guess he's as good as done for," he

remarked. "Touch off the fuse and let's git out."

"Better put out the light, too," said the man called Gus. "He kin watch the thing sizzin' along the floor better in the dark."

"Yes, an' kinder scatter the oil around the station so it 'll ketch fire easy when the crash does come," remarked the third man, laughing.

The man suited the action to the word, and then, with ironical good-byes, to which Sadler vouchsafed no answer, they withdrew from the station and walked rapidly up the track.

It was a dark, moonless night. There was not a ray of light in the office save for the little fiery glow at the end of the slow-burning fuse. Sadler had been bound hard and fast to the chair, which in turn had been roped to the iron safe. He struggled desperately, but found himself unable to move either his person or the chair an inch. Realizing at last the impotence of his efforts, he settled down to the hardest task that falls to the lot of man—waiting for an inevitable end.

He kept his wits about him at first, and coolly calculated that it would take perhaps

ten minutes for the fuse, at the rate it was then burning, to reach the can of powder beneath him. But one can never tell what a fuse will do. Sometimes defects in their construction cause them to burn for a space with the rapidity of a loose train of powder. He sat fairly facing the glowing end of the fuse, and as he stared it suddenly flashed into a bright blaze, and rapidly ran towards him for an inch or two. He was paralyzed with a sudden fear that stilled his heart, that choked him. At that rate the short period of life remaining would be rapidly diminished. But it stopped as suddenly as it had begun, and glowered at him—eyelike, sinister, menacing. He watched it as a man might watch a serpent charming him—fascinated.

He longed to shriek aloud. He tried to pray, but the "Our Father" came from his dry lips fraught with such a husky horror of sound that he clinched his teeth, closed his eyes, and waited. He resolved not to open them again until—

The thought of Annie suddenly rushed into his mind. Her pretty face rose before him in the darkness. She would miss him. But

neither she nor any one would ever know or understand his agony—how he died. Surely the fuse must have burned out by this time. He had waited so long. He craved to look again at the horrible glow, yet he had sworn not to do so. Presently his resolution gave way, and he opened his eyes. The fuse had hardly burned an inch; it was still some feet away! He heaved a deep sigh of relief; but as he looked at it, it flashed into light again and ran towards him. He screamed aloud, and the sound pierced the dull ear of his wounded comrade, who had fallen to the floor on the other side of the room.

"What's up, John?" Rogers asked, slowly and faintly. "Are they gone?"

"Gone? Good God, man, they went hours ago!"

"Give me a drink."

"A drink!" cried Sadler. "I can't move hand or foot. I am tied to this chair, and there is a can of powder beneath me, and when that fuse yonder reaches it we will be blown up. Oh, God, look at it! See how it runs!" Then a thought flashed into his mind. "Are you much hurt, Jim?" he cried.

"Shot through the lung," answered the other, feebly. "Bleedin' to death here. I can't move."

"It's all up with us, then," muttered Sadler, hoarsely; "look at that fire thing creeping nearer to the powder! Oh, Annie, Annie!" he whispered.

A little shiver went through Rogers, who, strange to say, had heard those last words.

"You are—goin'—to marry—Annie Mason?" he asked.

"I was," answered Sadler. "I'll not live to marry any one now."

"I loved her too," the other gasped out, "but she wouldn't look at me."

There was a short period of silence in the room. Stop! Rogers knew that the girl loved Sadler, and there suddenly flashed into his mind what the death of this man would mean to that girl. He had seen her eyes burn and her cheek flush when, thinking herself unseen, she had looked at the man she loved with the mask of womanhood down. He had only to look in his own heart to realize what she felt. The explosion of that powder-can would deprive Sadler of the prize that both

coveted, but it would break the girl's heart. He had only to lie still; but—

"John," he whispered, "I am goin' to—put out—that spark—for Annie's sake. I want you—to—tell her—that I died lovin' her."

"I will; I will; but you can't move," cried Sadler.

"I've got to—for her," answered the dying man. "The blood on my breast will put it out—if I can get—near. Don't speak. I need all—my—strength," he added.

He was visibly weaker than before, but he set his teeth hard, summoned all his resolution, brought to bear the last vestige of his strength, and began to creep along the floor towards the glowing fuse, which was now much nearer the can of powder.

How many hours had elapsed since it had been lighted? It smouldered, it flashed, it leaped, it ran, it lingered, it stopped—and there over the floor crept the mangled and bleeding figure, writhing towards it in the darkness. Sadler forgot his fear as he watched the race between the dying man and the living fire. It was a great game they played, with his life for the stake. A groan ever and anon burst

from the lips of the man on the floor. His bulk loomed up in the darkness; he was closer now. Would he make it? The fuse was shorter, too —frightfully short—the light of it shone about Sadler's feet; but the black shape drew nearer —nearer.

"Hurry, hurry!" cried the man in the chair.

The body of the creeping man brushed against his feet; a mighty surge, and his breast fell forward on the glowing ember. There was a faint, sickening little hiss.

"Annie," murmured the dying man. The sound rose from the floor beneath the chair and died away in the silence. Sadler's muscles relaxed again, his head sank forward, the darkness of the room gave way to deeper darkness—he knew no more.

The room was filled with light. Never, it seemed, had he seen such an illumination. He could not believe that train-lanterns could produce such vivid brightness. The room was crowded with men, too; there on his breast, with her arms about him, looking up at him while others cut the lashings, was Annie, laughing and crying. He heard her

voice, seeming to come from far away, saying:

"Oh, he lives, he lives; thank God, thank God!"

"The fuse!" he cried, suddenly recalling it. "Look out for it!" And then he returned to his senses again. "Yes, yes, living, darling, thank God, and that man yonder—"

Tender hands had lifted the body of the dead man from the floor and laid it upon the table. As they cut the lashing that bound Sadler, they poured down his throat a generous measure of whiskey, which tasted like water, and then they gathered about him and listened as he told the story of that race with death on the floor of the station. Annie sat at his feet, holding his hands as he spoke. He told it all, even that Jim had loved Annie, that he might have lain where he fell, and that but for his action both would have been burned.

"Young man," said the president, when he had finished the story, "you say you are a graduate of the university?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, sir, I have a position in my private office which you can have."

"But, sir," answered Sadler, "I have done nothing to be rewarded. 'Twas Jim, sir."

"He's dead," said the president, briefly, "and it strikes me that if you are good enough for a man like that to die for, and a girl like this to love, there must be something in you. Is not that so, Bishop?"

"Surely," answered the Bishop, smiling with pleasure at the president's keenness.

The two turned and walked out of the building, followed by the rest of the men, leaving Annie and Sadler alone.

"Oh, Annie," said the young man, "this promotion enables me to take care of you at last, but it will take me from you, dearest. I can't bear to go alone. I am all unnerved by these happenings. Won't you marry me now?"

"Yes, John," answered Annie, simply, "if father will consent."

"There is the key; ask him."

Annie stepped over to the key-board and called up Kyote Station.

"Father," she spelled out, after briefly wiring him the story, "may I marry John Sadler now?"

After a delay the transmitter spelled out "Y-E-S."

And the Bishop officiated then and there, the president giving away the bride, although, as he said, he only acted for the dead man, who of all others had brought about the wedding.

Chapter IX

THE FORGIVENESS OF CREEGAN

THE Bishop had been preaching with more than his usual vigor and force to a congregation which completely filled the rude little frontier church, which took the place of the paper cathedral whose glorious possibilities adorned the pages of the church almanac, and, to the Bishop's great discomfiture and displeasure, gave an entirely wrong impression of the diocese over which with gentle sway he ruled. The male members of his diocese were handy with the "gun" and easy on the trigger, and the Bishop was preaching on the sanctity of human life, and urging, as a bishop should, that private vengeance was no more nor less than murder, and that the law, which had been principally administered by Judge Lynch, should be allowed in future to take its proper course.

His sermon made a deep impression upon his congregation, which comprised nearly the whole population of the town, including many men who had a reputation second to none for quickness on the draw, sureness of aim, and general readiness for the game. To these the Bishop had particularly addressed himself. He was accustomed to speak his mind freely to his frontier flock, and generally with good effect, but this present sermon was an attack upon a cherished privilege firmly intrenched both by habit and affection in their hearts and widely prevalent on the frontier—the right of private war and private justice! He wondered, as he took off his vestments in the little sacristy, of how much value his pleadings and warnings would be in this instance. It must be confessed that he did not feel greatly encouraged.

He walked home alone through the unlighted streets after the service, and was very much surprised to find Creegan and his wife, who had been attentive listeners at church, waiting for him in his study. Creegan had kept the principal saloon and gambling-house in the town. Somehow or other the Bishop,

who had a very taking way with him, had gotten hold of Creegan and had begun a reformation in his character and life, which had been completed by Creegan's wife, a pretty, blushing little girl who had come out to the Territory with a broken-down physician, her father, who had sought the West to recuperate his shattered health or die—and had died.

The big frontiersman had fascinated the pretty little Eastern girl, and, for himself, he fairly worshipped the very ground she walked on. As a *sine qua non* to her consent to the marriage, which the Bishop solemnized, Creegan had disposed of his saloon, by the manly way of closing it up, and had gone into the hardware business; that is to say, he sold builders' hardware and "guns"—principally weapons, however.

The ex-saloon-keeper had a record behind him, and could have pointed with pride, as many of his confrères were accustomed to do, to half a dozen graves in the rude little cemetery on the hill, which his pistol had filled. He had been a just man, however, according to his lights, and no bully, and his killings had been in strictly honorable warfare, meas-

ured by the standard of the time and place. He had forsworn his evil ways when he had taken unto himself his little wife, and, so far as he could, was trying, in spite of adverse early training and persistent habit, to follow the counsels of the Bishop and the teachings of the Church, of which he had been made a vestryman, and in which the Bishop cherished the hope that he would soon be confirmed.

The leopard had changed his spots, but there were a few streaks remaining on him yet, and he had not quite made up his mind on that momentous point. The sermon of the evening had made a deep impression upon him, and he and Maria, his wife, had come to talk it over with the Bishop.

"Look here, Right Reverend," he began —his usual method of address—"Maria an' I've been hit hard by yer sermon to-night. You made a bull's-eye on me, sure, an' I've been thinkin' that maybe them guns w'ich I sells the boys has got more to do with the permiscus shootin' to w'ich you've been alludin' than anything else. 'Cause if a man 'ain't got no gun he can't shoot, w'ich it stands to reason, don't it? Not but that it's

a leetle onhandy position to be in, w'en t'other feller is armed, as I knows by experience, me bein' the armed one, o' course, or I wouldn't be here," he added, with an unholy chuckle, instantly repressed. "An' Maria's been a-thinkin', and wot she thinks we both of us allows—you an' me, that is, Right Reverend—is about right?"

There was a note of interrogation in this sentence, to which the Bishop instantly made reply.

"I have generally found," answered the Bishop, smiling upon the pleased little woman before him, "that Mrs. Creegan's opinions are entirely worthy of careful consideration. Go on, Creegan."

"Well, Maria's been a-thinkin', as I sed, that I better quit sellin' guns. Now it don't seem to me, w'ich I states my own opinion agin, that I'm responsible fer all the killin's in town 'cause I sells weepons. Men's got to have guns! Why, a man kin no more do without a gun than he kin git along without a—a—toothbrush, fer instance, an' I'm undecided as to wot I ought to do. I was druv or drug out of the licker business by

you an' Maria — well, no, I oughtn't to say that," he added, quickly, seeing the look of pain on his pretty wife's face, "fer I come out of it of my own free will, fer love of Maria an' you, an'—God, o' course," he continued, with exemplary piety, remembering the requirements of his position as a vestryman; "but if I give up the hardware an' gun business, I reckon I'll have to sell candy, or start a bakery, or foller some other innercent an' unerbjectionable way o' gittin' a livin' to w'ich I ain't suited at all. Now, we've agreed to leave it to you. Understand, Right Reverend, I depreciates this yer permiscus shootin' as much as enybody, an' as fer myself, I ain't goin' to do no more of it, nohow. I don't join no more lynchin'-bees, nor nothing o' that kind, w'ich I've been a tough man, as you know."

"I'll never believe it," said Maria, softly; "you know, Bishop, he's the best man on earth."

"Hush, honey," said Creegan, in such accents of joy and affection that the rebuke in his words sounded like a caress; "you don't know wot yer talkin' about. Well, wot d'ye say, Doctor?"

"Let me think over it a little while, Creegan," answered the Bishop, whose habit it was not to deliver snap-judgments about anything. A good example that was to the Territory, for it was the snap-judgment that usually pulled the trigger of the ever-ready gun.

"All right," said Creegan; "I'll come around an' talk to you about it to-morrer. Meanwhile, lemme tell you how much I enjoyed yer sermon, an' wot a lot o' good it done me, an' others too. We was talkin' about it around the church door, an' I sez to Bill King an' some other fellers I know, I sez, 'You fellers have got to quit shootin' every time you git the drop on a man, or by—by gracious, I'll bring my old gun down an' clean out the whole kit o' you if you don't stop it!'"

He delivered this stirring piece of information entirely unconscious of the implied violation of his new principles contained in it. In spite of himself the Bishop laughed—that's why they liked him, he was so entirely human in his life and ministry.

"Well, sir," Creegan continued, rising, "we can't keep you here all night talkin' about this matter, an' we'll say good-evenin' and

go home, expectin' to hear from you on the morrer."

Creegan and his wife lived in one of the nicest houses in the jurisdiction. The saloon business had been lucrative, the hardware "an' gun" business not less so. He was a generous man: indeed, the little church had often profited from his large-hearted liberality, even in his saloon-keeping days, and he had built the nicest house the Territory could compass, and furnished it well for his little bride. In fact, it was the best house in the town after the Bishop's—"two story an' a brick," the citizens described it. It was an unwritten law that nobody, unless it was the Governor, should have a better house than the Bishop in that Territory.

That night, about two o'clock, the house was entered by a burglar. Creegan was a light sleeper—the quality had saved his life before on the frontier—and he was awakened by a noise in the upper hall. He rose softly from the side of his sleeping wife and stepped into the hall.

Unfortunately for him, he stood in the bright moonlight coming through the window

squarely between the burglar and the stairs—the intruder's only way of escape. As Creegan, who was a man of splendid physique, sprang at the burglar, the latter fired. The bullet hit Creegan in the abdomen. The force of his spring, however, carried him forward. Before the burglar could fire a second time, Creegan was upon him. The men fell sideways upon the landing, the burglar underneath, with his outstretched arms tightly pinioned against the floor by Creegan, who had grasped his wrists. The huge bulk of the frontiersman overpowered the slighter man. There was a furious struggle for a second or two, but in spite of the agony he suffered from his dreadful wound, Creegan, with indomitable resolution, held down his man.

A few seconds only had elapsed before Maria, awakened by the shot and the confusion, sprang from the deserted bed and ran into the hall. She happened to be just in line with the outstretched arm of the burglar, whose right hand still tenaciously grasped the pistol. Fearful that the arrival of this new ally would result in his final capture, the man pointed the revolver, a

double-acting weapon, roughly in her direction and pulled the trigger. Singularly enough, the bullet struck the young woman also in the abdomen, just about where her husband had been hit! With a shriek of pain she sank down helpless on the floor, where she lay moaning and bleeding.

There was one other person in the house. The Creegans boasted the luxury of a maid-servant. She was a little "chunky" frontier girl, with plenty of common-sense and courage. She, too, came running at the sound of the shots, and took in the situation with a glance. Creegan, evidently wounded, lying in the hall, with just strength enough to maintain his position, but retaining his grasp on the man's outstretched wrists; Mrs. Creegan lying, a white, huddled heap, in the doorway, blood staining her nightclothes. The girl divined what had happened when she saw the pistol, which the man still resolutely grasped, pointing up the hall.

Lest she herself should be shot, she lay down on the floor, and bidding Creegan to hold on for God's sake, she worked herself across the hall, carefully keeping out of range

of the pistol, which the burglar in vain strove to point at her, until she could get near enough to his hand. Then she seized the hand in her teeth, and bit and gnawed and chewed it until the nerve of the burglar gave way. With oaths and curses of pain he dropped the pistol. The girl pounced upon it like a hawk, slipped it in Creegan's hand, and stepped out of range.

By an incredible effort the frontiersman slowly raised himself on one arm. With the other hand he swung the pistol about until he put the muzzle close against the head of the burglar. Like most Western men of whatsoever sort, the burglar was game. He uttered no cry and made no prayer, though he realized that his hour was come—that he had lost the game.

"Dearest," said Creegan, feebly, to his wife, "be you much hurt?"

"I am shot in the stomach, John," answered his wife, faintly; "pretty bad, I think. Are you—"

"I've got it in the same place, little woman. I'm done fer this time," he answered, weakly.

The servant-girl, who reported it afterwards, said it seemed as if he waited an hour, with the pistol pointed at the burglar's head, before he said anything else.

"Why in hell don't you shoot and be done with it?" finally exclaimed the latter, with an oath.

"You've shot my wife," answered Creegan, thickly, "an' you've killed me. Fer me to pull the trigger now would be revenge, an' he—the Bishop—says revenge is murder, an' I can't go to my God with your blood on my hands. You can go. You're free."

He lifted himself by a superhuman effort and rolled himself off the burglar.

"Well, I'm damned!" ejaculated the latter, springing to his feet.

He stopped a moment and looked at the two figures on the floor, struck the maid a fierce blow in the face with his left hand, which knocked her senseless half-way down the stairs, and then ran from the house.

When the maid came to herself, Creegan had crawled over to his wife. He lay with his lips on her bare foot. He was stone-dead, and she was unconscious and dying.

A broad, wavering trail of blood along the hall showed the last movements of the man.

Two days after, the little church was filled again, for the funeral of Creegan and his wife. The Bishop had a fruitful theme in Creegan's unparalleled magnanimity and forgiveness. He preached from the old and ever-wonderful text, "*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*" It was generally conceded by the frontiersmen that the Bishop's estimate of Creegan's extraordinary action had been entirely adequate to the situation. The citizens raised a handsome purse and presented it to the maid, subsequently, with the largest and finest gold watch in the Territory.

Three days after that the Bishop got off the train at Kyote, a far-distant station. The railroad agent, who was the warden of the mission at that point, met him with a telegram to the effect that the murderer of Creegan and his wife had been caught. The whole town had turned out to search for him when the story had become known, and they had finally run him down after a hard pursuit. His right hand was frightfully torn. He had allowed it to be gnawed by a bull-

dog in a vain attempt to efface the marks of the girl's teeth. The identification, however, had been complete. Even the teeth-marks had not been obliterated by the bull-dog.

The man was promptly jailed in the See city where the murder had been committed. On the afternoon of his capture a large party of prominent citizens, who respected Creegan and admired him for his action, but who did not propose to have it establish a dangerous precedent from the standpoint of house-breakers, streamed into the public square, held an indignation meeting, and moved towards the jail.

The sheriff, a splendid frontiersman, also a member of the Bishop's congregation, met the party at the door of the jail, pistol in hand. There was no time wasted in useless discussion on either side.

"Gentlemen," said the sheriff, presenting his revolver at the crowd, "I know wot ye're come fer, but you can't have him. I'm an officer of the law, an' I'm sworn to protect this man. There's enough of you to overpower me, but before you do it, I'll fire upon you."

"That's all right, Bill," remarked the sheriff's brother, also a member of the Bishop's congregation, equally as determined as the official guardian of the law; "we know you've got to do yer duty. We know it's yer duty to open fire on the crowd; but, Bill, you know you allus was a damned bad shot. Come on, boys!"

The sheriff's revolver cracked ferociously several times, doing some harm to the swaying trees back of the mob, before he was safely overpowered. The criminal was immediately taken from the jail and summarily hanged, in the presence of the assembled citizens. There were no barbarities attendant upon the execution, which was conducted in an orderly and judicial manner. Before his taking off, the burglar, a notoriously bad character, made a speech to the effect that if Creegan had not been such a fool, and had shot him when he had the chance, all this unfortunate publicity and annoyance might have been avoided.

"That's all right," remarked the sheriff's brother; "don't go to aspersin' Creegan's character now he's dead. That man was a Chris-

Chapter X

MARRED OR MADE, A ROMANCE OF THE NAVY

"DO you believe in a celibate clergy, Bishop?" asked Major Roodruff, who was thought to have a slightly ritualistic turn of mind.

We were assembled before a cheerful wood fire in the hall of the commanding officer's quarters at Fort Carpenter one cold winter night during the annual visitation of the Bishop to the post.

"Well," answered the Bishop, thoughtfully, "that is rather a leading question, isn't it? You see, being the Bishop of a large body of clergymen who evidently do not believe in celibacy, if I may judge from the size of their families, always in an inverse ratio to their incomes, it behooves me to be discreet in my reply."

tian, w'ich you ain't much acquainted with the breed, I takes it."

"No, I ain't," remarked the burglar, laconically. "Go on with the game."

As the Bishop that night entered the little sod church in that village three hundred miles away to conduct services, the agent read him another telegram, signed by the sheriff's brother. It was terse, but to the point. It said:

"We lynched Creegan's murderer this afternoon."

The Bishop's eye flashed, his face lighted, an expression of singular satisfaction spread over his countenance as the agent read the message. "Well!" he exclaimed, joyfully. A moment after he remembered himself, and, resuming his usual gentle and mild expression, remarked, gravely, "Well, that was a very wrong thing to do, brethren."

To the day of his death the little Bishop could not settle to his own satisfaction whether he had even converted himself by the sermon which had moved Creegan to his great act of forgiveness.

The Bishop sighed deeply.

"Excuse me, Bishop," said Dr. McKibbin, the misogynist of the regiment, "but many a man believes more profoundly in celibacy after his marriage than before."

"Yes," remarked General Blythe, meditatively, "I have more trouble in—er—ah—administering the affairs of the wives of the junior officers than I do in running the rest of the regiment. It seems to me that the first thing a man does when he gets a strap on his shoulder is to put a load on his back in the shape of a wife," he continued, grimly, shooting a warning glance at Michelson, the junior lieutenant, who was thought to have aspirations in the direction of the general's daughter.

"There is certainly much in what you say," assented the Bishop. "Theoretically, of course, I do not believe in clerical celibacy, but practically, in some instances at least, I wish it might have obtained. I have seen so many young clergymen whose lives have been wrecked by hasty and ill-considered marriages."

"I can duplicate your observations by my experience in the army," said the general.

"'A man married is a man marred,' so the proverb goes," continued the woman-hating doctor.

"That's rather good," remarked the major, "considering you are the only unmarried man here, except the youngsters there."

The junior lieutenant, whose spirits were going lower and lower under this attack from the elders, gathered in the general's den for a smoke and chat after the Sunday-evening service, was somewhat reassured when Carter, the oldest captain in the regiment, a grizzled veteran of the Civil War and many Indian campaigns, spoke out with deference and yet with decision.

"And yet, after all, Bishop and general and gentlemen all, how many instances do you not recall where a good wife—and they are all good—has saved a man from all sorts of difficulties and dangers. I would restate the old proverb, 'A man married is a man made.'"

"I can answer for the truth of that last, gentlemen," a softer voice broke in, for the general's wife, a tall, white-haired woman, who had gone through many a hard campaign with him, had entered the room during the

conversation. "Where would you be without me, Dick?" she questioned, looking fondly at him and not waiting for an answer. "Do not rise, gentlemen," she continued, coming over and resting her hand on her husband's shoulder. "I was passing the door and heard this talk about wives, and came in to defend my sex."

"They need no defenders here, madam," interrupted the Bishop, with his old-fashioned gallantry.

"No?" answered the lady, with the rising inflection of doubt and interrogation. "What were you discussing, Dick?" she asked, looking down at the old veteran, whose fortunes she had made and shared.

"I—er—ah—nothing," stammered the general, in much embarrassment.

"Clerical celibacy and military celibacy, Mrs. Blythe," cried young Michelson, blushing furiously at his boldness, and then incontinently shrinking into himself once more before the general's angry glare of surprise.

"Thank you," said the lady; "and what were your views upon that subject, Dick?"

"Why—er—er—my dear, you see—" He paused.

"Well, never mind. I will tell you a bit of secret history, gentlemen," she continued, "and I will put it in the form of questions. How old were you when I married you, Dick?"

"Twenty-two," growled the general, helplessly, under this new development of the situation.

"And you were—in short, we—we—ran off, did we not?"

"We did, egad!" said the veteran, smiling pleasantly at the recollection. "And a mad man your father, the old captain, was when he found we were gone," continued the general, chuckling with reminiscent joy.

"You had just received your commission, hadn't you, and I was only eighteen?—and what were your opinions, my dear, on military celibacy, did you say?"

"I haven't got any; I am beaten," answered the general. "I throw up the sponge; you have captured me. The discipline of the regiment, so far as affairs of the heart are concerned, is verging upon ruin. However, young

gentlemen, I caution you not to follow my example!"

He shot another meaning look at the junior lieutenant, whose rising heart began to sink again.

"Madam," said the senior captain, rising and bowing, "as the sole exponent of wedding early—"

"And often," interjected the unsubdued misogynist, irrelevantly.

"—I congratulate you on the victory you have won!"

"It is easy to talk, gentlemen," said the general's wife, gracefully withdrawing under cover of her triumph; "but, after all, what would any of you be without your wives?"

"I think we are all converted, general," said the Bishop, smiling, and breaking the little silence that followed the exit of the lady. "The whole conversation reminds me of a marriage that occurred a long time ago which worked both ways. I do not know whether it was make or mar, but I'll tell you about it, and you can judge for yourself. When I was first ordained—so many years ago, gentlemen, that I hardly care to refer to it—I had a little

parish in a seaboard town in Rhode Island. Among my parishioners was a young man with whom I had grown up from boyhood. We were most intimate friends. When the time came for each of us to make choice of our life-work, he elected to serve his country on the sea. In short, he became an officer in the United States Navy. In one of the Southern ports at which his ship touched he met a young woman of rare personal beauty, great charm of manner, cultivation, and all that, but without a cent of money."

"Pity it is," growled the general, "that those things never do seem to come together."

"My friend, whose name was Joe Donaldson," continued the Bishop, "promptly fell in love with the young lady; his feelings were reciprocated, and they proceeded with the heedlessness of youth—"

"Call it rather a sublime courage, Bishop," interrupted old Captain Carter.

"Perhaps that would be better," assented the Bishop. "Well, at any rate, they were married. I married them, having gone South for the purpose. She was as high-spirited as she was handsome, and her devotion to her

State, and to the whole South, was boundless. Some years after, as you know, the war broke out, and then there was trouble. I had another friend named Parker—Jim Parker—also a sailor, six feet high, every inch a fighter; you can see his qualities still in the councils and conventions of the Church. I got part of the story from him and part from the wife, and, to save trouble, I will tell it as it was told me, without reference to the source.

"Donaldson and Parker met in Washington early in the war. Parker had been a naval officer too, but had resigned the service some years before the war and had entered upon the practice of law. When the war broke out he hastened to offer his services to his country. He had served with Farragut in the Mexican War, and was an officer of experience. They were glad to have such as he then.

"He received orders to report at Washington, and was waiting in the anteroom of the Secretary of the Navy one morning in '61, when he met Donaldson. The two had known each other a long time in the old navy—they had been at the Naval Academy together, though Parker was much the older man.

Parker noticed that Donaldson looked worn and worried. The two men, who had not seen each other for some years, at once engaged in conversation as they paced up and down the room waiting the pleasure of the Secretary. Parker began to inveigh bitterly against those officers who had resigned and had gone South."

"They were justified in what they were doing, sir!" interrupted Ramseur, the adjutant, hotly, his dark, Southern face flushing.

"My dear young sir," said the Bishop, calmly and gently, "I am not passing criticisms, simply stating facts. I have no doubt that they believed that honor demanded of them the sacrifice—and I am sure it was a sacrifice—they made. To resume, Parker at that time was very bitter in his strictures. We were all more bitter then than we are, thank God, to-day. Donaldson endured it as long as he could, and finally broke out:

"'Look here, Jim, don't be so hard on us!'

"'Good God, Joe!' cried Parker, stopping short in amazement. 'You don't mean to tell me that you have resigned?'

"'Yes,' said Donaldson, 'I do—I did!'

"'Why, man, you are from Rhode Island! What do you mean?'

"'It was this way, Parker. I was first luff' —executive officer, that is—'of a gun-boat that was stationed off Baltimore. At any moment I felt that orders might come to us to open fire upon the town. My—my wife lived there, Jim, and my baby, and all her people. I felt that I couldn't do it! She—they—'

"'I understand, Joe,' said Parker, kindly. 'I can guess the situation.'

"'Well,' continued the other, 'I never would fight against the old flag, of course. I hoped that I might get a detail on some foreign station, where I would not be compelled to fire against my wife's people, and all that, but when I spoke to the Secretary about it he said I must decide one way or the other—so I resigned.'

"'Then what are you here now for, Joe?' asked Parker, sympathetically.

"'Good God, Jim, can't you see? I'm sorry, bitterly sorry. I want to get back. I haven't drawn a happy breath since my resignation was accepted. I must get back! Honor—'

"'But your wife, man?'

"'I cannot help it! She and the baby are safe in the far South. I must get back into the service again!'

"'God bless you, old man, and good luck!' said Parker, wringing his hand, and turning away as his name was called.

"Well, gentlemen, Donaldson didn't get back. The Secretary refused to reinstate him in his rank, so he went off and enlisted as a volunteer. Naval officers who had resigned prior to the war, and whose services were accepted during the conflict, were commissioned as volunteer lieutenants or whatnot, others who were taken from the merchant service, or other sources, were commissioned as *acting* volunteer lieutenants. Finding no other possible opening, Donaldson at last enlisted as an acting volunteer lieutenant.

"Fate, as if to punish him for his original action, gave him no opportunity for distinction. Nothing fell to his lot but routine work of the driest and most mechanical kind. His proud spirit chafed under the situation, but he could do nothing. He was never a robust fellow, and the hardships and exposures of four years

of constant cruising, with the heartbreak back of it, developed consumption. Under ordinary circumstances he would have been invalided home long since, but the navy was short of officers, and Donaldson would not hear it. He had risen, in due course, to the rank of acting volunteer lieutenant-commander, and was executive officer of one of the gun-boats, which he might have commanded had he remained in the service. Parker had never seen him since that day in the Navy Department. You remember when the combined attack by the army and navy was made on Fort Fisher?"

"I was there," said the general, shortly.

"Well, boarding-parties were detailed from the various ships of the fleet to land on the beach and attack the corner of the fort nearest the sea, while the army was to attack the landward end. I believe I am right, general?"

"Precisely," answered the general.

"Jim Parker happened to be the ranking officer of the landing-party, and he assumed the command. The men were drawn up in three divisions, van, centre, rear, all 'ship-shape,' as he said, and were then moved forward over

the open beach, under a furious fire, to attack an utterly unscalable parapet forty-six feet high."

"It was one of the most foolish operations ever undertaken by a naval force," commented the general.

"It was," assented the Bishop, "but I have been told that the demonstration enabled the army to make good its attack on the flank."

"It did," said the general, "and I was not reflecting upon the courage of the blue-jackets, either, but upon the stupidity which would send men armed with cutlass and pistol against a position of that kind. Go on, sir; excuse the interruption."

"Certainly," answered the Bishop. "As the men trotted along towards the fort under a withering fire, Parker, who was with the second line, stopped for a moment by a kneeling man in the uniform of an officer. He was crawling along the sand on his hands and knees. The man's face was ghastly pale. He was emaciated to the last degree—so weak and feeble, in fact, that he actually could not stand up. It was Donaldson!

"'Good Heavens!' cried Parker, pausing a

moment; 'what are you doing here, man? You ought to be back on your ship!'

"'I can't help it,' answered Donaldson, sitting up tremblingly. 'You remember our conversation at the Navy Department four years ago?'

"'Yes, yes!'

"'Well, this is the first time I have had a chance to do anything. The first chance to put in a blow for the old flag, and—and—now—oh, God! I've fallen out of the front line. I'm too sick and weak to go on with the rest!'

"'Never mind, Joe!' answered Parker, 'crawl along the sand, old man, with your face to the enemy, and I'll see that you get mentioned in the despatches.'

"There was no time to say more, and when Parker sprang forward to the head of the line, to attend to the deploying of his men, he looked back and saw the grim, ghastly, broken figure writhing along the sand towards the fort. They picked him up after the battle was over, carried him back to the ship, and sent him up to Washington. Under a flag of truce, and by the courtesy of some Confed-

erate officers, word was sent to his wife. She joined him with the child at Washington.

"We can imagine his joy, gentlemen, at the sight of her and the baby. She had no reproaches to make, no questions to put to him now. Her pride and her spirit were gone. In the grim and broken wreck, dying before her eyes, she only saw the bright-eyed, gallant lover of her youthful days. The end, of course, was certain, but Donaldson felt that he could not die until he heard from Parker's report. He talked with his last breath of that report. He prayed that he might live to get back his commission. Somehow or other the report was delayed. The days passed by and no word came to him. He grew weaker and weaker. The matter preyed upon him fearfully. His wife could stand it no longer.

"One bright, sunny morning a woman presented herself at the office of the Secretary of the Navy, and, by stating that she was the wife of a dying officer, she finally gained admittance. Secretary Welles was poring over an official document when she entered. I have pieced the interview out from what I

learned from the Secretary and from Jim Parker, and from the woman herself.

"She told him frankly who she was: that she was a rebel, that she always had been a rebel, and she always would be one, thank God! That it had been her pleading, her influence, which had caused the resignation of her husband from the service; that it had been against her will, and almost at the price of a separation, that he had gone back into it, but, now that he was dying, she saw what his action had cost him, and she, too, was sorry. With all her racial instincts and antagonisms, she now stooped to beg of the Secretary the restoration of her husband's rank. She sank on her knees and dropped her head on her hands on the desk, as many another poor woman, I doubt not, had done during the four years of that bitter conflict, weeping and sobbing at the thought of it all.

"'Madam,' said the old Secretary, finally, 'nothing, in my eyes, can excuse an officer who resigns his commission as your husband did, but since I have seen you, and heard you talk,' he went on, with the grave gallantry of a father, 'I begin to understand something of

"'SHE TOLD HIM FRANKLY WHO SHE WAS: THAT SHE WAS A REBEL'"

the pressure that was brought to bear upon him! And yet, I tell you frankly, that you would have pleaded with me in vain had it not been for a delayed report, which I have but this day received, of the participation of the navy in the attack on Fort Fisher. Commander Parker says — but let me read.'

"He handed the tired woman into a chair, and, stooping beside her, read in low tones how her husband had risen from a sick-bed on his ship to head his men, and how he had fallen helpless and had crawled along the bullet-swept beach of the Cape Fear River—towards the enemy!

"'Oh!' she exclaimed, 'how noble! That is just like him! If he had been born in the South he could not have done better!'

"'Quite so,' answered the Secretary, smiling; 'and that, madam, will gain his commission. I will see that he is restored to his rank as — let me see, what was he when he resigned?'

"'A lieutenant, sir!'

"'He shall have a promotion!' added the Secretary. 'He shall be made a lieutenant-

commander in the regular service from the day of that attack! Yes, madam, rely upon me, it shall be done! He is very ill, you say?'

"'Dying, sir,' answered the woman, choking back a sob.

"'I will attend to the matter immediately, then,' said the official, touching a bell. 'Meanwhile, do you go home at once and tell him the news. On my word of honor, it shall be done; and now, may God bless you,' continued the white-haired old man, laying a fatherly hand upon her head.

"She snatched it away, pressed it to her breast, raised it to her lips.

"'Oh, sir,' she cried, 'may God thank you, for I never can!'

"'It is coming, Joe,' she whispered to him, 'I saw the Secretary. Mr. Parker's report is there. They say you are a hero! You are going to have your commission back! You will be promoted! You are to be a lieutenant-commander, the Secretary told me; he pledged me his word of honor! It was lost through me—'

"'It comes back through you,' he whispered. 'I am so—happy—happy—'

"Gentlemen, they brought his body back to Rhode Island, and I read the burial-service. In his dead hand was his commission as a lieutenant-commander in the Navy of the United States — his wife had put it there. Over his heart a little flag was laid, the stars and stripes he had loved—his wife had laid it there."

There was a brief silence in the room.

"Thank you, sir," said the adjutant, slowly —"thank you, in the name of the women of the South."

"Thank you," said the general, rising— "thank you, in the name of women everywhere, Bishop."

"Yes," said the Bishop, "what would humanity be, after all, without the love of woman!"

CHAPTER XI

THE MARK OF CAIN

THE Rev. James Harden was a man well along in years when he was ordained to the perpetual diaconate. He was a man of humble origin, few opportunities, and limited education, and was sadly lacking in those social graces and qualities which, though they be trifling in themselves in comparison with the weightier matters of the law, are usually so vitally necessary to the successful work of the clergyman. Generally speaking, so the Bishop used to say, the man who essays the difficult labors of the pastoral office must be able not only to preach and teach, but also to move easily in any or all of the varied strata of society to which his ministry is apt to call him. Harden's lack, therefore, of the social gifts aforementioned was a serious handicap; yet, in spite of this disability, years of trial in the

service as a layman under the direction of the Bishop had proved that no more successful worker among the poor and wretched had ever attempted to lead the "slum-dwellers" up the difficult path of social and moral reform. The reasons of that success were not far to seek.

There was a spirituality about the man that comes from suffering, and which can be given by no other force. He had been poor, he had been weak, he had been wrong, and nothing that comes under these familiar headings was foreign to his own experience. There was a quiet persistence about him, too, a resolute determination, an intensity of purpose which enabled few to resist him. The devil in the shape of devilish man or woman either succumbed incontinently or sought safety in flight.

Harden was a rarely quiet man, and in repose his face bore the marks of a rooted sorrow—one of those griefs that stay with those they possess until the very end. He had not found peace, though he often preached it, and there was a hunted look in his eyes, at times a shrinking expression, which seemed strangely like a badge of shame. He would carry it to

his dying day. Only the Bishop knew that it was the mark of Cain, and this is how it was traced upon his brow:

The woman was fairly stunned by the deafening report of the old "forty-five"; the noise seemed to be thrown at her from every side of the little room, and the silence that succeeded was appalling. The smoke from the discharge prevented her from seeing clearly, too. The pistol had been held so close to her when her husband pulled the trigger that she had not yet realized what had happened. She staggered back, at first too terrified and startled for more than a faint cry. Presently, however, the smoke cleared away somewhat, and through the gray wreaths she discerned dimly — it was early evening and the lamps had not yet been lighted — the figure of her husband.

His hand had dropped partially to his side, but he still held the smoking pistol, his finger upon the trigger, the barrel pointing downward. He was leaning forward, with an expression of rage and hate and fury upon his distorted countenance, staring with ferocious

intensity of passion at a figure which she saw lying on the floor between them. He was waiting, perhaps, to see if another shot were needed; but after a few convulsive tremors the man who was the object of his animosity lay perfectly still. He was dead, evidently. There was a blotch of blood spotting his shirt, and a little stream trickled slowly down to the floor at the woman's feet.

"My God," she whispered, in a faint, surprised voice, putting her hand to her head in a daze of terror, "you've killed him!"

The man shot one glance of determinate hatred at the woman, flung a vile name at her, seized his weapon by the barrel, and threw it down in the face of the dead man. Then he looked at the woman again and turned quickly away. She tottered towards him, her hands outstretched.

"Oh, Jim," she cried, appealingly, "don't look at me like that! I swear to you, Jim—"

But he was gone. He left her without another word. Outside the door of the house he met Barney Rafferty, the policeman. They were good friends and cronies of old.

"What's up, Jim?" asked the officer. "You look awfully bad. I heard a shot. Is anything wrong?"

"Wrong? Well, you might call it so. Bob Roscoe's in there with—I shot him—an' it's the rightest thing I ever done."

Rafferty's face changed.

"I'll have to take you into custody, Harden," he said, gruffly, laying his hand upon the other's shoulder and at the same time whipping out his gun.

"You won't need your gun, Rafferty," answered Harden, standing passively. "I'll go with you."

The friendship and the curiosity of the policeman got the better of him.

"What did you do it for, Jim?" he asked, kindly.

"Never mind. I done it, an' I'm glad of it. That's enough."

"I'm mighty sorry for you, Jim. I'm afraid they'll—" He paused.

"Swing me!" exclaimed Harden, with reckless bitterness. "I don't care. I wish they would."

"And your wife?"

"No need to bring her in it, Rafferty," the man cried, sharply.

"No, of course not; but where is she?"

"In there—with him, damn him!"

Rafferty stared at him in astonishment, and presently, as the patrol which he had rung for came rattling along, he took Harden to the station. After leaving another officer in the house to look after things and keep back the curious crowd already beginning to gather, he notified the coroner.

Jim Harden and Alice Church had been married about a year. Jim was a prosperous young blacksmith. He was a gloomy, morose, saturnine sort of a man, jealous-hearted, and of an uneven temper.

However, he loved with all his heart and soul his pretty little wife, who had been a village milliner, and she returned his passion. They had begun their wedded life most auspiciously, but Harden's jealousy, and a pretty little turn for flirtation which had always been latent in his wife's mind, brought about quarrels which resulted in a partial estrangement.

For the few months preceding the tragedy the little house, which they had entered upon

their wedding-day with such fond anticipations of happiness, had become almost a prison. Harden had remained away from home night after night and left his wife alone. It is not good for young wives to be alone. Mr. Bob Roscoe, a young man about town, had thought to improve the situation, and had endeavored to ingratiate himself with Alice Harden, although with but little substantial success.

The girl loved but one man, and that was her husband. Yet perhaps she thought to pique him, to provoke him, to show her indifference to his neglect through the attentions of Roscoe. At any rate, if she did not encourage, she did not discourage that unfortunate young man. She was a very unsophisticated young woman, and a thoughtless one as well, and she did not realize whither the affair tended. The shocking culmination came on that fatal evening when suddenly he put his arm around her and strove to kiss her.

Her husband entered the little parlor at that moment. He had not noted the burning flush of shame upon her cheek, the indignation and surprise that flashed in her eyes. He could

not, of course, be aware of the thrill of repulsion and horror which swept through her. She thrust Roscoe violently away, and but turned to her husband as if for protection; he, conscious of nothing but the man and his impudence, had shot him down instantly.

It was a pitiable ending to a foolish and mistaken attempt to provoke, or win back, her husband's love. Her efforts had culminated in a murder. Alone in the room with the dead man, she stared down at the prostrate form before her. At thought of his presumption in daring to kiss her she almost spurned him with her foot, and yet she also had been guilty. No matter how she had been neglected or what had happened, her wifely duty, her personal honor, her Christian training should have prevented her from stepping aside from the circumspect path of womanly propriety for a single moment for any purpose. She might have known that if she could not win her husband from his foolish jealousy, and restore the happiness of their first months of wedded life by right living, it would be hopeless to attempt it in any other way.

Now what was the situation? One man with whom she had trifled lay dead at her feet; the other would have to stand trial for murder. Perhaps, though, he had got away. No, that would not be Jim's way. She felt that he had given himself up. He was no coward. Yet he had left her alone with that hideous thing upon the floor. How it stared up at her! God! Would no one ever come?

The door opened and the officer sent by Rafferty entered the room. Hard on his heels came the old Bishop. He happened to be passing by and had heard the dreadful news. He took the young woman by both hands and led her tenderly away. He had known her from childhood; he had baptized, confirmed, and married her, in fact.

"Tell me all about it, Alice," he asked her, when they were alone.

Not sparing herself, she told him the naked truth—the whole petty, pitiful, tragic story. When some of the women of her acquaintance — her neighbors — came to her, and following them the doctor, he left her with a sad heart and went to the city jail, where Harden had been imprisoned. He was alone in his

cell, white-faced, inert, indifferent, listless, all the fire and fury and hate apparently gone out of him.

"Why did you do it, Jim?" asked the Bishop.

"I had my reasons," answered the man.

"What were they?"

"They're mine an' no one else's. I hated the man. He done me wrong. I'd do it agin."

"But your wife?"

"Look here, Bishop," cried Harden, sharply, "don't you mention my wife. She's got nothin' to do with it. Nothin' whatever. I done it because—I—I—"

"Jim," said the Bishop, quietly, "don't lie to me. I am your friend. I want to help you. I'll respect your confidence. What you say to me you may tell me under the seal of confession. I'll not betray you."

"But the court?"

"Not even to the court. It shall be between you and me and God. You must tell me, man, for your own peace of mind."

"I don't never expect to have none no more."

"That's as God pleases," said the Bishop, "and as you will. I have seen Alice and she has told me the truth. Why did you shoot him?"

"On your honor as a man, an' on your faith as a Bishop, you'll not tell?"

"No one."

"I caught him with his arm around my wife. She's been flirtin' with him for five months. We've hardly spoke together all that time. I heard him tell her he loved her. I saw him kiss her. They told me he'd been hangin' around my house. They whispered in the streets that he—that she—that they—God! I can't tell no more! I shot him like a dog. I told her what I thought of her, an'—"

"Stop!" cried the Bishop. "She has been weak, foolish, mistaken, misguided, but not what you think."

"What! Prove that to me an' I—"

" 'Tis not a thing that anybody can prove, but I am sure of it. She told me the truth. She told me all, and in such a way that I believe her. She could not have lied to me then. Why, I believe she's dying now from the shock

and shame and sorrow. She admitted that she had encouraged Roscoe. She did it in the hope of awakening your affection, or provoking your attention. She thought you had grown indifferent to her. You stayed away from her. You have been awfully wrong. She never dreamed of this. She was surprised and horrified when he put his arm around her waist and kissed her. She could have killed him herself then, she told me, she was so outraged. She had thrust him from her when you entered the room. She had turned to you. She's sick unto death, I tell you—so broken that Dr. Bermingham fears for her life. I have known her from childhood, Harden. I'd stake my salvation on the truth of her story. She's innocent. Think yourself!"

In the intensity of his feelings the old Bishop shook the man roughly by the shoulder.

"Think!" he cried again.

"Yes, yes," answered Harden, slowly, at last. "I do believe it. He was staggerin' back when I came into the room. She did turn to me. I remember she called my name. Innocent! Innocent! Thank God!"

He put his hands to his face and cried like a child.

"I've been a fool," he sobbed out, at last.

"Yes, you have," said the Bishop, sadly. "My poor boy, I fear that you must pay for your folly."

"I will," answered Harden. "Nothin' matters now that I know she's innocent. They'll hang me, an' that 'll relieve Alice."

"But your plea?"

"Guilty."

"But the circumstances in extenuation?"

"There are none; there shall be none."

"But your wife?"

"I forbid her to testify. I won't have her brought into this. She mustn't say anythin'. Nothin' that she could say would make any difference, anyway. I'll plead guilty, I tell you."

"And may God pity you!" cried the Bishop, laying his hand upon the other's head.

The day of the trial came around with fatal swiftness. The jury had been impanelled and sworn, but no witnesses had been summoned, for it was known that none would be needed. Harden, grim and broken, pleaded guilty to

the charge of murder in the first degree, as he had said he would do. The Bishop was in the court-room, and by his side was Alice—all the prettiness and buoyant elasticity of youth and health had gone from her face and figure. She sat an old, broken woman, gray-faced, haggard, ill, streaks of white in her soft, brown hair. Her hands clutched her dress nervously over her bosom.

Harden could not trust himself to look at her. He had forbidden her to come and see him, or to appear at the trial, though he had sent her many messages through the medium of the Bishop—messages of love and contrition. She had disobeyed him, and had risen from her bed against the advice of the doctor, who told her if she went to the court that morning she would go at the peril of her life. That did not matter to her, so the protesting physician came with her and now sat just back of her.

The brief formalities were soon over. The old judge, who had known Jim and Alice for most of their lives, turned to the prisoner.

"Harden," he said, "you have confessed to the crime of murder. The community in

which you have lived have known you as an upright, honest, hard-working, nay, even a God-fearing, citizen. Men of your stamp do not take away the life of a man without cause or reason. Before I pass sentence upon you, for the sake of your reputation I ask you if there is no plea in justification which you can urge? Is there no excuse that you can offer? I beseech you, if you have anything to say, to speak now."

"I've nothin' to say, your honor. No excuses to offer. I'm guilty. I know what the punishment will be. It don't need to go to the jury. You can sentence me. Let's have done with it."

"I have somethin' to say, judge!" cried Alice, springing to her feet and standing erect before the crowded court-room. "I want to give testimony, because—"

"Don't listen to her, judge," interrupted the prisoner, swiftly; "she knows nothin' about it! She's got nothin' to do with it!"

"I have!" the woman cried. "I must testify!"

"I tell you you shall not!"

"Let the woman be sworn," said the judge,

sternly. "Silence in the court-room!" he added, as a low murmur of excitement broke from the lips of the spectators.

Alice tottered forward to the witness-stand. The Bishop supported her on one side and the doctor upon the other. The Bishop thought she shrank back when the Bible was offered her, but if she did she mastered herself instantly and took the required oath.

"Please, your honor," she said, "will you let me tell my story in my own way?"

"Go on, Mrs. Harden," said the judge, kindly, "we will listen to you."

"Please, sir," continued the woman, rising to her feet in her excitement, "I'm here because I'm the cause of it all. I—Jim, yonder, found me in the arms—of Mr. Roscoe."

She spoke brokenly, her voice sinking to a low whisper, but such was the intense silence in the room that what she said was distinctly audible in the farthest corner. The blood which had flamed in her face as she had sworn had retreated and had left it deathly pale. The perspiration stood out on her forehead in large drops; she trembled violently.

"Sit down, Mrs. Harden; compose yourself," said the judge, in pity for her weakness.

"I'd rather stand, sir. I—" She hesitated. "Oh, forgive me, Jim!" she cried, turning to her husband, who stood gripping the rail and staring at her, scarcely less white than she. "Forgive me, Jim!" she murmured. "He deserved to be killed. I'm a wretched, wicked woman. I'm an—"

She wrenched out from between her white lips a ghastly word from the seventh commandment.

"My God!" screamed Harden. "Say it's not true! It's a lie!"

"'Tis true," she gasped. "That's the reason he shot him, gentlemen. Mercy! God have mercy!"

She staggered and fell forward. The Bishop caught her in his arms and laid her back in the chair. Dr. Bermingham bent over her.

"Your honor," he said, after a brief examination, "the testimony of this witness is finished. She is dead."

Harden was by her side on the instant, no one attempting to stop him.

"Alice, it ain't true!" he cried. "It ain't

true!" he pleaded, taking both her hands in his own. "Speak, Alice! Say that you lied to save me. Judge, I swear it ain't true! Bishop, you know the truth. She told you. Speak! Say she's not guilty. Your honor," he continued, rising excitedly, "I've a witness. I want the Bishop sworn. No, don't take her out. Let him stand by her side."

"Administer the oath to the Bishop," said the judge. "You may question the witness now," he added, turning to Harden.

Standing erect before the Bishop and pointing his finger at the old man, Harden fairly hurled the questions upon him.

"You heard what my wife said just now?"

"I did."

"You heard her say that she had been an —criminally intimate with Roscoe?"

"I did."

"Standin' by her dead body, do you believe her testimony?"

"I do not."

"I protest that this is most irregular, your honor," said the prosecuting attorney, rising and interrupting.

"It is," said the judge, "but I will hear the

witness further. Prisoner, proceed with your questions."

"You don't believe she was tellin' the truth when she said that?"

"No."

"Why don't you believe it?"

"She told me the facts. She did nothing except to give Roscoe a little encouragement. He had never laid his hand upon her until the night he kissed her and you killed him. She had thrust him from her then, and had turned to you for help when you entered the room. I know she is innocent. I not only believe, but I would stake my life upon her innocence."

"An' what did she say that thing for?"

"To save your life!" cried the Bishop. "She lied herself into heaven for you, Harden."

"That's all, your honor!" cried the prisoner, turning to the court. "I know she's innocent."

"I know it, too," said the judge, carried beyond himself. "Gentlemen of the jury, you may retire and consider your verdict."

As the jurymen gravely filed out of the court the body of poor Alice was tenderly

carried into an adjoining room. She had died of heart-failure when she had fallen forward a few moments before. Nobody else left the room. It was felt that the jury would soon come to a verdict. The people waited in silence. Harden sat with his face buried in his hands. The Bishop prayed softly to himself. There were tears in the judge's eyes. Even the court officers, used to scenes of all sorts, were affected by the tremendous climax which had just transpired.

In a few moments the jury reported that they had agreed upon their verdict and were brought in.

"Gentlemen of the jury," said the clerk, his voice broken with emotion, "have you agreed upon your verdict?"

"We have."

"How say you, gentlemen of the jury? Do you find the defendant, James Harden, guilty or not guilty of the crime of murder whereof he stands indicted?"

The foreman paused a moment.

"Not guilty," he said, slowly and distinctly.

"Gentlemen of the jury," continued the

clerk, "hearken unto your verdict as it stands recorded by the court. You say that you find the defendant, James Harden, not guilty of the crime of murder, and so say you all?"

"Is that a verdict of reflection upon my wife?" Harden broke out in the silence.

"And we wish to say, your honor," spoke out the foreman of the jury, quickly, "to bear testimony here and now, in this public way, that it is our solemn conviction that the prisoner's wife was innocent of the charge made by herself."

Cheers broke from every side of the room.

"Silence!" cried the judge, and as order was restored he turned to Harden.

"Prisoner, in the face of your confession the jury have declared you guiltless. I cannot go beyond their decision. The law does not allow it. Yet there is no doubt of your guilt. The blood of one of your fellow-men is upon your hands. An innocent woman, for love of you, has taken upon herself the most dreadful of accusations. She has endeavored to assume the odium of the basest of crimes to shield you, and she has died in the effort. She was innocent, and as I confidently hope for

the pity of God for her, so do I recommend you to that pity. One of old slew his brother," said the old judge, rising and shaking his white head at the prisoner, "and he went forth into the world to live his life with the mark of Cain upon his brow. Such, sir, is to be your unhappy fate. Let the memory of the woman who loved you, and who lies in yonder room, whom you killed as surely as you did Roscoe, lead you, if possible, to better things. You are discharged, yet I say to you, as I say to those who leave not this place except to go to the scaffold, may God have mercy upon your soul!"

"I'd rather have died!" cried the man. "What is there for me? Who can help me now?"

"I will, under God," whispered the Bishop, stepping over to him and slipping his arm about the poor wretched man.

He led him through the open ranks of the awe-struck, quiet people, and they left the room together.

CHAPTER XII

THE LAST LYNCHING IN CIMARRON

AT the little weather-beaten station one hot Sunday morning a single passenger alighted from the dirty car pulled by the rickety engine over the shaking railroad which was the tenuous link connecting Apache—"the flourishing city of Apache," as the weekly (and weakly) *Bazoo* mendaciously described the town—with civilization. It was the Bishop. As he stepped on the battered platform, valise in one hand and robe-case in the other, he knew that he was fixed for the next twenty-four hours: there was but one train a day, and Apache was fifty miles from anywhere or everywhere—a fact upon which the *Bazoo* dwelt with pride, as affording an undisputed monopoly in trade and cattle.

A tall, slender man was standing upon the platform when the Bishop arrived. In his

appearance were mingled the ineradicable marks of hard and incessant toil, and painful evidences of an unusual delicacy of mind and body as well. Given more bodily strength and vigor, Eldred Johnstone would have been a typical frontier farmer, hunter, or cattle-man; given a little more delicacy, a little less roughness, and he might have been taken for a college professor or a clergyman from the East on a vacation.

He stepped eagerly towards the little Bishop, whom he overtowered to a degree, and led the way to a battered wagon, whose recent washing only revealed a shameless lack of paint. With pleasant nods of recognition to the agent and the forlorn group of human flotsam which daily repaired to the station "to see the cars go by," the Bishop mounted beside his host, and with a click to the gaunt mule and flea-bitten bronco which made up the team, the pair drove away.

A mile and a half distant from the station lay a little huddle of dust-brown, sun-baked, weather-beaten buildings, towards which the road meandered aimlessly over the prairie. The town, through which they presently drove,

consisted of one long street—Main Street, of course — with a few intersecting residence streets of varying lengths. Main Street was lined on both sides with stores, saloons, a post-office, a drug-store, an "opera-house," and a ramshackly "Palace Hotel," all of frame. Two imposing brick buildings rose on different sides of the street — two-story buildings at that. One was occupied by the "New York Emporium"; upon its walls were painted in highly ornamental fashion these gigantic letters, "L. O. L. P.," which only the initiated knew signified "Leaders Of Low Prices."

The other brick building was tenanted by the Cimarron County Bank. The Daltons had raided the town and robbed the bank once; other gentry of the same ilk had tried it a second time, and in anticipation of a third visit the interior of the bank resembled an arsenal. It was easier to draw a gun than a check there.

Wooden sidewalks humped along the irregular road in front of the stores like a horse with the "heaves," and continued out into the country till they met the square, ugly little court-house, with its accompanying pendant,

the jail, both of brick; opposite these two rose the frame public school—education and justice safely anchored by the prison.

The casual visitor to Apache would have looked in vain for a church-steeple. But if he had gone down one of the side streets a short distance he might have seen an abandoned saloon, over the door of which a white sign had been nailed, whose black letters proclaimed that there was TRINITY MISSION, and that services were held there at irregular intervals by the Bishop, due notice being given. The church was open this morning, and after depositing the Bishop's robes in the corner curtained off with red flannel for a vestry-room, Johnstone and his guest drove on to the farm on the outskirts of the town to prepare for service later on.

This was the only church in Apache—in fact, in the county. It enjoyed the same monopoly in religion that the town did in trade, and with about the same negative results. The inhabitants were proud of their church, and their Bishop as well, and came loyally to the infrequent services when no game, fight, or man-hunt was on. They enjoyed the vig-

orous preaching to which they were subjected by the energetic Bishop, too.

Apache had not always rejoiced in a church. Some four years ago the Bishop had been holding services at Waywego, the nearest town to the north. After service a stranger came forward and invited him to Apache.

"We need you down there, Bishop," he said, earnestly. "There's murder, an' gamblin', an' drinkin', an' lynchin' goin' on all the time. Seems like God's got no show at all there. I've lived in them parts nigh onto thirty year—I come when there wasn't nobody but Injuns an' buffaler an' me—an' we 'ain't never had a religious service sence I been there. There's wimmin an' childern there, too. I've got some myself — w'ich I means childern, not wimmin—an' none of 'em 'ain't been baptized. I was raised in this Church, an'— Will you come, sir?"

The Bishop came, and came again and again, and, in spite of short-sighted local opposition, he established the church, baptized the children — some of them, that is — and stirred up the people generally. The town improved in manners and morals—not much,

but perceptibly; nevertheless, gambling went on, of course, and drinking prevailed as before, but the public point of view gradually changed; men grew ashamed of these things, even if they did not stop them. The cowboys on the ranges used to say, with emphatic disgust, that "Apache had got religion and gone to hell!"—a double misstatement that.

In only one particular was there no change—the vigilance committee, which comprised all the male citizens, still held its sessions; horse-stealing, murder (not killing in fair fight, be it understood), ill treatment of women—all these were expiated at the end of a rope in Judge Lynch's swift and summary court.

The Bishop thundered against it apparently in vain. Presently he sent a clergyman to reside in the town and look after its spiritual welfare—and the only thing which presented itself was a young "failure" in holy orders from England. He crooked "the pregnant hinges of the" elbow too easily! The Apaches, as they called themselves with grim pleasantry, found out his weakness, played upon

it, made him gloriously drunk, and straightway relegated him to merited contempt.

The Bishop removed him and tried again—another failure, and this time an old failure. Cimarron County had no more use for him than for his predecessor. Apache could only be preached to by a real man, and the indolent, tactless old makeshift never even gained a hearing. The Apaches preferred the Englishman; he could at least get drunk like a man and a brother! So the last man was worse than the first, and the Bishop removed him as well.

What was to be done? The religion, or lack of it, of Apache lay heavy upon his conscience; a church he would have or know the reason why, but for the present he was at his wits' end. To him at this juncture came Johnstone. Like the prophet, he solved the dilemma by saying, "Here am I—send me!"

Johnstone was a man with a history. A plain farmer-boy of humble extraction, he had just entered the preparatory class of a little Eastern fresh-water college when the great war between the States broke out. Pennsylvania was menaced by invaders. He

left school, volunteered for service, found himself in the front of the battle-line at Gettysburg almost before he had learned to handle his rifle, and a short time after lay wounded and ill in Libby Prison. When he was exchanged, long after, he was but a shadow of his former self; broken in health, with the seeds of a pulmonary trouble sown in his system, the outlook was a sad one. His father had died in the interval, his mother long since. The college course and his subsequent goal, the Episcopal ministry, were of necessity abandoned.

In this strait he did two things—a wise and a foolish. He married and went West. He was the pioneer in Cimarron County. Hard work, open-air life, the high altitude of his prairie farm, and the dry climate held consumption in check, and he lived—lived with a daily threat hanging over him. Children were born to him with unvarying regularity; rain or shine that crop never failed, until the wife, weary from much mothering, gave up the struggle, and, transferring the remainder of her vital force to the latest born, quietly sought that rest which is at once

the hope and the desert of the wife of the frontier.

The children, weak constitutionally and ill-nourished, nearly all died in infancy, and Johnstone was left at this time with Rena, a girl of eighteen, and a little boy of three. Rena kept house for her father when her mother died, and life went on as before. She was a pretty girl, with her father's delicacy of mind and body, and was the undisputed belle of Apache. All the unmarried men adored her.

When the last aspirant from the East retired, Johnstone offered himself for the work in these words:

"If you think I can do it, Bishop, an' you're willin' to trust me, you can make me a deacon, an' I'll carry on the services. I'll do what I can. When I first went to college it was with the hope of becomin' a minister some day, but the war an' this," laying his thin hand on his hollow chest, "knocked it all out. I've forgot most of what I learned, but I was raised right, an' I guess it 'll come back if you help me. There ain't much left of me now, but what there is is the Lord's, an'

He's welcome to me if you think He wants me."

The Bishop accepted the offer, and decided, in due course, to ordain him to the perpetual diaconate after such preparation as could be given him. He had come to Apache that day to do it.

The ex-saloon was never so crowded—no, not in the palmy days when it had run the biggest game and kept the best whiskey in the Territory—as it was that Sunday morning. The entire population turned out to see "Ol' El' Johnstone made inter a preacher." A queer figure he looked in the long black cassock, but there was a strange look in his thin face which stilled laughter and quenched mockery. Rena wept softly, and the good women in the front seats wept with her, while even "Tearaway Mag" and her wretched sisters in the back of the church were strangely moved.

The Bishop never preached better than on that day. He spoke of the first Macedonian cry which had come to him from Apache through this man; he referred to the fruitless efforts made to keep the church going, and

the gradual improvement that he saw in spite of failures. He dwelt upon the hopes he cherished now that God had raised up a man from among them to minister to them. Then he turned to Johnstone, standing erect in the crowded room, so very still, and poured out his soul to the man in passionate appeal and inspired prophecy. To him the Bishop committed the wild flock, confident that he would not be found wanting.

"Kind of a religious cow-puncher," remarked Lone-hand Pete, with no thought of irreverence, "to round us all up in God's corral."

Johnstone, with a shaking heart, knelt down while apostolic hands were laid upon his head, and when he faced the congregation again in his snow-white surplice, with the stole crossed over his breast, he looked as an ancient crusader might have—half soldier, half saint, all man. That was the Bishop's first triumph in Apache. The old farmer took off his vestments, and during the week went back to his plough, laboring as usual for his meagre daily bread. On Sundays he talked to the people who crowded the church to hear him. From a critical human stand-point there was little to

be admired in those talks, but somehow to the people it seemed as if God spake through him. Apache had a man at last; they respected him, and were satisfied if not converted. The improvement in manners and morals continued — except in the matter of lynching. The community was a law unto itself in that particular. But with an eye single to that end the Bishop effected another mighty revolution—his second triumph.

The community was dazed when he persuaded Lone-hand Pete, the most successful gambler of the vicinity, to give up cards and run for sheriff. When elected, through the Bishop's unbounded influence, he announced that hereafter the law had to be respected, and public or private vengeance "don't go no more." The ex-gambler was known as the quickest man on the draw, the surest shot, and the coolest man in Cimarron County—and that was the world, as far as Apache was concerned. With Johnstone in the pulpit and Pete in the jail, the Bishop thought that society in Apache was well protected at both ends.

When the sheriff said he would have no more lynching, the men only smiled. When

Johnstone argued against it, they allowed that he was right enough in theory, but theories did not go in Apache. If any man laid a hand on their "wimmin or hosses"—let him look out; neither pulpit nor jail should protect him. In the face of such threats Pete swore softly and looked to his "weepins," and Johnstone prayed and argued more zealously than ever, and they both waited.

There drifted into the town one day a negro who signalized his arrival by robbing the "New York Emporium." The sheriff, who had been thirsting for some excitement, captured and promptly jailed the criminal. He was tried, found guilty, sentenced, and served his term. When he was released he fell ill. Johnstone, who had visited him often in prison, nursed him back to health, and finally, since no one else would take him, gave him work upon his farm. As was his nature, he trusted him entirely.

Johnstone came back to his house one afternoon from a long ride to visit the sick wife of a distant cattle-man, to find the negro gone. The baby was not at the gate to greet his father as he rode up; he was not playing about

the yard either. No one answered his call. It seemed unusually still around the house. Letting the reins fall to the ground, Johnstone sprang from his cayuse and ran towards the door. "Rena!" he called, "Rena!" as he ran. There was no one in the kitchen. He stopped on the threshold a moment, and a low moan broke the ghastly silence. He ran to the next room.

In a corner, in a doubled-up heap, his neck broken by the force with which he had apparently been thrown against the wall, lay the little boy—dead. At his feet Rena was stretched on the floor. She was bruised and broken, livid and bloody, but faintly alive and feebly moaning. She had not given up without the instinctive and desperate struggle of assailed womanhood; her clothing was in rags; the furniture was disordered and broken. These things he noted in one swift glance as he sank on his knees beside her. There were black marks around her neck, prints of fingers; . . . in one clinched hand there was a piece of torn cloth; he recognized it—it was from an old coat of his own which he had given to the negro.

As he knelt by her in dumb agony she lifted her head, opened her eyes—how vividly bright and blue they were he noticed even then—looked hard at him for a moment, murmured something incoherently, and fell back, dead. He lifted her gently and laid her on the bed, closed her eyes softly, and put the baby down by her side. Then he covered the two silent figures with a blanket, stood still a moment, turned to the corner, and picking up his Winchester rifle and his gun (revolver), he walked rapidly through the house and yard, sprang on his horse, and galloped madly away towards the town.

In the streets he found mounted men already assembling; they were all armed, and two or three of them carried long, new Manila ropes, one end forming a noose. A fierce discussion among them died away as Johnstone rode up. In view of their patent purpose, the men eyed him askance, scarcely knowing what to expect from him. There was a gray look of determination on the thin face which was unusual.

"Boys," he asked, at last, "what are ye goin' to do?"

His voice was dry and husky, and he spoke with evident effort. There was a further silence.

"Goin' to ketch yer nigger an' lynch him," finally replied one of the men, defiantly. "He run off with Joe Key's hoss arter most killin' the boy w'at was leadin' him," continued the man.

"An' don't you say nothin' to hender us, nuther, El' Johnstone," cried another.

A perfect roar of shouts and curses broke from the men clustering about the preacher. Johnstone sat his horse in unmoved silence until the noise died down somewhat, then he laughed, and the men stopped to listen. Such a laugh would silence a madman.

"Come with me!" he cried, turning sharply and galloping off.

The wondering crowd followed him at once. When they reached his house he dismounted, and led them all into it. They crowded through the kitchen and filled the back room. He gently drew back the blanket from the bed. . . .

The rough men stared at the woman and the baby. Hands went to hats, faces flushed, breaths came deeper.

"Good God!" whispered one.

"The sweetest and prettiest girl in the county," muttered another.

"The baby, too—poor little kid!" cried a third.

Young Bud Trego stepped softly to the bedside and laid his hand on Rena.

"Boys," he said, brokenly, "I—I—loved her! W'at are ye goin' to do?"

Johnstone turned and grasped him by the hand; there was a quick interchange of fierce glances between the two.

"Let's git out o' here; we're wastin' time," promptly cried Jim Wallace, the keeper of the hotel. The men crowded through the rooms again, sprang to their horses, and galloped down the road, Johnstone, swaying in his saddle like a drunken man, in the lead, Trego and Wallace by his side.

Over on the prairie two horsemen were riding furiously — one was the sheriff and the other was the black man, a prisoner, bound to his horse. They were desperately endeavoring to reach the jail. The mob caught sight of them and raced after them. The crowd was nearer the jail than the two, better

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

"HE LED THEM ALL INTO THE HOUSE"

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

mounted than the negro, and they rapidly overhauled the fugitives. The sheriff, dropping the reins of his horse, but keeping tight hold of the lariat attached to the negro, turned in his saddle and fired at the nearest pursuer. Bud Trego saw the motion; with a quick jerk he threw his horse into the air. The animal received the bullet, staggered, and fell. Bud disengaged himself and ran along the prairie. A dozen shots rang out in reply, and the horses of the sheriff and his prisoner went down instantly to the ground. The sheriff alighted on his feet; he still held the end of the lariat. The man turned about instantly, and, pistol in hand, confronted the mob, which now dismounted. His courage was magnificent. Not for nothing had he been called Lone-hand Pete. He was playing one now—the hardest he ever undertook.

"Back!" he cried. "He's my prisoner. I'm goin' to keep him. Don't come no nearer. I'll put a bullet into the first man that moves."

The crowd stopped irresolutely.

"You don't know w'at he's done, Pete," cried Wallace. "'Tain't only hoss-stealin'; it's Johnstone's gal an' the kid—Rena, you

know. That black hound's done 'em to death."

The sheriff turned white under his tan. He, too, had loved the girl—secretly and from a distance, be it said—but his hand never trembled as he held the pistol pointed at the eager crowd. With his left hand he twitched the rope tied about the prostrate negro.

"Git up!" he cried, spurning the man with his foot. The man staggered to his feet. "Did you do it, you dog?" queried the sheriff, hoarsely.

The man nodded unwillingly. "Ya', suh, I did it. Oh, fo' Gord's sek, suh, doan' let 'em tek me, suh." He sank down at the sheriff's feet again, grovelling, writhing, and shrieking.

"You see how 'tis, sheriff. Give the man up!" cried Wallace, fiercely.

"No! by God! Duty! I won't do it. The law's got to be preserved this day. Back!" he cried again.

A roar of rage was blasted up from the crowd, pistols were thrust forward, but the sheriff stood there undaunted, the negro cling-

ing to his feet. Johnstone forced his way to the front.

"Pete, he's my man. I treated him kind; I took him in; an' in return he's done Rena an' the kid to death. Give him to me; I've got to have him."

"Not to you nor to no man. What 'd the Bishop—"

A revolver-shot rang out — two, in fact. Bud Trego had crawled, unobserved in the excitement, far to the right of the sheriff, his revolver cracked, and the bullet broke the sheriff's pistol arm. Before his gun fell Pete managed to pull the trigger. The bullet went wild, and the next moment the crowd was on him. He struggled desperately, but was at once overpowered and dragged back. The negro, screaming and babbling with terror, was jerked to his feet and held erect, while Johnstone cast a rope about his neck, the end of which was thrown over the low branch of a stunted cottonwood. With readiness born of long practice the men tailed on to it. Then there was a pause.

"Say a prayer if you kin!" cried Wallace to the frightened negro. "We don't lynch

no man without givin' him a chance to pray."

But no prayer came from the criminal. The voice of the sheriff now broke forth once more.

"Men, think what you're doin'. The law will settle with him. Give him back to me an' I'll see justice done. Ef you don't, I'll arrest every one of you. I know you all—"

"Oh, string him up, boys, and let's have done with this!" cried Trego.

"Wait!" shrieked the sheriff. "You dare not hang him. I promised the Bishop, an' I can't go back on my word. You, Johnstone, you're a preacher—a minister of the gospel. You've spoke agin this thing over and over. Where's your honesty? A nice deal you're givin' us! Are you goin' to let this go on? A nice Christian you are, leadin' a mob! What I say I do. Yes, I know you loved her, Bud Trego; so did I. For God's sake, Johnstone. . . ."

A voice whispered to Johnstone's soul, a light shone in his heart; the men saw it in his face as he staggered out in the open between the mob and the negro.

"Boys," he cried, brokenly, "the sheriff's

right. He's the best Christian among us. Vengeance is God's, not ourn. The law. . . ."

He turned swiftly, and before the astonished men could stop him cast off the noose and cut the lashing, so that the negro stood forth unbound and free.

"Let the law take its course," he cried.

And then he fell at the negro's feet, blood gushing from his mouth. The long-deferred catastrophe had come at last; the hemorrhage was sudden and awful. Life rushed from him, but again the voice spoke to him; there was something else he could do.

"I forgive him," he said.

The words frothed through the blood and foam. A moment after, no longer able to speak, he lifted himself on his left arm, and with his right hand traced a few words in the dust in which he lay.

"Law— Forg . . ."

He fell forward, with his lips upon the unfinished word—dead.

The men stood about in awe-struck silence as the negro stooped down and turned the body over; his hands were red-wetted in the act.

"His blood's on my han's!" he cried, shudderingly, as he rose to his feet. No one moved or spoke. "Gemmen," he continued, "I'm ready ter die, an' I wants ter. I done it. I was mad, an' I'm sorry. I wisht I hadn't. You can tek yer will o' me." He slipped the rope about his neck again and stepped over Johnstone's body towards the crowd. The sheriff, one arm bloody and dangling, stepped forward and seized him by the shoulder. "You're my prisoner," he said, slowly; "the law will deal with you."

"Ya', suh," said the negro, quietly. His courage had come back with Johnstone's words. "I's willin' ter go wid you. He fergib me."

And, no man hindering, the two walked through the crowd and entered the jail.

Everybody in Cimarron County came to the funeral of the father, the daughter, and the little son. The Bishop, summoned by telegraph, was there and conducted the services, and Trego, Wallace, and the sheriff were chief among many mourners. There was a public meeting that night to consider a monument to Johnstone. The Bishop presided, and, af-

ter discussing various elaborate, ornate, and extravagant propositions, they finally decided, at the instigation of the Bishop, that the best monument to the humble preacher would be to have no more lynchings in Cimarron County forever. And that was unanimously passed, Jim Wallace making and Bud Trego seconding the motion.

Then they passed the hat and took up a generous collection to build a new church with a proper steeple to it, if the Bishop would promise to send them a minister again.

"Men," said the Bishop, when this question was put to him at the next meeting, "I already have a preacher for you. One man, I am glad to say, has volunteered to fit himself for the work our hero has just laid down. I have agreed to prepare him and assist him. His acceptance of this great trust will leave an official vacancy in Cimarron County. After his ordination you will be called upon to elect another sheriff."

And just here Lone-hand arose by the Bishop's side and faced the meeting. There was a stern look in his eyes; they had seen it before, and they knew that he was in earnest.

CHAPTER XIII

THE BISHOP'S DILEMMA AND THE SOLDIER'S

AS the train pulled out of Fort Carpenter the door of the smoking-car opened and a young officer came down the aisle. As he approached, the Bishop noted with pleasure the strong, erect, compact figure, the soldierly grace of his movements, and his general clean-cut and well-set-up appearance. As the soldier came abreast of the Bishop's seat, he stopped with military abruptness and lifted his cap, smiling in gratified recognition.

"How fortunate I am, sir, in meeting you!" he exclaimed. "May I sit here?"

"The pleasure is mine," answered the Bishop, genially. "I am rather tired of this dusty theological tome," he continued, as he exhibited a modern novel to the amused glance of the lieutenant. "I have been pining for a

little human society after the unreality of this volume. How far are you going?"

"Oh, about a hundred miles up the road to Hiawatha, to look at some horses for the regiment which are offered for sale," replied the officer.

The Bishop often visited the several army posts in his diocese, and had a great many friends among the officers and soldiers who were stationed there from time to time. Of them all, none were more devoted to him than the jaunty young first lieutenant whom he had just met; in fact, it had been only a few years since Lieutenant Ewing had taken to himself a blushing bride, and the Bishop had married them. It was not so long since, either, that the Bishop had baptized "the most remarkable child ever born on the reservation, sir," so there was no need for an introduction, and the rusty black coat of the cleric settled itself against the natty blue blouse of the soldier, and the two mingled cigar smoke and gossip for a pleasant hour or two as the "limited" whirled them over the brilliant, sun-flowered, corn-tasselled prairie.

Not only was the personality of the officer known to the Bishop, but he had learned something of the man's military history as well. It was just after the great railroad strike in Chicago. As everybody who remembers current events knows, the United States troops had been sent to the great city and the strike had been broken by the power of the government. The officer was then attending the "Post Graduate School" at Fort Carpenter, popularly and irreverently known as the "Kindergarten." Most of the young officers, his classmates in the school, had on that occasion been ordered to the front at once, and he was very much dismayed to find that he had, as he thought, been overlooked, since his name was not mentioned in the orders. He had hurried at once to old General Blythe Townsend, the post-commander, and had asked for an explanation. The general had suavely pointed out to him that he was a young married man with a new-born baby, and, as the situation threatened to become dangerous, he had concluded to order to the front only the unmarried young officers and the old stagers who were grandfathers. Why he

made this discrimination was never apparent.

The lieutenant had begged and pleaded and protested as much as his junior rank permitted, but the old general had proved inexorable, until, just as he was about to give up in despair, the young officer remembered that, as the school was not in session, he was entitled to a month's leave of absence. He demanded it, received it, bade a hasty good-bye to his wife and baby, caught the first train, and at his own expense followed the troops to Chicago.

He went straight to the headquarters of the general in command and offered his services as a volunteer in any capacity from that of a private up. The general had plenty of young officers at that time, and was at a loss what to do with him. Our red-headed lieutenant solved the dilemma himself in his own way, however, by informing the general that he knew how to telegraph, whereupon he was appointed to a staff position and had the handling of the wires.

It was tame enough, barring the excitement of climbing a pole and tapping a wire

now and then, until one day information was brought to headquarters that an attack was to be made at once on the stock-yards. There were a little handful of men and a lieutenant stationed there, and the plan of the strikers involved almost of necessity the killing of the whole party. The situation was a critical one. If the strikers succeeded in this there would be no telling what would happen.

After vainly endeavoring to communicate with the place by telegraph—an attempt frustrated because the strikers had cut the wires—the general wrote out an order, handed it to the lieutenant, pointed to his horse, and bade him at all hazards to get through the mob and make the situation known to the lieutenant in command, then ride on till he met the Gatling detachment, and bring it up to support the stock-yards' guard, all of which he brilliantly accomplished.

The Bishop and the officer were talking about the strike. It was the first time they had met since the trouble. The older man was leading the younger to tell him about his experiences. He had heard, as has been said, about this incident, and after some des-

ultory conversation on the subject he asked him how he managed to get through with the order.

"Well, sir," said the young man, "it's not much of a story, but if you would like to hear it, here goes: I did not have any trouble, of course, until I reached the railroad yard. I loped along on the general's big black horse until I got to the crossing of the tracks near the round-house. I had been coming down the road at a hand-gallop, with the hope that perhaps I could dash through the crowd I saw in front of me there; but it didn't seem to give way—got thicker all of a sudden—and, as I was not quite prepared to jump the beast into the midst of it, I had to slow up. Of course I had my uniform on, and, though I was without a sword, there was a big army revolver in the holster. The crowd, which looked ugly enough, parted reluctantly before me on the outskirts, but presently I got well into the middle of it. It seemed to me they closed around me in a solid mass of rage and hate.

"I could hardly control the horse, they

made him so nervous. He was a restless animal, and part of the time I was afraid he would hurt somebody and part of the time I was afraid he would not. As for myself, I will admit, Bishop, I never was so scared in my life. You have heard about blood turning into water in a man's veins, and all that? Well, I felt just that way, surrounded by thousands of infuriated people. Wherever I looked were faces convulsed with passion; hands were lifted and shaken in frantic temper; curses and execrations were hurled upon me and upon the government. Begging your pardon, sir, it was like hell let loose. It—it just dried you up—withered you! There was nothing that kept me up but the uniform I wore; I could not disgrace it—that and the message. Upon the delivery of that message, you know, sir, probably depended the lives of the little guard at the stock-yard—my comrades—and I just *had* to get through!

"I did not say anything to the crowd. I just kept a tight rein on the horse, patted him on the neck, and urged him forward. We managed to worm ourselves through the

jam little by little, and I hoped that perhaps in the end I could get through without a fight; but right in the thick of it a great, big, raw-boned woman — she had a dress on, that is, but she didn't look like a woman in any other way—thrust herself through the crowd and began taunting the men with being afraid to stop me. She was an awful-looking creature, and I was more afraid of her than of all the rest, I think. Finally, in her own blind passion, she grabbed the horse by the bridle, and, lifting a muscular arm which might have belonged to a blacksmith, she started to throw an iron coupling-pin in my face.

"I realized instantly that if anything or anybody struck me it would be all over with me, that the first blow against me would be a signal for the whole gang to let loose. I did not care for myself a bit, I pledge you my word of honor, sir; I felt as good as dead, anyway; but the thought of the peril to the detachment was on my mind, the fate of those men was before me. Woman or no woman, nothing must stand in the path of the United States. I reached

forward quick as a flash and grabbed the revolver from the holster. I struck her with the butt of it in the temple; she went down like a felled ox, of course. I hated to do it; it seemed cowardly to strike a woman, but it was the lives of my comrades and my duty against hers—she had to give way. It had to be.

"Would you believe it, sir, from the time that woman fell all the fear that had paralyzed me left me? I did not care for anything; the blood came back to my heart, and it felt red and warm, too. I cocked that big revolver, shook the reins over that black stallion's neck, dug my spurs into his flanks, and we started forward. This time the yelling mob did fall back. I guess it was the pistol and the horse. I tell you, sir, we got through the last part of the crowd in a hurry, and I got the message to the stock-yard and brought up the Gatlings in time to save the detachment. That's all. But it was a tight place, the tightest I was ever in."

"I have heard of it," said the Bishop, "though never the exact story, of course.

Were you not complimented in general orders for it?"

"Yes, sir," said the young officer, blushing, "the general did say something about it, but I never saw so much glory in it. You see, I do not call it heroic to knock down a woman."

"My boy," said the Bishop, after reflecting a moment, while he blew a cloud of smoke in the air, "a man naturally does not wish to strike a woman; but there are times when perhaps it requires more courage and heroism to strike a woman who stands in the way than it would to face a thousand men. There are times when a woman cannot plead her sex. As you say, though, that was a tight place."

"Yes, sir; and, if I know myself, if it had not been for the others depending upon me, I do not think I could have done it; but the weight of that message was upon me. Were you ever in a tight place yourself, Bishop?" ventured the young man, after a little pause.

"Well, yes, I think I have been in a great many. Hardly such as you have mentioned, though," answered the Bishop, gravely.

"Well, sir, story for story. I should like to hear one of yours."

The train was pulling up a heavy grade at the time and going slowly. By the side of the track ran a country road. A young farmer was driving a pair of spirited horses along the road as the train passed by.

"Do you see that farmer out there?" said the Bishop, pointing through the window.

"Yes, sir."

"Well, that reminds me of a journey I took through my diocese about ten years ago, when I had just been made a bishop, and of a story which began then and ended yesterday. I got on the train one afternoon, and found in the seat in which I chanced to sit a paper-backed book. I picked it up and began to read it. The title was unfamiliar, and the name of the author I had never heard before. I shall remember both to my dying day. It was a rather well-written book, and I read on unconconsciously for a dozen pages until I discovered the character of the story — or, I suppose I should say, the lack of character. I think from what I saw that no more in-

sidiously corrupting, utterly depraved book had been sold or could be written by a human emissary of Satan than that volume. On the impulse of the moment I turned to the open window — it was summer — and with no thought but a desire to get rid of the loathsome thing, I flung it far out of the car.

"The circumstances were just as they were a few moments since. It was an up grade, or for some other reason the train was going slowly. There was a young man driving a farm-wagon along the road, which there nearly approached the track. The book sailed through the air and fell into the wagon at his feet. I saw him pick up the book, and in my excitement I thrust my head out of the car-window and shouted to him to throw it away, an injunction which he naturally did not heed; and then the train swept around a curve and I lost sight of him."

"Is that all?" asked the lieutenant, as the Bishop paused.

"No," he said, "it is not. I wish to Heaven it were. Last week I was holding

a mission in Selopa. You know what a mission is? It is a sort of revival, with some of the distinguishing features of a revival left out and new features added. I usually speak very plainly upon different subjects on such occasions; in fact, I speak plainly on almost all occasions."

"Yes, we know you do," interrupted the young man, smiling. "You have made us all feel pretty uncomfortable at times at the Post."

"I presume you needed it," continued the Bishop, calmly. "Well, on this occasion I was speaking of personal purity and the things which go to break it down. Among other things I referred to the evil influence of a bad book, and I told this story that I have just told you.

"A great many people waited to see me after the services, as usual, but I finally disposed of all of them except one wretched, miserable woman. She came up to me after everybody had gone and grasped me fiercely by the arm, and asked me to accompany her to her home on the outskirts of the city. There was some one ill there she wished me to see. We walked along in the dark in

silence. Finally we reached the house. It was a squalid ruin. There was one room in the hovel and a man was lying on a bed in that room. He was in the last stages of a loathsome disease. Drink and dissipation had put their brutalizing, debauching marks all over his body; the contagion of his life had extended even to the miserable woman who had brought me to the house; and the two faced me, one lying on the bed, the other standing by it, wrecks of humanity, blurred images of God."

The Bishop stopped and looked out of the window for a moment.

"My boy," he said, finally, turning and resting his hand upon the young man's shoulder, "weigh well your lightest action; you can never dream what results may come from it. That woman said to me: 'Do you know what became of that vile book you threw from that car-window? Ask him. He got it! We were just married then. It's all come from that; that was the beginning, and who's to blame?'"

There was a long silence, which the lieutenant finally broke.

"That was a tight place, sir," he said, sympathetically—"a harder situation than mine."

"Yes," said the Bishop, gravely; "you are right. The weight of a message was on your soul, but the weight of a soul was on mine."

CHAPTER XIV

HOW THE BISHOP CAME TO THE PLAINS

THE old man was alone in his room. He sat in an arm-chair by the window, his faded eyes listlessly scanning the gray horizon. The house stood on the edge of the town, and there was nothing but the prairie between him and the end of the world. It was a late afternoon in December, and it was raining: life was ending for him in a winter rain. A mortal sickness was upon him. The room in which he sat was meagrely furnished and painfully bare. A case of well-thumbed books of a distinctly theological character, an old-fashioned desk littered with papers, a small sheet-iron stove, the arm-chair in which he sat, another chair of the "kitchen" variety, a few pictures, prints as good in subject as they were poor in execution, and a faded, old-fashioned photograph of a woman, hanging

upon the walls, summed up his earthly possessions. His world—his field of action—was narrowed to the room in which he sat and a dingy little bedroom beyond. He sat listlessly in silence.

He was the rector of the parish church of a little Western town, but it was evident that he would not be a rector of anything very long. He was the wreck of a man who had never been of the physical stuff of which heroes are made, yet there was a touch of fire still in his dim eyes that spoke of a soul overweighted by an insufficient body. The man was waiting, not only waiting for the end, but waiting for any break in the monotony of his life; at that moment he was waiting for a visitor. He was expecting the Bishop. He had never seen the Bishop, and he longed earnestly to meet him.

The man's history had been uneventful and commonplace. He had been ordained to the ministry years and years since, and through family influence and ecclesiastical connections had been made the rector of a pleasant parish in a quiet, sequestered little Eastern town. He had lived there and done his humble work

faithfully all his life until the death of his wife and the breaking-up of his family a few months since. He had been particularly touched while in that impressionable condition by an appeal which the Bishop had put forth for men to work in the neglected, untilled, needy, clamorous fields of the West. He had abandoned everything—torn up his life by the roots, as it were—and had gone out to become the rector of the little parish in which he sat dying, and of the parts adjacent, comprising perhaps fifty square miles.

His arrival had been the means of a great awakening—to himself. He saw the needs of the situation as perhaps a man of tougher fibre and less introspective nature would never have seen them, and had plunged into the work with the vigor of a boy. The vigor of a boy and the constitution of an old man do not accord; he broke down. The Bishop had been away when he came, and he had not rightly understood the circumstances when he accepted his offer of services; and he did not realize that the man was so old, or he would never have allowed him to come to the diocese and undertake the work. But it was

too late now, and the Bishop was coming to see him. It was the first time he had been able to visit him. The old man was eagerly expecting his visit.

Presently the door opened and the little Bishop entered. He started in surprise as he saw the thin, broken figure in the chair. Stepping quickly over to the invalid's side to prevent him from rising, he sat down, and the two began to talk. There was a puzzled look in the Bishop's eyes, as if he could not bring forth from the storehouse of his memory the identifying key to the old man's personality. Finally he interrupted the conversation by saying, eagerly:

"I know you now. I thought your name was familiar from the very first. Are you not the man who had the parish church at X for so many years?"

"Yes, Bishop," replied the other, "I am that man."

"How blind I have been!" exclaimed the Bishop. "I never thought. I ought to have known. What on earth made you come out here?"

"You did," quietly answered the aged priest.

"I?"

"Yes."

"How was that?"

"You remember that appeal you published in *The Church Militant* some six months ago?"

"The appeal for men to work this field—for volunteers?"

"That was it. Well, I read it, and I came."

"Yes," said the Bishop, "you came, and you alone out of the thousands to whom it was addressed, who might have heeded the call."

"And anybody might better have heeded it than I," replied the old man. "But I came. I have done nothing, and now, instead of a help, I am a burden to you."

"A burden I am glad to bear," answered the Bishop, softly, "if only for the inspiration you have afforded me. I think it would have broken my heart if nobody had come; and even one man, old and feeble, shows that there are heroes still on the earth."

"You praise me too much," the old man said, in swift deprecation.

"Not I. But tell me why you did it. There

must have been some reason to make a man like you leave the work of a lifetime for this." The Bishop's glance swept the room and the sodden prairie outside. "Weren't you happy where you were?" he added.

"Happy! Why, my life had been the sweetest and happiest that could have been imagined. Had I ordered it myself, it could not have been cast in fairer paths. It was so easy and so pleasant that I was ashamed of it. My wife died just before I read your appeal, my children were scattered; there was nothing left to tie me to the home of my boyhood, manhood, and old age; and so, with the hope that I might be able to do something in the needy fields of the West, though I was an old man, and, I now see, a broken one, I came. My life had been such a failure from the point of view of a man of action— Oh, I don't mean that I neglected my duty or anything of that sort. I had always done my best to teach and lead my people, to help my wife, to bring up my children, and to lead a sober, righteous, God-fearing life. I succeeded in some measure, I trust. . . . You will not think this is self-assertion?"

"No, no, not at all," said the Bishop. "Go on. I am deeply interested."

"It was all so easy. Not the being good, of course," he added, simply, "but the life I led; and when I read your appeal, in the state of mind consequent upon my loss, I felt the only thing left for me to do was to come out here to try to do some work before I died. There was nothing to keep me and everything to call me. What had I done that my life should have been so easy and pleasant, while other men, like you, Bishop, were fighting the world, the flesh, and the devil on the frontier? I came . . . I was a fool. As a servant of God I had been a failure; I had not done anything in a long life except build up the spiritual life of that sleepy little town, and it seems to me that it would have grown just as well without me," he added, bitterly. "I thought I could redeem myself by something splendid at the end of my days, and it has all come to this. I'm done for."

His wasted hand tapped restlessly upon the arm of the chair; his old eyes filled with tears as he turned away his face and looked out upon the gray desolation of the winter rain.

"Oh, is it so bad as that?" asked the Bishop, softly.

"Yes," replied the older man. "It is all over with me; the doctor says it is only a question of days, and I know he tells the truth. But I want you to believe that it is not death I fear; nothing of that sort."

"I quite believe it; I am sure of that," said the Bishop.

"Thank you; but it is not only because my life has been so easy and pleasant that I feel that it has been wasted and a failure. I tell you, sir," he exclaimed, leaning forward, "I have been here just six months, and that is enough to assure me that every word you said was true. I have learned to know these people, to know something of their courage, their devotion, their generosity, their zest for work. The hope of the nation is here, the hope of the Church, and all that is needed is men—men," he cried, with unexpected strength, "who love God, who love their fellows, and who are willing to come here and work for them and with them until they both grow together into the knowledge and into the stature of the Son of Man. Not men broken as I am."

He sank back in his chair exhausted. Neither man spoke for a little time.

Presently the Bishop, who had been thinking deeply, broke the silence:

"And so you think you are a failure, do you, and that you have done nothing for the West, do you? You remember your first confirmation class?"

"My first confirmation class!" exclaimed the old man, in surprise. "Why, that must have been nearly fifty years ago!"

"Yes, all of that, I think," answered the Bishop.

"Yes, certainly I recall it; in fact, I think I remember it more clearly than any other which I ever presented."

"How many were in it?" asked the Bishop.

"One," answered the old man, smiling. "It seems to me I began with a failure, just as I am ending with one."

"Tell me something about him, or her, that made up the class," said the Bishop.

"Well, sir, that was my first charge—except this, my only charge in life. I came out from the seminary with all of the hopes and anticipations of youth, and I took charge of that

parish imagining that I was going to effect a religious revolution in that town. Presently the bishop—old Bishop Griswold—named a date for his first visitation, and I began the preparation of a confirmation class. I was young then and enthusiastic and interesting, I suppose, and lots of people came to the church. I brought together all the young people I could find—I believe forty or fifty—and I labored with them as I have never worked with anybody, except during these last six months out here. I preached to them, reasoned with them, read to them, discussed with them, prayed over them; it seems to me that all that mortal man could do I did.

"I thought I was to have the most glorious class to present to the bishop for confirmation that that town had ever seen. Finally he came, and I could offer him but one—just one solitary little girl! I declare, Bishop, my heart was almost broken at this small result of all my labors, at that little ending of all my hopes. It seemed to me that it fairly took the heart out of me for years. I have presented large classes in later years, perhaps as large as anybody could expect in such a town,

"'I HAVE PRESENTED LARGE CLASSES IN LATER YEARS'"

but I never got over that sense of impotent failure. You see, as I said, I began the way I am ending."

"Do you remember what became of that little girl?" asked the Bishop, quietly. "Do you remember anything about her character, what she was?"

"She was a good little girl, a lovely girl, as I recall, and bade fair to grow into a noble woman."

"Do you know whether she did or not?"

"No. She went West a few years after her confirmation, and I lost sight of her. I have never heard from her since then. I can only say that while I knew her she lived up to the promise of her confirmation."

"I can tell you something about her, my friend," said the Bishop. "She did go West—or what was West in those days; we call it East now—and she grew up into womanhood. She built her character upon the solid foundation which you had laid in her childhood, and she pursued her course in that path wherein you, under God, had planted her feet. Presently she met a young man in the city in which she lived—a young man who did not know

whether he had a soul to save or not, and who would not have cared if he had known it; and the young man loved her. By the favor of God she returned his affection. She showed that young man his own soul. She led him to his Master, then she married him. God called him to the ministry of the Church. The call came through her sweet lips. She remained by him and helped him as he studied to perfect himself for the work, and when he was ordained to the priesthood she stood by him through days of toil and struggle while he fought his way upward.

"Friends said it was a miracle, but it was not; it was the grace of God and a woman's love, for presently God wanted a bishop for this great Western field, and He took this young man and brought him out here and set him down and bade him work. Oh, my brother, my brother, he stands before you to-day, and thanks you and blesses you for the work that you did in that little maiden's heart in that little Eastern town!"

The Bishop paused; his voice had risen as he had talked, but now it sank into softness again as he took up his story once more.

"She's gone now, like your own wife; and of the children that blessed us, some are asleep and some are away, but I am here, and God is with me. Whatever I have done, whatever I shall do, has come from my association with that little girl whom you brought to Christ. Never say again that your life has been a failure, and that you have done nothing in this world. My friend, have you not learned that the failures of men are the successes of God?"

The Bishop sank down on his knees and rested his head upon the knee of the other. The older man laid his hand upon the bent, gray head of the Bishop and whispered a few words of prayer and benediction. Presently the Bishop arose and walked out of the room. Like most men, he felt ashamed of himself for having given way to his emotion, and he wished to get away until he could recover his equipoise again.

The old man was left in the room alone. The rain had ceased. There was a rift through the gray cloud on the horizon; the light of the sun shone gloriously through into the bare chamber. It fell upon the

happy face of the old man in loving, golden touch.

"Lord," he murmured, closing his eyes, "now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace!"

CHAPTER XV

"LOVE DIVINE ALL LOVE EXCELLING"

WE were the only passengers in the combination-car—half-baggage, half-passenger—bumping along at the end of a long string of freight-cars on the solitary daily train to Arapahoe, the terminus of the road. It was late in the afternoon and the setting sun was streaming its light over the verdant prairie—that season there had been no drouth — with a splendor and magnificence that are paralleled only on the sea. We were both tired out from our all-day journey on the slow train, with its long stops at the dusty little way-stations, and we were anxious to get to Arapahoe, where we were to consecrate a new church—a brick church, by-the-way—on the following Sunday.

"Did I ever tell you of my most memorable visit to Arapahoe?" asked the Bishop, looking

up from the tattered old copy of *Harper's Weekly* with which he had beguiled the last hour of the journey.

"No," I replied, "that was before my time, I believe."

I was a new-comer in the diocese, comparatively speaking.

"Yes," answered the Bishop. "Something in this paper recalled it to me. This notice of the Irving-Terry performance of 'Macbeth' in New York, with the pictures, you know," he added, handing me the journal.

"What connection is there, Bishop, between your most memorable visit to Arapahoe and the Irving-Terry performance of 'Macbeth'?"

"Not any," said the Bishop, "except that it reminded me of another theatrical performance which I attended in Arapahoe. I am not one of those clergymen who join in the clerical hue and cry against theatres," he continued, reflectively. "In fact, I think the theatre may be a means of grace, and that a good play is uplifting and elevating."

"Do you speak from experience?" I asked.

"Well, no—that is, not exactly. Of course, when I was a young man, I remember going to

theatres more or less, but since I have been ordained I think I have only been twice—once when I was taken by my host and hostess in New York to see this Irving-Terry performance a few years ago, and the other time at Arapahoe. But these two visits convinced me that the theatre can sometimes teach a needed lesson.

"Arapahoe," continued the old man—and now that I had him fairly started I breathed softly so as not to interrupt him or check the current of his thoughts, hoping that I should get one of the stories we youngsters prized so much from this veteran—"Arapahoe was one of the toughest places on the border. When I first decided to start services there I wrote to the only man in the town whose name I knew, and announced my intention. He said I could come along and that they would fix things up for me in good shape. The railroad wasn't built there in those days, and the last thirty miles of the journey had to be made by wagon over the trail. I was astonished when I reached the station to find some twenty-five or thirty horsemen portentously armed and picturesquely costumed gathered about the

wagon which had been provided for me, who declared that they constituted themselves my escort!

"I learned en route from my communicative friend who drove the wagon that there was some little antagonism to holding religious services in the town; and, as the opposition had organized, a church-party had been gathered together to see fair-play, and, as they phrased it, 'They wasn't goin' to see no shootin' done agin the minister 'less'n they c'd take a hand!' You may imagine," continued the Bishop, smiling at the recollection, "that I did not feel very comfortable even when I looked at my stalwart defenders. However, in accordance with regulations prescribed by the 'religious-party' of the town, which, I am happy to say, turned out to be in a considerable majority, the congregation, or the opposition, was forced to leave its guns with the ushers, and we got through all right.

"It was a very unpromising beginning, but —well, you will see the nicest little brick church in the diocese to-morrow, as one of the results of our efforts, and there were other results, too. I grew to be rather popular in that

town," continued the Bishop, "I don't know exactly why."

I knew well enough, but discreetly said nothing.

"On the rare occasions of my visitations, the church, or the abandoned saloon used for the church, was always crowded. It wasn't in a good location for a saloon—that's why it was abandoned—but any place would do for a church, you know. Well, whenever I came the people took the day off to attend the services. They used to say it was Sunday only when the Bishop came around. But I have changed all that," continued the old pioneer, as a quiet smile of satisfaction overspread his face.

"But about the theatre, Bishop?"

"I'm coming to that. I became so popular, in fact, that there was not a 'show' that could rival the church, so the boys put it. On church nights, which were only once every three months—and perhaps that accounts for their popularity—everything else shut up shop, and the services were crowded. I always preached to them the very best I knew how. I remember one of the expressions of appreciation of my efforts which came from the city marshal.

"'Wot we like about you, Right Reverend,' he said, using that quaint form of address, 'is that you don't never play your congregation fer a fool, w'ich we may be, but we don't like to be told of it. You allus seems to give the best you kin to us, the best you got in the deck, you sure does,' he added.

"I've always remembered that phrase, it was a lesson to me," continued the Bishop, "and I always give even the poorest and humblest congregation the very best that I have to give. There is another maxim that I parallel with it, that I got from my old father. 'My lad,' he said, when I started out on this work—I was younger then, you know—'get a good seat in the saddle before you try to lead the procession.'"

"Well, that being the case in Arapahoe, you can imagine that the managers of the various wandering theatrical enterprises that were liable to visit such places were careful to avoid church nights. One day, however, on this very railroad, after it was built into the town, I fell in with a travelling theatrical company headed for Arapahoe. I made friends with them, of course. They seemed to be respectable peo-

ple enough. The manager, a veteran player, assured me, 'I don't allow any immoral plays in my show. We're poor, and have to do bum towns'—I'm trying to quote his elegant phrases—'but I try to be respectable myself, and to have everybody in my company decent-like.' He confided to me in secret that there was only one member of his present troupe about whom people talked, and he assured me that he didn't believe what was said about her.

"I made the acquaintance of all of them, and they talked freely to me about their experiences and adventures, and certainly they had a difficult life and a hard one."

"Almost as hard as being a peripatetic missionary?" I suggested.

"Oh, much harder than that," said the Bishop, cheerfully. "I enjoy that, so far as I am concerned. But the two who interested me most were a young man whose name was Victor Montague—at least, that was his theatrical name—and a young woman who was introduced to me as Miss Carlotta Sylvester. She had been a charmingly pretty girl, although she looked tired and faded and somewhat

haggard, as if there was something on her mind which preyed upon her and rendered her life miserable. It appeared to me that Mr. Montague was very much in love with Miss Sylvester, and, by all the signs — and you know I am a past-master in such affairs," laughed the old man, "for I have had so many young couples on my hands—that she reciprocated his feelings; but there was a barrier between them quite perceptible to a close observer, and both appeared to be supremely miserable. My loquacious friend, the manager, confided to me that Mr. Montague, 'which his real name is Henry Pearce, and he is a young man of very respectable family, is in love with Miss Sylvester, which her real name is Mary Bates, and it's her as is talked about for something or other, the rights of which I don't know, but I stake my life on her honor and honesty.'

"She looked like an honest girl, and I would have backed up the manager's confidence myself. Well, the day dragged along somehow. A funny little thing happened at Sewaygo, where we ate. By this time I was one of the party, and dined at the same table with the

rest of them at the railroad eating-house. I finished my meal before the others, rose, walked over to the cashier's desk, and handed him a ten-dollar bill. You know, I wasn't very strong on clerical costumes in those days, and I was dressed in an ordinary business suit, very dusty and much the worse for wear. As the cashier took the bill I was astonished to have him ask, 'Are you payin' for yourself alone or for your whole party, sir?' In the eyes of the cashier I was the manager of the party. So much for my episcopal air and authority.

"A few miles from Arapahoe the manager of the local opera-house, who was also the warden of the mission and the city marshal, boarded the train in great perturbation. He was in hard luck, for it was church night, and he told the manager of the travelling company that he and his troupe would have no show against the Bishop, that he had tried to head them off, but had failed to do so, and he did not know what to do. The two consulted in the end of the car, and finally came back to where I sat.

"'Right Reverend,' said the warden, 'we're up agin it hard. You know, bein' a religious

an' a law-abidin' town, we allus gives the Church a hearty support, an' there ain't nothin' an' nobody as is more welcome in these yere parts than you be. We shuts down the saloons, w'ich the barkeeps says they wants to go to church as much as anybody. It's allus Sunday when you comes around. But we've made a mistake in the dates somehow or n'other, an' we've got a show billed fer to-night. Now this yere man,' pointing to the manager, 'sez you've been speakin' to him durin' the day, an' he sez you've been treatin' him w'ite, w'ich you allus does everybody, I told him. He's down on his luck, he sez, w'ich he's been in break-downs an' wrecks an' wash-outs, an' has had poor houses an' mobs, an' now he's run up agin the Church. He wants to make a propersition to you, an' I told him you'd deal fair with him if any man would. As fer me, between my dooties as warden and my dooties as manager I'm tore both ways.'

"'Mr. Bishop,' said the manager, 'what he says is all true. We've had a terrible time. This is the last of our season, the company is goin' to disband as soon as it gets back to civilization again, an' if I don't get some re-

ceipts to-night and to-morrow—bein' as to-morrow's Saturday, we're going to have a matinée—I don't see how I can pay the salaries to those poor people that's due them, or get them away from here. We're goin' to give a clean, moral show. No "Uncle-Tom's-Cabin" affair, Doctor, but it's respectable, an' any one can see it with pleasure. We hear from Bill here that there ain't no show for us in Arapahoe unless you help us out. What I propose is this. If you'll have your show—I mean your services—a little earlier, we'll have our services—I mean our show—a little late. Say you have yourn at quarter-past seven, an' we'll have ourn at quarter to nine. And we'll do more than that,' he added, hastily, lest I should decide before I had heard all that he had to offer. 'We'll all come to your sho—services, I mean—if you come to ours, and we'll give you a part of the proceeds to-night to help the Church.'"

"What did you do, Bishop?" I asked.

"Well," answered the old man, "I promptly accepted two propositions and rejected the third. I said I would anticipate my services a little provided they postponed their per-

formance, and if they would come to my show I would go to theirs. It was an alliance between Church and Stage, you see!"

"And what proposition did you reject, sir?"

"I said that I wouldn't take any of their money. From the looks of things they needed it all, and my friends in Arapahoe were so generous that the church in that particular section lacked nothing. The church in Arapahoe has always been more or less unique, you see. I think that one reason that I decided so promptly was because I intercepted an appealing glance, a piteously appealing glance, I might say, from Miss Sylvester when she heard the proposition. She came to me after the two managers had retired to discuss their other arrangements and clasped my hand impulsively.

"'Oh!' she said, 'I am so glad you are going to have church. I haven't been to church for years, it seems to me, and you have been so kind to us, and have treated us so much like re—respectable people, that I wanted to go to your services so much to-night.'

"'I am very glad,' I replied, 'that you are to have the opportunity.'

"About this time the train pulled into the station, and the townspeople, informed of the change in the hour of services, and delighted at the prospect of a double treat, or, as they phrased it, 'two shows in one evenin',' immediately busied themselves in spreading the news throughout the settlement. The place was smaller in those days than it is now, and it was not difficult to advise every one.

"I was driven to the hotel where I was invariably entertained, and given the only suite of rooms the place boasted, a parlor and bedroom opening from it, which I think had been really designed for me when the hotel was built, which was after I had got my ecclesiastical grip on the town, as it were. I usually stayed a day or two in Arapahoe, as my visits were so infrequent, and the parlor was a sort of private office. On account of the early hour of service I hadn't much time to think what I should preach about, considering the unusual addition to my congregation.

"I had, of course, a lot of sermons with me —in my head, that is; you know the first thing you learn in the West is to 'shoot without a rest,' so they say, which is their euphemism

for preaching without notes—and I had previously selected a theme for the evening, but something, I did not know what, unless it were Providence, turned my thoughts in another direction, and I chose that text of Scripture, 'Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more;' and I determined to preach upon forgiveness, as exemplified in that exquisite incident cited by St. John, as the very first lesson in Christian practice.

"You see, the first thing a man expects is forgiveness, although it is usually the last thing he wishes to bestow. There has been much discussion about that chapter," said the Bishop, "and it is believed, you know, to be an interpolation, but whether it is or not, I, for one, am convinced that it represents a true incident, and I bless the interpolator, whoever he may have been.

"There was something in the girl, Miss Sylvester—to call her by her stage name—which kept recurring to me when I thought over the points of the sermon. Not that she looked bad, only troubled. Beneath her indifferent hardness, or her forced pleasantry, there was an undercurrent of suffering, such as only comes

from great sorrow, and too often, in a woman's case, the sorrow is based upon—well, at any rate, I thought hard over the sermon, and when the services came off I think I never preached better in my life.

"The thoughts were very old, as the story itself is old, but I pointed out, in a way which was told me afterwards was very convincing, the duty of forgiveness, and how Jesus Himself, in touch with the grossest sort of aberration, forgave it.

"The theatrical people were all there, although to keep his promise the manager had been compelled to go without his supper, he had been so busy arranging for the performance. The most interested listener in the congregation crowded into the saloon-church was the young woman. On the same side of the room with her, Mr. Montague followed the sermon with scarcely less eagerness. You know, when you are preaching, sometimes without volition you direct your arguments to one or two people in the congregation, and my appeals and exhortations seemed to be aimed straight at those two young people.

"Well, after the services I went to the play,

as I had promised, and the whole congregation did likewise, for the manager had kept his promise faithfully. As I remember, it was rather a poor play, but very respectable."

"What was the name of it, Bishop?"

"I declare," said the Bishop, reflectively, "it has been so long ago that I believe I have forgotten. I only recall that the theme of the play was the reticence of a woman who had been unfortunate, and who concealed her life from the man who loved her. She finally confessed, and, when he repudiated her, died of a broken heart. It was a sad play—a tragedy. As the sheriff said, 'We likes 'em harrerin' out here. We kin laugh a plenty, but we don't often get no chance to display our tender emotions less'n you come, Bishop, or a play like this here'n.'

"Miss Sylvester played the leading part, and though, I suppose, ordinarily she would be considered an indifferent actress, yet when she confessed the past, in which she had been more sinned against than sinning, and the hero of the play, depicted by Mr. Montague, gave her up, her acting was a marvellous surprise. So real and natural did it seem that I almost

felt that they were not playing parts, but speaking the truth there on that stage. There was such agony in the woman's voice, such heartbreaking appeal to her lover for mercy, that it did not seem possible that he could reject her even on the stage. The opera-house rang with applause, and there were tears in many a rough cow-boy's eyes when the girl died, still begging for forgiveness.

"The manager of the company, whose part permitted him an early exit, whispered to me that he had never seen Miss Sylvester act like that before, or Mr. Montague either. He didn't know that it was in her, and he thought it was a pity that they were going to disband, because that sort of playing would make a fortune anywhere.

"He appealed to me for confirmation of this opinion, and although I was poor authority I agreed with him. The play, you see, ran exactly counter to my sermon. The man did not forgive the woman. There was a difference between the human and divine point of view, after all, I thought, as I sat in the parlor alone after the performance. Was it that man never

could rise to such a height? Had Christ set us an impossible standard?

"I was thinking sadly over the whole situation, and the face and voice of the girl fairly haunted me. My reverie was broken by a tap on the door. When I opened it Mr. Montague came in. He was very much perturbed, and without any preliminaries burst out that he had come to see me on a very important matter.

"He told me in the most direct fashion that he wildly loved Miss Sylvester; that he had seen her play in the little town in which he lived a few months before; that he had been so infatuated with her that he had given up his business—he was a lawyer—had followed her, and had finally been engaged in the company. The course of their affection had not run smoothly; for, while he was convinced from many signs that she loved him, there was something always between them which had kept her away from him; that he had striven to find out what it was and overcome the barrier, but without success.

"His intentions were of the most honorable character. He wanted to marry her and take

her away from the life she was leading. He had some little property of his own, was a college man, learned in the law, and had no fear but that he could support her comfortably. Latterly he had heard rumors. He had received an anonymous letter, and though he believed her as sweet and pure a woman as ever lived, yet stories of so circumstantial a character had been brought to him, with some little corroborative evidence, that he did not know what to do. He was in a state of perfect despair.

"'Have you spoken to her of these stories?' I asked.

"'No,' he replied.

"'Nor shown her the letters?'

"'No, I couldn't. They'd insult any honest woman. Now, Bishop,' he continued, 'I've come to you for advice. I never heard a sermon like that you preached this evening. It was in my mind all through the play. Did you notice the earnestness with which Miss Sylvester played her part? We have acted in that piece a number of times, and never before has she impressed me as she did then. It was almost as if she were really pleading

for forgiveness. I love her more than life itself, and yet there are some things—suppose it's true? Can I forgive her? What shall I do?'

"We were interrupted just here by the sound of footsteps in the hall. Outside the door I heard the clerk say, 'There is the Bishop's office, Miss Sylvester. I've no doubt he will be glad to see you.'

"There was no other exit from the room save the door leading into the bedroom. As Miss Sylvester approached the parlor door I motioned to Mr. Montague, who immediately went into the bedroom and closed the door.

"The hotel was a well-built one. The partitions were lathed and plastered instead of being low board walls, as was often the case, so that I felt that I could have due privacy for any conversation with the woman. I anticipated what had brought her to my room. The sermon I had preached, the play in which she had acted, the story I had heard, fitted into one another in one of those strange coincidences which sometimes happen. I divined that she had come to me with a confession. It was so. I had been kind to her,

she said, during the day; I had preached to her about the forgiveness of the Saviour, and I said that it was the duty of humanity as well. She had something to tell me.

"It was the woman's side of the situation. Mr. Montague loved her, and she returned his affection, but she had refused to become his wife. She had, so far as was in her power, even prevented him from declaring himself, because—ah, here was the reason! The story was a sad but not an unusual one.

"She had lived in St. Louis, the only daughter of two worthy parents who had stinted themselves to give her an education. She had fallen in love with a man whose character and reputation did not commend themselves to the judgment of those older than she, who loved her, and, in defiance of parental opposition, she had run away with him—and there had been no marriage. It was his fault; he had taken advantage of her youth and inexperience, basely deceiving her. It was not long before life became unendurable; she was yoked with one utterly unworthy, and, the glamour passing from her eyes, she saw nothing but misery ahead. Of course the parting came;

the old people had died, broken-hearted by her conduct, she believed, and she was absolutely alone.

"Chance, to make a long story short, threw her into the company of the good people with whom she was acting. She had a pretty little turn for elocution, and she had supported herself, wretchedly and meagrely enough, under her assumed name, for the past two years by acting. She had struggled against her affection for Mr. Montague. She considered herself no fit wife for him or any man, but my sermon had put a new idea in her mind. Might there not be forgiveness for such as she? God would forgive her. Would man? In the play he would not. Which was true and which was false? Love divine could make excuse—would love human?

"'You saw me act to-night, Bishop. I never played like that before. I was myself on the stage, confessing and pleading for forgiveness—which he would not grant.'

"'My child,' I said, 'it seems to me that while you have done grievously wrong in running away from home and wilfully disregarding the appeals and commands of those who

loved you and whose judgment you were bound to respect, and have broken the commandment that says 'Honor thy father and thy mother,' and you have erred sadly in other ways, yet you have been more sinned against than sinning. I see nothing, since you are so truly repentant, which would prevent you from being the wife of any honest man who loved you, if you loved him. The man you went away with, where is he?'

"'Dead, thank God!' she flashed out through her tears.

"'And you would expect forgiveness,' I returned, 'with such bitterness in your heart?'

"It was a new idea to the girl, apparently, for she stopped sobbing and raised her head, looking at me.

"'Must I forgive him?'

"'You certainly must,' I answered, although I knew it was almost an impossible task, 'if you expect to be forgiven.'

"The woman in her, the old, instinctive woman that values honor and purity above every other possession, battled in her for a space with the new spirit of Christianity which puts forgiveness and love above per-

sonal animosity and rankling injury however great.

"'I did not believe it possible,' she said, at last, 'but I will try. Now, what must I do?'

"'Go to Mr. Montague,' I replied, promptly, 'tell him the whole truth, and let him decide.'

"'I can't!' she said. 'He respects me now. He loves me. I'm afraid to put him to the touch. I'm afraid to confess and let him decide. 'Twould kill me to lose that affection. Indeed, I could not bear to have him fall below the standard I have set for him in my heart, and if he doesn't forgive, if he ceases to love me, I shall die. I've lost faith once in humanity, and have only slowly recovered it. If I lose it again I shall lose faith in God.'

"There was much that was true in her words, I thought," said the Bishop, digressing for the moment, "for our faith in God depends upon our faith in man to a greater extent than we dream of.

"'You need not confess anything,' at that moment exclaimed Mr. Montague, who had opened the door and entered the room.

"'What!' cried the girl, springing to her feet,

in piteous dismay. 'Were you there? Did you hear?'

"'I did—everything.'

"'And you, sir!' turning fiercely on me; 'were you a party to this deception? Did you allow me to tell you the most secret thoughts of my heart in confession with that door open, so that he, of all men, could hear?'

"'The Bishop is entirely innocent,' returned Montague, promptly, stepping nearer to her. 'He saw me close the door. I opened it again on my own account. You were neither of you looking that way, and neither of you noticed. It wasn't the right thing to do, I'll admit; but I love you, and I love you more than ever now. I intended to-night, after what I had said to the Bishop, and what he preached about forgiveness to us, and the play, you know, to have told you not to confess anything to me, for there was nothing I could not and would not forgive, if you loved me and were free to marry me. I am sorry I didn't say it before I heard you say that you had suffered so severely and how you had been wronged. Now it is I who should beg your forgiveness for having doubted you for a

single moment. Don't shrink away from me. I love you more than ever, and if you give me a chance to lead you back to happiness and restore your lost faith in humanity, I will undertake the task so gladly that I will bless you forever for the opportunity.'

"'And you will take me as I am?' she cried. 'You will forgive me and love me in spite of—'

"'In spite of, nay, because of, everything,' he cried.

"They had entirely forgotten me," laughed the Bishop, "and it was almost like a scene from the play we had just witnessed. Perhaps because they were players there was a little touch of the theatrical about them, for he knelt at her feet, clutching a fold of her dress as he pleaded with her. When she yielded to his importunities—as what woman could have resisted?—she put both hands upon his shoulders and bent and kissed him.

"'It is I,' she said, 'who should kneel at your feet, not you at mine.'

"Then I coughed violently to remind them that I was there. Hand in hand they came to me.

"'Oh, Bishop,' cried the girl, 'I'm so glad

you came. You have been to us like an angel from heaven.'

"'My services are not ended, I trust,' I suggested.

"'No,' said the young man, promptly. 'When shall it be?' he continued, turning to the girl.

"'Whenever you like,' she answered, frankly. 'There is no one to consult and nothing to hinder, if you are sure—'

"'I'm very sure.'

"'Then let it be—'

"'This evening?' he cried, impulsively.

"'No,' she answered, smiling, and her face was fairly transformed by the happiness of the new situation. 'Let it be to-morrow, in the church where the Bishop taught us that forgiveness was the first lesson of the Christian life.'

"'Will you be ready to officiate, sir?' asked Mr. Montague, turning to me.

"'With the greatest pleasure,' I replied, there being no obstacle to prevent, as I learned by questioning them.

"So, on the next morning, Mr. Victor Montague and Miss Carlotta Sylvester disappeared forever from public view, while I united them

in the holy bonds of matrimony under their proper names of Mary Bates and Henry Pearce.

"That's all," added the Bishop.

"But, Bishop, you spoke of the elevating and uplifting character of the theatrical performance when you began the tale. It seems to me," I remarked, "that it was the sermon that conveyed the lesson."

"Well, yes, perhaps it was," said the Bishop. "That is, it carried a lesson to those two, but it was the theatre and the players that carried the lesson to me. You see, as I sat alone there in the darkness, I had been doubtful as to the possibility of humanity rising to the height of forgiveness demanded by the Church and her Founder, but these two players showed me how wrong I had been to doubt. They taught me that the burden of Christianity is one that humanity may carry without fainting or failing—if God show the way."

"Arapahoe!" shouted the conductor, thrusting his head in the doorway, as the cars bumped together and the train slowed down by the station platform. "All out for Arapahoe!"

THE END

14 DAY USE
RETURN TO DESK FROM WHICH BORROWED
LOAN DEPT.
RENEWALS ONLY—TEL. NO. 642-3405
This book is due on the last date stamped below, or
on the date to which renewed.
Renewed books are subject to immediate recall.

SEP 24 1970 5 0
REC'D LD SEP 1 8 70 -11 AM 8 8
Cal. Poly. Pomona
INTER-LIBRARY LOAN
OCT 22 1970

LD21A–60m-3,'70
(N5382s10)476–A-32

General Library
University of California
Berkeley

The bishop

M18198

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY