

Mrs. Messmer turned to him.

'O, doctor! can he not be moved?' she asked. 'Can't we have him some place by himself?'

'There is no place, Madam,' he said, gravely. 'He is well situated for the present. There are only four in this tent altogether.'

Mrs. Messmer looked around her.

'All boys?' she inquired.

'All boys,' was the answer. 'And all worse off than your son, if you look at it rightly; for the other mothers can not come to theirs.'

'Oh, I am ungrateful!' sobbed the Captain's wife.

'When will he be well enough to move, doctor?' whispered Jennie.

He looked at her compassionately.

'I am afraid he will not live the day through,' was the slow reply.

Doctor James had gauged Miss Jennie well. She neither trembled nor wept, but regarded him for an instant with tightly closed lips. Then she asked:

'Will he be conscious again?'

'He may; I cannot say,' replied the doctor.

'We are Catholics. He would want to receive the Sacraments. Is there a priest anywhere about, doctor?' she inquired.

'There are several at Montauk, if one could find them. But it is so hard to do that, they are in such demand.'

Just then Mrs. Messmer uttered a little cry. The dying boy had stretched forth his hand; he was smiling. 'Mother!' he said, and two big tears coursed down the gaunt, pale cheeks.

Jennie clutched the doctor's arm.

'Is it a sign of death?' she asked.

'It may be,' said the doctor.

'Jennie! Jennie!' murmured a faint voice from the bed. He had seen her. But Jennie was gone.

Up and down between the long rows of tents she flew rather than ran, asking everyone she met if he could tell her where a priest might be found. Some of those whom she encountered offered to assist her, others pointed out possible places where she might find the object of her search; and finally a red-headed, good-natured-looking sergeant conducted her to one who was just issuing from a large hospital tent. He accompanied her at once. John was still conscious, but very languid. To her loving greeting he reached forth a trembling hand, which she kissed again and again. Then she led her frightened mother away. Until she saw the priest, the poor woman had not realised her son's imminent danger.

When the visitors left the tent, a screen was placed about the bed, and the penitent was practically alone with the confessor and his God. A few moments later the priest came out, smiling.

'He is ready,' he said. 'In fact, he was ready before I came.'

As they stood for a moment outside the tent, an orderly advanced with a letter, which he gave to the Captain.

'It is for you, Fanny,' he said, handing it to his wife.

'Oh, it is from John—from Cuba!' she whispered, in a choking voice. 'Read it, Jennie: I cannot.'

The girl opened it with unsteady fingers. It was the letter written after the battle, with which our readers are already familiar. She read it aloud, but in a hushed tone of voice. There was not a dry eye in the group when she had finished.

'Father,' she said, handing the priest the dollar bill which was inclosed in John's letter, 'will you say the Mass to-morrow? And, oh, remember my poor brother!' Then she ran away and hid herself for a few moments behind the tent; presently returning, with red eyes but a cheerful countenance. 'I do not believe God will let John die,' she said. 'I believe he will get well, he is so good!'

However illogical this reasoning, it comforted her hearers, who all declared when they went back to the sufferer that he looked better. And so he did, and

so he was. From that moment he began to improve; in a fortnight he was able to be moved.

During that fortnight Jennie showed herself to be a veritable angel of mercy throughout the camp. Her gratitude for the recovery of her brother was so great, and her sympathy for the poor fellows who, like him, were suffering, but, unlike him, had not been fortunate enough to have the loving care of friends and relatives, was so deep that she devoted herself to their service.

And John's cup of happiness was full. The overflowing drop was added when, on the day before their departure for Philadelphia, his father came in to tell him that he himself had been appointed colonel, at the same time placing a large official envelope in the boy's hand. It was John's appointment as lieutenant, —subject to his passing a satisfactory examination when able to undergo it. That he did so is a matter of recent history. He is now in the Philippines. He has won his way.—*Ave Maria.*

THE CATHOLIC FEDERATION AND POLITICS

The following paper by Mrs. M. C. Goulter was read at the meeting of the Wellington Diocesan Council of the Catholic Federation:—

Among all the rocks and shoals which threaten the safety of the barque of the Catholic Federation, none loom so large or so threateningly on her course as her relation to New Zealand politics. It is a three-fold danger, consisting of the nervousness of many Catholics on this point, and their consequent aloofness from the Federation which they would otherwise support; the hostility excited in the public mind by any suggestion of our entry into the political arena as a corporate body of Catholics; and the real difficulty experienced by the governing body of the Federation in steering a true course between rashness and over-discretion in political action.

Already there has been so much talk about the Federation and politics, that the main point has got thoroughly obscured. There has been so much stress laid on the necessary freedom of the Catholic conscience from coercion in political matters, the disastrous results of the interference of the clergy in politics, and the sacred barrier between politics and religion, that we are all apt to forget the real point at issue, which, nevertheless, is insisted upon in the first page of the constitution of the Federation. The point is this: That nobody is more anxious than the Catholic Church to keep the Catholic conscience free in political matters, and to maintain an impenetrable barrier between religious matters and politics; but when that same Catholic conscience is in danger of being tyrannised over, and when that barrier is broken down by legal encroachment, the secular legislation trenches on the province of religion, then political action must be taken to remedy this state of affairs, or, if that is impossible, at least to protest against it. It would manifestly be of no avail in twentieth-century New Zealand, for the Church merely to denounce and forbid evils of this kind, her authority is not recognised outside her own fold. The obvious reply to any complaints of injustice is: You are citizens of a democratic country, and you have the remedy of citizens—political actions. The possibility of successful political action hinges, of course, on the willingness of individual Catholics to place the interests of religion first in a case where they are seriously threatened; but it will easily be recognised that the machinery of the Federation, embracing as it does, or should do, every parish in the Dominion, provides an unrivalled means of pointing out to Catholics any danger that threatens them, and urging them to combat it. That the Federation is far from being a political machine is guaranteed in the constitution, where we read the following plain and definite statement:—'The Federation is an organisation for the purpose of advancing the religious, civil, and social interests of Catholics throughout New Zealand. It is not a political party organisation, and does not seek to touch politics except where politics