

her to my heart, but she weakly raised her hand, and turning half away, slipped noiselessly to a chair. I was beside her in an instant, but her weakness was gone; her voice was clear, though broken with grief, as she said:

"Oh, Charley, my dear friend, I am sorry, so very sorry. I did not know. I thought that you knew—had guessed my secret. Oh, why did I not tell you long ago and save you all this sorrow! How wicked, how selfish I have been!"

Her voice choked with sobs. It was firmer when she resumed, but not less sorrowful, and oh, so gentle!

"If it were possible for me to accept and return the love of any man, it would be yours, dear friend. I have always thought of you as beyond all other men and have cherished your friendship as one of the dearest treasures of my life. But it is not possible. Long ago, while still at the convent, I heard the voice of our Saviour calling me to another, a higher life. Throughout the years that have passed it has been ringing in my ears, each hour more clearly, more insistently, more commandingly. I should have obeyed it long since but difficulties, until of late insuperable, have kept rising before me. Now, happily, all has been arranged, and soon, very soon, I shall go away to consecrate my life, what little there is in it, to the service of the poor of Christ."

She rose and held out her hand and said simply: "And so, dear friend, good-bye, and may God bless you ever. I feel, I know, that He has great things in store for you. I shall ever pray to Him to grant you still greater, higher things. Good-bye, and oh, forgive me!"

I took her hand; I would have pressed it to my lips, but somehow I could not; it seemed too sacred, and she too heavenly. I think, I hope I whispered brokenly, "God bless you, Helen!" as I turned away. Since that evening I have never seen her, never. Soon afterward she went away to take the veil. Her name in religion was Sister Margaret. You knew her, Frank—

"I?" I cried, amazed.

"As Mother Margaret."

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A younger man would, no doubt, have seen what was coming, but to me the disclosure was simply overwhelming. My heart was torn by conflicting emotion: pity for poor old Charley, admiration for that brave, noble girl; but of the two I think that pity was gaining the mastery, until a doubt took hold of me. I recalled the fact that Charley had never married. It seemed unsatisfactory, unfitting, weak even, that a man of his strong character—God forbid I should misjudge him of all men—but Charley read me through and through.

"Don't, Frank, don't!" he said quietly, with just a shade of reproach in his tone; "I could not bear it, not for the briefest instant. I grant you it is natural enough but wrong, all wrong. You are not to think that I have spent my life in useless repining for what the hand of God has placed beyond my reach. At the time, 'tis true, I was crushed, utterly crushed; my past seemed all in vain, my future without a hope; I rebelled stubbornly, bitterly. But as time passed I came to think less of my own sorrow and loss and more of the bravery of that heroic girl; from admiration of her action I grew to admire the ideal that inspired it and to wonder if I, too, might not in some small way realise it in my own life. I never thought of the priesthood or the cloister; my place was out upon the firing line; but I resolved that if I could make my fellow-men better for having lived among them—"

"You have! God knows you have, dear old boy!" I cried, my pent-up feelings bursting forth at last. But praise was lost upon him.

"Whatever little good I have done or may do I feel that under God I owe to the inspiration caught from Helen Lee—or better still, Mother Margaret. And so I've come to-day, not so much to do honor to the memory of a woman I have loved as in reverence to a saint whom I have worshipped."

There was a silence, which Charley broke with:

"But look alive, Father Frank: it's after ten. You'll hardly have time to get ready for your Mass."

"True, true!" I cried, fumbling for my watch. 'I'm almost late, and I must receive the Archbishop. I had forgotten all about him. I must be off. You'll pardon me, Charley, of course. I'll send Father Kelley to bring you to the church; he will escort you up to—'

"No, Frank, no; it's better not. I'll slip in quietly, unobserved. I'll find a place myself—the further back the better. Only keep a seat for me in your carriage."

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We rode in silence to the cemetery, each busy with his own thoughts. As Charley stood with bowed head beside the grave, I felt sure that his eyes were wet with tears, but my own were too dimmed to see them. Our few attempts at lightness on the journey home were quite ineffectual. As we neared the station, Charley said:

"You'd better put me down here, Frank. I meant to spend a day with you, but it doesn't seem the time for a visit. I know you feel that just as I do. I'll come again—later—next year. Good-bye!"

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My youngest curate, a mere stripling, met me at the door.

"So ho! old Foxy Grandpa," was his most irreverent greeting. "You thought you'd keep your old governor to yourself, did you? Well, 'the best-laid schemes of mice and men'—you know the rest. The reporters saw him as he entered your carriage and the afternoon papers are just full of it."

"Good Heavens!" I cried in great alarm—for I have a holy horror of the headlines of those scandal-mongering yellow journals—'what reason do they assign for his visit?'

"They say he came to give public and official acknowledgment to Mother Margaret's many benefactions to the community."

"Thank God!" I fervently exclaimed. But my relief was all too evident. The lad eyed me sharply.

"What other reason was there?" he questioned, searchingly.

"What other reason, indeed?" I answered defiantly. "What other reason could there be?" But he was not satisfied. "What did he want to come so quietly, then; so secretly. It would certainly have been more of an honor to Mother Margaret, and more of a public recognition of her worth, if he had come announced and in state."

Drat his persistence! I took an old man's refuge: "Would it, indeed?" I retorted. "You will think differently when you are older. Besides"—and here my Angel Guardian came to my aid—"you seem to forget that it was Mother Margaret's funeral, not a governor's levee."

And I hurried off before he could resume.—Rev. H. A. Gaynor, S.J., in *Messenger of the Sacred Heart*.

## UNDER AN AVALANCHE

"Have you harnessed the dogs, Mykota?" I asked, as I emerged from our sealskin tent, and handed a light repeating rifle to the young Eskimo.

"All but Nepta, Kalarswa," replied the boy. "He is very restless this morning, and I cannot catch him."

"Call Annowee, and let her try," I said.

In answer to her brother's shout, a girl came hurrying from another tent not far away, and took the harness from his hands.

"Agai, Nepta! Ai, ai!" she said, soothingly, as she walked up to a large white dog that stood with his wolfish muzzle turned defiantly towards us. Gently grasping the long, shaggy hair of his thick neck and speaking softly to him, she passed the harness over the dog's head; then, lifting his forepaws, she deftly thrust them through the sealskin bands.

Holding the end of the long trace in one hand, Annowee led the animal across the beach to where five more dogs were secured to a sledge that stood on the level ice floe. There we joined her, and while Mykota attached the dog's trace to the bridle line of the sledge.