

was nursing your poor Aunt Sophy abroad. She died, my dear. And so your poor, dear father is gone, too. Dear George, what a beautiful fellow he was!

From the moment Miss Henrietta Crackenthorpe came into the room Muriel had been feeling as though all her burdens were rolled away from her. It meant—why, surely, it meant that Patrick would grow strong, and the child be provided for and educated and brought up as a gentleman. Aunt Henrietta had taken the baby from her arms, and was looking down at him with an almost maternal delight. Now and again she glanced at the child's father, and her glance was very benignant.

'My dear,' she said, when she had Muriel alone for a few minutes, 'it was a great shock to me when I learnt that you were in poverty. And how high-minded of you to scruple over that hundred pounds! How it would have pleased poor Sophy, if only she had known it! It was your Aunt Sophy's wish that I should remain apart from your dear father. She knew how he fascinated me, and she always said he would make ducks and drakes of my money, as he had done of his own. You'll excuse my mentioning it, dear. And what a charming person your husband is! One of those broken-down old Irish families. What a romance it is! You see, we Crackenthorpe's don't care for money at all, although we happen to have it. Blood is everything with us, and there is blood and breeding in his face. You are my concern henceforth. I have just bought a charming place in Warwickshire, and I was looking about for a man to take the management off my hands. How fortunate that your dear husband should be a practical man.'

And so, like a fairy-tale, it ended. No one could have been better than Miss Henrietta Crackenthorpe to her adopted family, the possession of whom filled her with such happiness that she often said it had prolonged her life by at least thirty years. She never found any fault with Patrick, to whom it seemed easy to become a country gentleman. Privately, she thought him too good for her niece, but she never said as much. Fortunately, Patrick's children inherited their father's beauty, and Miss Henrietta Crackenthorpe was peculiarly sensitive to beauty. She often said that she could not have endured her money to go to Joe's children, who took after their mother and were lamentably plain-looking.—*Catholic Weekly*.

LEARNT FROM LIPU

On the wide verandah of a big house in the foreign quarter of one of the Chinese towns, a child lay in a hammock overlooking the kitchen garden, in which a Chinaman was working.

The boy was English, and, judging from his small, frail body, did not appear to be more than seven or eight years old; but the prematurely aged face might have claimed more than twice that age, though he really numbered more than ten years. Books and newspapers lay on the table before him, but he did not heed them; he lay quite still, watching the gardener at work amongst the vegetables. After a time the man approached the hammock, and in passing by he smiled and saluted its little inmate.

'Come here, Lipu,' said the boy, 'please pull me up and turn me so that I can see you working on the other side of the garden.'

The man put down his tools and very gently complied with the child's request. Little Hubert Hurst was a cripple; as the man bent over him, he put his arms round his neck to help himself into the desired position.

'I like you, Lipu,' he said, as he did so. 'I wish you had to carry me about instead of A-tching. He is kind, too, but there is a horrid feel about him. Why is it you are different?'

Lipu gazed down pityingly at the boy before answering, and when he spoke it was in curious 'pigeon English.'

'I am always happy, little master,' he said, 'for in my heart I have a great gift.'

'Dear Lipu,' returned the child, 'do tell me what your secret is. I have seen the other men point at you and chatter together, and I have been afraid that my father was going to send you away. You have been here a shorter time than any of them, yet I like you best of all.'

'Little master,' replied Lipu, 'I am happy because I am a Christian; not a Christian like the lady your mother, but a Christian of Christ.'

By this Lipu meant that he was a Catholic. He had answered the question put to him and volunteered no more information. But the boy was not satisfied.

'Tell me more,' he cried. 'Tell me how being a Christian of Christ makes you happy. Would it make me happy, do you think?' he added longingly.

Hubert had been born in China, and although his parents were comfortably off, he had never been to England. His father's business kept him always in Hongkong, and going home was talked of as a pleasure to come, when years of money-making justified such an expenditure. There had once been a question of sending Hubert back, in the hope that some treatment in a London hospital would cure, or even relieve, him; but the doctors in the naval hospital at Hongkong and the newcomers who came with the fleet agreed that nothing could be done to prolong the boy's life. He could not live to manhood, and they advised his parents to keep him with them, and to make his short life happy.

So Hubert had lived for ten years in this far-off Chinese town, kindly treated and well cared for. He was taught to read by his mother, but neither she nor his father had ever spoken to him about religion. Mrs. Hurst was nominally a Protestant. Her husband had once been a Catholic, but a life spent hundreds of miles from any priest who could have understood him, had he gone to confession, had led on his part also to complete indifference. The boy had been christened by a Presbyterian missionary, who had happened to pass through the town when he was about two years old; but until Lipu began to speak to him of Catholic belief, he had been absolutely ignorant of anything spiritual, except that there was a Supreme Being in heaven.

He was naturally gifted with an unusually sweet disposition, and schooled himself to be brave and patient, because any pining or show of distress on his part grieved his parents. But this conversation with the Chinese gardener was the first of many, and from Lipu Hubert learned a higher, nobler reason for patience and long-suffering.

At first the Chinese had spoken of the goodness of God and the mercy that His love for us made Him show. Then he told of the passion and sufferings of Jesus Christ, and it was this recital that Hubert liked best of all to hear. He told his parents that Lipu had been taught beautiful things by the Catholic Sisters at Ning-Po, where he had worked before coming into Mr. Hurst's service. Seeing the boy happy with his new friend they told Lipu to look after him when he was in the garden, thus setting his own attendant A-tching, free to do other work, at the same time easing Lipu's conscience, for though he loved to speak of all the missionaries had told him, he feared to neglect the tasks he was paid to perform.

All through the summer months this strange course of instruction went on, till Hubert knew as much Christian doctrine as his teacher could impart. He had learned all the prayers that the nuns had taught in their classes, and he began to repeat them morning and night, as Lipu told him he did himself.

The first time that his mother saw his little wasted hands joined, his blue eyes raised to heaven, and a look of more perfect happiness on his features than she had ever seen on them before, her heart smote her at not having taught him herself; and even though the 'Hail Mary' followed 'Our Father' from his lips, she did not check or chide him for what she could see gave him so pure a joy.

As the autumn drew near the boy seemed to grow weaker. Lipu sometimes thought he saw a fore-glimpse of heaven in the innocent, patient eyes, but his parents noticed no change in him, and though they knew the flickering, feeble light must soon pass out of their sight forever, it came as a shock to Mr. Hurst when Hubert spoke to him one evening of his approaching death. They had been talking of his eleventh birthday, which was soon to be celebrated, and Hubert had spoken in tones of heartfelt longing.

'Oh, I hope—I do hope I shall live till then.'

Mr. Hurst turned quickly towards his son.

'Why do you say that, Hubert?' he asked. 'Do you feel ill? Worse? Why do you think of—of leaving us?'

'Don't, father, dear!' replied the boy, laying his little hot hand on his father's cheek as he bent over him and scanned the thin, white face on the scarcely more white