

the church. 'Why did I go in?' he asked himself, almost angrily.

The next day his wife's telegram came. He laughed when he read it: 'She knows I can't go!' he said irritably. 'At any rate, she wants me.' And this thought pleased him.

Already the genial touch of the coming Christmas was in the air. The bustle of shoppers, the holly with the red ribbons among its green, made him think in a tender and sacred way of Edith.

'I believe,' he murmured, 'that I can never be really happy again unless I "throw away this weight."'

This absurd idea made him smile. He read Edith's telegram again. Then he said to his secretary:

'Write a note to Mrs. Allen, enclosing this cheque for fifty thousand dollars. Say I've found that it is due her,—that's all.'

'Mad!' the secretary said—'mad! But everybody's crazy at Christmas.'

Then he telegraphed to Edith:

'I am coming.'

'Raving mad!' thought the secretary. 'Why, the L.A.O.'s consolidation is on for this week before Christmas! If he's not here he may go to the wall.'

By this time Beauchamp was on his way to Chicago.

Fine, damp particles filled the air: it grew warmer. Beauchamp had rashly insisted on driving from the station to the ranch. The buggy was new and springy; the horse, young and fresh; the drive, exhilarating. He had a good local sense: he had no fear of losing his way, and he wanted to surprise Edith. He laughed out loud when he thought of his returning to the old-fashioned way of 'surprising people.' 'I'll be playing practical jokes next!'

Suddenly the world seemed lost in a whirling, white mist. The horse stood still, shivering. A blizzard had begun. It was not a snowstorm; it was an uncanny, white spiral, by which space seemed to be pierced and annihilated. Beauchamp managed to cover the horse. Then, wrapped in a spare blanket—how he thanked the foresight of the stableman for those blankets!—and in his fur coat, he lay down under the buggy. The air was filled with a perpetual roar. He felt as if he were touching electric currents every time he moved. His face was soon covered with fine, moist particles; they seemed to force themselves into his lungs, though he kept his mouth closed; he drew his cap over his face, and over it a flap of the blanket. He was buried alive.

It was a long night. He could not sleep. The roar above him did not cease for an instant; an electric tenseness kept every nerve in a rack. His loneliness was like a black sceptre. For the first time in many years, he faced his own soul: and he knew that the main thing in life was to save that soul. The lessons which he had learned, rather perfunctorily before his marriage, from the Little Catechism, became clear to him. 'What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?' He now understood Edith's restlessness in that round of splendors which a great part of the world believes to be the real paradise for every American woman. And he was losing her, Edith, the one loving creature bound to him sacramentally, to whom love for him was life itself! He knew that: he had never doubted it.

The roar above him continued, and, by some instinct he knew that the day had dawned. He was in a grave from which he might never escape. 'If I do,' he thought, 'I shall try to gain the grace St. Francis gave to the husband of Bona Donna.' He smiled, even while death was near: for, though he did not know it, another day had gone by. On the morning of the third day he slept a little. He was growing weak, and the horrible and monotonous roar continued. He awoke startled. There reigned a strange silence. With what seemed to him a terrible effort, he arose, the moist snow falling away from him. At his full height he stood, breaking the crust with his head. He was up

to his neck in the moist, clinging substance. He looked upon a glittering, white frozen world. The horse and buggy were little hills of snow; the air was fresh and as cold as ice itself. The surface of the snow was rapidly becoming hard. His weakness disappeared under this glowing turquoise dome. Millions of diamonds and pearls glittered in the sun. He was alone, and God seemed very near.

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All day Edith had sat near the entrance door of the ranch house, now closed tight and doubly tight. Nevertheless, on the second day of the blizzard the floor of the hall was almost covered by sandlike particles that had defied all barriers. Through the glass nothing could be seen but the perpetual white whirl.

'He may have started, mother, Edith said, over and over again. 'He did not say that he would not come.'

Her mother tried to comfort her.

'I have drawn him to his death,' Edith went on. 'And, Oh mother, I said that he had killed Dick Allen. That was almost my last word.'

By the heavy plate-glass door, she sat tearless and watched all day and half the night. At noon on Christmas Eve the nerve-racking roar stopped, and the white world shone and smiled. Now at least he could be searched for, and the telephone began to work. But shortly after noon, he walked across the sparkling world into the hall of the ranch, and there Edith met him.

'No questions, child!' he said. 'I have been alone with God. I know now what was working in your soul. Here I shall stay, as the husband of Bona Donna stayed, away from the world, with fees to fight worthy of a man. Happy Christmas!'

'We need you,' said the mother. 'You can lift the burden from my son.'

Beauchamp bowed gravely.

'I have made some amends to the Allens, Edith. To-morrow there may not be enough money for even a pearl or two. I can't tell how stocks are going, but I've dropped out of the game. What do you say, Edith?' he added, a little anxiously. He looked into her eyes and smiled.

'Happy Christmas!' she said.

—MAURICE FRANCIS EGAN.

Frankton

A very pleasing function was held in the Frankton Town Hall on the evening of January 4, when the Catholics of Frankton Junction assembled to bid farewell to their beloved pastor, Rev. Father Finn. Mr. Lafferty presided, and there were about 100 present, including Very Rev. Dean Darby, of Hamilton.

Eulogistic reference was made to the departing guest's many sterling qualities and universal popularity by Mrs. Chainey, Messrs. Lafferty, Hooper, O'Shea, and O'Leary, all of whom expressed the deep regret felt in losing Father Finn, whose untiring energy and zeal in furthering God's work, and his kindness and gentleness had made him so beloved by young and old.

Very Rev. Dean Darby, in a few well-chosen remarks, presented Father Finn, on behalf of the Frankton congregation, with a well-filled purse of sovereigns.

The remainder of the evening was devoted to a musical programme, to which the following contributed: Very Rev. Dean Darby, Mrs. Chainey, Miss Stokes, Miss McGonnell, Mrs. Owsley, Messrs. K. Devery, Cussen, Vallilly, O'Shea, Owsley, and O'Leary. Refreshments provided by the ladies were done justice to, and the singing of 'Auld lang syne' brought a very enjoyable evening to a close.

When careful Scotsmen pin their faith to one brand of tobacco, it's surely something good. So it is. Test BONNIE DOON to-day and see if it's not a'right.

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