

sadly. He was a priest, and he knew human nature better than the boy. 'Well, God knows best,' he said, after a pause, 'and we will leave the future in His holy hands.'

There were great rejoicings at Folkstone when Joseli Muller, after a short stoppage at Alpenberg to wish his father and family good-bye, returned to Miss Wilson, declaring that he would never go to Switzerland without her again, and announced his intention of embracing the same faith as herself.

The years sped on, and in due time Joseli Muller was called to the Bar and settled down in the West End of London in a large and well-appointed house of his own, but contrary to the expectations of all his friends, he never married. The gay and fashionable young collegian developed into the grave and studious lawyer, devoted to his profession and to his books. Gradually he grew silent and dreamy, caring for nothing but reading and mixing but little in society, and that only when his position or his profession seemed to demand it from him.

People said that it was the loss of his adopted mother that had wrought this change; but such was not the case, for though he mourned much for the kind woman who had raised him from a life of poverty and ignorance to the estate of a gentleman, and who had acted for the best according to her lights, his present course of reading and his insight into human nature caused him to view things in a far different light to what he had done in his impetuous youth.

A great wave of Catholicity had swept over England, and the minds of all seriously thinking men were agitated with the great problem of the day. Among Joseli's friends he numbered many good and fervent Anglicans, and sometimes he wondered if, after all, the religion that his father professed might not be the true one; and then he would look at his little charm and wonder why he had ever thought it wrong to pay deference to the Mother of his Saviour. Of one thing at least he was certain—he had neither obeyed the laws of God or man by deserting his now aged father as he had done, by never making any provision for him out of the abundance with which God had blessed him.

So it came to pass that one autumn he made up his mind to go to Interlaken and place his family in a more comfortable position before he returned again to England. He would not have that reproach on his conscience any longer. But, alas! when he reached Alpenberg he found that his father was dead. He had died of a broken heart, brought on by grief for the loss of his child and remorse for the sin of which he had been guilty in helping to rob him of his faith.

Joseli's brothers and sisters, too, were all dispersed; some were married and others had left Alpenberg for a different part of Switzerland. The good old cure also had gone to his reward. So Joseli, after depositing a large sum of money in the hands of the parish priest to be held in trust for any survivors of the Muller family whom he might come across, went higher up the mountains to the village where Father Bernard lived. To his delight he found the priest at home, and was welcomed with every sign of pleasure and genuine gratification. The two friends were more on an equality now so far as age was concerned, for Joseli was thirty-five, and his love of reading and studious habits rendered him a still more agreeable companion to the erudite and holy priest, whose former kindness he was able to return by supplying him with ample means for his poor.

So the old sweet life amidst the eternal hills went on as it had done some twenty years before, and the twain boated and fished and climbed up the rugged mountain sides, enjoying the splendid panoramas and the pure fresh air almost as much as they had done in the days of their youth.

'So you still wear the little charm, I see,' said Father Bernard one evening, pointing as he spoke to the miraculous medal suspended from Joseli's watch-chain.

'Yes; it has brought me here,' replied Joseli, slowly and gravely; and then, to Father Bernard's astonishment, he raised it to his lips. The good priest's heart bounded with delight, but he appeared not to notice the circumstance.

'I always felt you would come back one day, Joseli,' he said, 'though you never wrote, and I had no clue to your whereabouts.'

'You must have thought me an awful brute,' replied Joseli, with a touch of his old impetuous manner; 'but although I am a man now, it is only lately, since the death of my kind benefactress, that I have been able to do as I liked. Too late, alas! to be of any use to my poor old father.'

'Too late to see him alive,' responded the priest, 'but not too late to help him in the world where he has gone. Masses and alms will do much to relieve his soul from purgatory, Joseli.'

'Alms you shall certainly have, and you can say as many Masses as you like, Father Bernard,' replied the young barrister, 'but I think my father must have suffered enough purgatory on earth on my account to atone for what he had done.'

'I am inclined to think the same,' said Father Bernard kindly; 'but the justice of God must be appeased, either in this world or the next; and the mere fact of his dying without ever seeing you again—shows how God punishes sin even here below.'

'My poor father!' said Joseli, with a deep-drawn sigh—and then the subject dropped.

Joseli's knowledge of the world and literary habits had given him a larger and broader view of Christian philosophy, and he was able to discuss the matter calmly and quietly with Father Bernard, asking questions and receiving answers with a becoming reverence that greatly pleased the priest. Still Joseli gave no sign of what his thoughts really were till one or two days before his intended departure he came into Father Bernard's study, and, kneeling down by his side, asked him to hear his confession. 'God be thanked,' was all that Father Bernard could say; and they went silently together into the little church—tears in both their eyes.

When they came out again the sun was just sinking behind the lofty Alps, and the snow-clad mountains were bathed in a halo of crimson and gold. 'Look, Joseli, look!' cried the priest. 'What are all the sights of the earth compared to that?'

'Nothing,' murmured Joseli, bending his head in reverence to God. Then, recovering himself: 'I think I will go for a walk up the mountain,' he said, 'where I can watch the sunset better. I want to be alone and think. Don't wait supper for me, Father,' he added.

'Oh, yes, I shall,' replied Father Bernard, 'and mind where you go; there have been several nasty landslips lately, and the mountain paths are rather treacherous.'

'Don't be afraid; I think I know every inch of the way as well as you do now,' said Joseli, with a smile; 'but if you insist on waiting I will come back as soon as I can.'

It was long past supper time, yet Joseli did not make his appearance, and as the shades of evening were creeping down the mountain side, filling the valleys with mist, Father Bernard grew alarmed. He sent for some men with dogs and lanterns, and bade them go and meet the young Englishman, who might have missed his way.

It was some hours before they came back, and when they did so they bore between them a litter on which lay the body of Joseli Muller. They had found him at the bottom of a steep precipice, and death must have been instantaneous, for he was lying quite peacefully on the soft white snow, a smile on his lips and his hands clasping the little miraculous medal that he called his charm.

They buried him in the little cemetery at Alpenberg, close to the graves of his father and mother; and on the cross that was his headstone they carved the words: 'This my son was dead and is alive again: was lost and is found.'—English Messenger.

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