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FROM DUST TO GLORY

M. J. PHELAN

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COLL. CHRISTI REGIS S.J.
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TORONTO



FROM DUST TO GLORY

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

THE STRAIGHT PATH;

OR

MARKS OF THE TRUE CHURCH.

Crown 8vo.

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.,
London, New York, Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras.

FROM
DUST TO GLORY

A SEQUEL TO
"THE STRAIGHT PATH"

BY THE REV.
M. J. PHELAN, S.J.

AUTHOR OF "THE STRAIGHT PATH"
"THE YOUNG PRIEST'S KEEPSAKE," ETC.

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PREFACE.

THE reader of "The Straight Path" will remember that in the opening pages he was introduced to an anxious inquirer who found himself in an English city on a Sunday morning. There he was led, by the varied chimes from Protestant belfries, to reflect on the contradictory doctrines preached from the pulpits.

He then turned to peruse the all-important question—"Amidst these clashing creeds where can I discover the One, True Church that Christ established?"

To the solution of this problem he brought but two things—his own unbiased judgment and his Bible. Step by step these led him to the knowledge that the path of honest inquiry inevitably ends at the door of the Catholic Church. In the last chapter we saw him safe in a haven

Preface

of happy security; torturing doubts and anxieties now for ever vanished.

To abandon a soul at this important point would be to leave our task unfinished ; hence, the present volume is placed in his hand to guide him onward still, through the Catholic Church, to his true home—Heaven. Here he is instructed in the mysteries of Creation, Redemption, and finally his share in the triumph of Christ's Resurrection.

The title spans the book. The first chapter deals with man's creation from dust, and the last leaves him bathed in the glories of the risen Christ.

People sometimes turn away from spiritual books because of the dulness or heaviness of the style. This should not be so ; for there is no reason why those who consecrate their pens to God should not press into His services the varied gifts and graces that so often contribute to make the secular book attractive—the clarified thought, the brilliancy of colour, the happy imagery, the crispness of style, the tuneful period and the musical rhythm.

Without pretending to have accomplished all this, or even partially succeeded in doing so,

Preface

except in a very limited degree, the writer has made his best endeavour to lift the treatment of Sacred Truths above the region of the monotonous common-place, and invest them with all the interest his limited ability could command, in order to entice the reader on from page to page and spare him fatigue.

It would be ungrateful to close these prefatory remarks without a word of thanks to a public that gave such a generous reception to the previous volume—"The Straight Path".

ST. FRANCIS XAVIER'S,
GARDINER STREET,
DUBLIN, 27th December, 1919.

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CHAPTER I.

LIFE'S STARTING POINT AND GOAL.

Man was created to praise, reverence and serve God our Lord, and by this means to save his soul (Spiritual Exercises).

At some time or another in all our lives we have asked the question—What is my purpose in this world? For what was I sent upon this planet? The answer to that momentous question heads this chapter.

But since we live in an age when people like to get not only medicines, but even their thoughts in tabloid form, for the sake of brevity and simplicity we shall compress that answer into three words : God Made Me.

How poor our thoughts, how feeble our words, when we attempt to answer that question. We must be satisfied with an attempt—for the human and even angelic mind must humbly bow and acknowledge its utter inability to shape in thought, or frame into speech, an answer to the

Who is
God?

From Dust to Glory

question—Who is God? How could a person describe the sun in its mid-day splendour if his life-long knowledge of its light was limited to a tiny thread that came through a pinhole.

We occasionally see a small ray of God's wisdom reflected in a Shakespeare or a Napoleon, and we hear the whisper of His power in the tempest roar or the ocean fury. Yet, after all, our knowledge of Him in this life must ever remain of pinhole size.

The Psalmist says—“*Thou makest the clouds Thy chariot; who walkest upon the wings of the winds. He looketh upon the earth, and maketh it tremble; He toucheth the mountains and they smoke*” (Ps. c. 3).

However, let us take a few facts that may enable us to grasp even a glimmering notion of who God is. The best substitute for an answer is to be found in the preface of the Mass, where we are told that He is the Being “which Angels and Archangels do praise, Cherubim also, and Seraphim; who cease not daily to cry out with one voice, saying Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts”.

Why do the blessed spirits repeat the one word Holy? Because there is an unvarying law

Life's Starting Point and Goal

governing every heart and it is this—Whenever you are confronted with an overpowering spectacle in art or nature, unconsciously you give expression to your wonder or admiration by the repetition of one word.

When you stand before Michael Angelo's picture, "The Last Judgment," in the Sistine Chapel at Rome—the most sublime creation that ever came from an artist's brush; when you ponder on the vastness of the conception and the fiery daring of the hand that flung forth that terrific poem in colours, when you see those black tumultuous clouds, pierced with red lightning flame and look on the despairing forms of the damned, blasted by the Judge's anger; when you behold the tragedy of a rent world reeling before the face of an avenging God, you feel overpowered with awe, your feet are glued to the ground and you discover yourself repeating one word—Splendid, Splendid, Splendid!

Michael
Angelo.

The same thing happens when we are confronted by the marvellous in nature.

Those who have never seen the Alps cannot realize the meaning of the word "majesty," and the man who has not witnessed the sun rise above them has yet to see the most wondrous

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picture that the vast treasure house of nature holds.

You take your stand in the twilight of the opening dawn. The morning star still pauses above the head of Mont Blanc, and a bandage of pale light is drawn across the mountain's brow. As it grows brighter you see it lifting its awful form to the heavens ; and now its head begins to sparkle with red sun-fire, its white bosom is dashed with wine, and a forest belt of dark pines hangs like a girdle around its waist.

Let us now turn from Mont Blanc to that interminable barrier of crystal ice that stretches along the skyline. The light-waves of the rising sun are breaking against it : acting as a prism, it splits the light into the seven colours of the spectrum and sends them sparkling and dancing over the landscape, transforming the scene into fairy land.

The sun at last has climbed the heavens, and behold the cataracts, clothed in rainbow mists, from lofty heights dash tumbling down, and the glaciers, like huge white snakes, come creeping on.

Now, you attempt to pierce into that limitless world of silent whiteness and there are snow

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forms suggesting vast cities. Yes, towers and domes, spires and walls stand sparkling in the sunlight, while the mysterious spirit of silence broods over all that white world of death.

You are riveted before that stupendous panorama and find yourself instinctively repeating the self-same word—Glorious, Glorious, Glorious !

In like manner when the heavenly spirits gaze on the Beatific Vision their wills are swept towards God ; their whole beings tremble with adoration ; they are thrilled with ecstatic rapture, and the heart voice of their praise finds expression in the one repeated word—Holy, Holy, Holy !

Who is God ? If one ray from His face fell upon you, you would be consumed like an insect in a furnace blast. When His presence on Mount Sinai was made known to the children of Israel, "They stood afar off, saying to Moses : *Speak thou to us and we will hear ; but let not the Lord speak to us lest we die*" (Exod. xx. 19).

When Moses came down from the mountain, because in a mysterious manner he had conversed with God, beams of light shone on his face ; so dazed were the people at the sight that they

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would wither if He did not hide the glory of His countenance.

When, even shrouded in human form, God appeared to St. John, a man whose eyes above all those of the sons of men were trained to gaze on the supernatural, yet he tells us—“*And when I had seen Him I fell at His feet as dead*” (Apo. i. 17).

Hence the humility and reverence of the Saints. When they come to know God they are filled with a sense of their own lowliness and of His Majesty.

Me. We have lifted our eyes up and tried to realize, however faintly, the greatness of God. Let us turn them down now and measure the depths of our own insignificance. Let us suppose that an angel is looking out from the gates of Paradise. What does he see? Worlds of undiscovered wonders are careering through the ample fields of space. Bright bodies are scattered here and there, they are suns ; but in the largeness of his view they appear as drops of light. He now fixes his eyes on one. Like a circle of gems, eight glistening planets cluster around it. He singles out one—Earth—for special observation ; on that little ball he sees a number of

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creatures, diminutive as insects, jostling and hurrying—and *I am one of these*. How all pride is withered up in the thought of our insignificance. I am of no more account than the mote in the sunbeam, the fly on the window, the midge in the air. A trifle such as I am comes into the world and another leaves it at every tick of the watch.

An infidel's view of man ends here. He is a speck of dust made only to dissolve. But see how on this foundation of lowliness God erects a structure of dazzling splendour. Watch the building rising step by step.

Looking through that dust-shell the angel sees an immortal soul that reflects its Father's image : a soul that will live as long as God lives.

"Thou hast made him a little less than the angels ; Thou hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou hast set him above the works of Thy hands" (Ps. viii.).

Not only have you an imperishable spirit, but you are made, not through the instrumentality of any creature, you are the immediate handwork of God Himself.

When He called the earth and the lights above it into being, the beasts that browse over

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the plains or roam through the pathless woods, He did so in each case by the mere expression of His will—*Fiat*—Let there be—but when He comes to the creation of man, mark the ritual with which that momentous function is accompanied. The Blessed Trinity seems to pause before proceeding to the crowning work of creation. The phraseology is changed. It is no longer *Fiat* but *Faciamus*—“*Let us make man to our image and likeness*” (Gen. viii. 1-26).

Pause for a moment and see what worth and dignity is yours from the fact that God made you Himself. The world is full of illustrations that show what immense value comes even to worthless trifles from their relation with an exalted personage.

Some years ago the quill pens of Charles Dickens were sold by auction at Four Pounds Fifteen Shillings each. Now an old quill is worse than useless, it is rubbish; yet, see the value with which it becomes invested because it was even used—certainly not created—by a great writer.

Let us take another example: A maid of the late Queen Victoria came on a holiday to an Irish seaside town. The Queen frequently wrote to

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her. The hotel proprietor picked up the torn envelopes and sold them at Five Pounds each.

Now, when paltry nothings such as old quills and torn envelopes can become so precious because being touched by the hand of royalty or greatness, what dignity comes to creation's King from the fact that he was not only touched but fashioned, not by the hand of genius or royalty, or even by the hand of an angel, but by the Majesty of God Himself.

Well indeed might the Psalmist exclaim—
“Thou hast crowned him with glory and honour.
Thou hast set him above the works of Thy hands”
(Ps. viii.).

We come now to examine a still higher degree in the God-built dignity of man by asking—
What did He make you?

He did not make you a Rock. Yet see how precious a mere rock can become if it could claim even a distant relation with God.

“Not a
Rock.”

Go back to the days of the Crusaders when Europe was set on fire by the lava tide of eloquence that flowed from the lips of Peter the Hermit. See the military hosts marshalling in every land, nobles pledging their estates, and the clergy melting down the sacred vessels of the

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sanctuary to help the holy cause. There were then no steamships, motors, or telegraphs. The small sailing boats were tossed, scattered, or becalmed for months : the prospects of the dreary march, the vile dungeon, or slavery of the galleys had to be faced. For what was all this sacrifice, suffering, this out-pouring of blood and treasure ? For the possession of a rock--the tomb in which the dead body of Christ lay.

There are in our days people who sneer at the Crusaders. But then, turning from Christ and His interests to their modern divinity--the golden idol--they bleach the long roads that lead to Kimberley or Alaska with their own whitening bones.

It is not by the standards of materialism the Crusaders' efforts should be appraised. Their truest measure is the judgment of their own generation. Europe then looked through the eyes of faith. Its impulses flowed from the unerring instincts of Catholic belief ; and their purpose was blessed and encouraged by Christ's vicars. So great as the Crusaders' sacrifices were, they were only commensurate with the exalted dignity of their aims.

We now see the sacred importance that wraps

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around a mere rock, though never chiselled by the hand of Christ, but solely because it touched His dead body.

Yet He did not make you a rock.

Let us turn now to organic life. The simplest object is perhaps a flower. If I could assure you that angel fingers—mind, not God's, but an angel's fingers—folded every leaf of that flower, channelled its veins and wove its fibres, that all its fair and delicate tints came from an angel's brush, and an angel hand stored up within it the fragrant perfume, how precious that flower would become. If goodly sums were poured out for torn paper and mouldering quills, what money would not be cheerfully given for that flower that was not created, but folded, painted, and perfumed, not by God but by one of His creatures? What chemical resources would not be invoked to preserve it?

Yet He did not make you a flower.

One more step upwards and we find ourselves in the animal world. We all know how precious a fair and gracious animal can be. What prices are not paid for great race-horses!

There is a story told of Julius Cæsar. He had a pet—a beautiful white fawn that accompanied

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him on his walks around the pleasure ground. He petted and caressed this milk-white hind that wore a golden collar upon her neck bearing the words, "Touch me not ; I belong to Cæsar". In public eyes that creature assumed a sacred character. Every park and garden gate were thrown open to her. She roamed at will. At length the people cried, "It is a god that has come down and assumed the form of a fawn to inspire the great Julius".

Now Cæsar did not create a drop of its blood or a hair of its body ; yet, because the loose dominion of a great man is thrown around it, in public estimation, its dignity mounts to the divine.

Still, God did not make you a mere animal no matter how fair. When temptation brings you to the verge of sin, pause and listen to the soul within you crying, "Stab me not ; I belong to Jesus Christ".

God did not only touch you as His dead body touched the rock or the angel's fingers the flower : He not only holds over you a conventional proprietorship such as Cæsar held over the fawn.

His relations with you are infinitely closer.

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See what they are.

By an act of omnipotence He called you out of nothing. His hand fashioned the graceful curve of your limb, built up the delicate cells of the brain and the wondrous machinery of the eye ; then from His own hot lips He breathed into that body a flame from the Blessed Trinity. Oh how essentially you belong to God ! Count up the properties of the body with its five senses ; reflect on the soul with its immortal life and divine reflection.

Ponder, then, on what He did make you ; neither rock nor flower nor fawn, however fair. He made you a man ; and on what model did He shape your being ? Here we reach the highest altitude in the ascending scale of man's dignity.

His eyes swept the globe and no exemplar could there be found. He examined the angel hosts, but even in the Seraph that stood before His throne He could discover no type of life sufficiently exalted for the dignity He wished to confer on you. Glory's crown of glory. He made you after His own image and likeness. Now we see the splendid structure God erected on the tiny dust-shell the infidel saw.

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The reader must have observed that in all the illustrations, whether a quill, an envelope, a rock, a flower or a fawn, their value came not from any intrinsic worth inherent in them but from sources lying entirely outside themselves.

So with man: on his utter lowliness God raised an edifice of splendour; therefore, while having every reason for gratitude he has no more reason to be proud than the torn envelope or the old quill. In himself he was just as worthless, all his dignity came from God's right hand alone.

The concluding links in this chain of thought are reserved for the next chapter.

CHAPTER II.

THE GLORY DUE.

This is perhaps the most important as well as the most interesting question that could engage our thoughts. Why did God make me?

Why did God create me?

St. Thomas answers. Because "Good is of its own nature diffusive". God, being goodness without limit, He naturally pours out his perfections on others. We see this law operating every day.

We call the sun "good" for the golden treasure of light, heat, and colour with which he blesses the earth. You could not imagine the sun, like a cruel miser, locking up his riches and allowing this little planet to freeze in darkness; no, with every notion we have of the sun, the diffusiveness of goodness is associated.

Watch the good-natured man, and when does he wear his happiest smile? Is it not when he

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puts his hand in his pocket to relieve the sorrows of others, or when he stoops down to lift up the wretched. Then the imprisoned sunlight of his heart bursts out: it radiates and sparkles on every feature, declaring the truth of the law that whatever is good is diffusive.

Perhaps the best illustration of this is to be seen in the head of a good, happy family.

Look into the home when the day's toil is over, when the lamp is lighted and the winter fire aglow. The children cluster around that loving father. The little ones are upon his knees crowing, dancing with delight. The arms of others entwine around his neck. The pat of his hand sends an electric thrill of pleasure through these young hearts, and the souls of his children dilate in the sunshine of his love.

In like manner when the hand of death draws aside the veil and we pass into the bright presence of our Father, we will cluster around His throne and He will saturate our beings, like the sponge in the ocean, with His own glorious attributes—His wisdom, His power, His splendour. The fountain of all goodness will diffuse Himself and fill our beings. Does not His apostle tell us that “*Eye hath not seen nor ear*

The Glory Due

heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man what things God hath prepared for those that love Him" (1 Cor. ii. 9).

The answer is evident—To give God Glory. What is my Duty?
And glory is defined by St. Thomas as *Claritas cum laude notitia*—Clear knowledge of the head with praise of the heart. From this definition it follows that man alone can give God glory, since he of all the creatures of His hand has a head to know and a heart to love Him.

Every portion of creation is bound to contribute towards his creator's glory. The Psalmist calls on the stars and the winds, the cedars of the forest and the beasts of the earth to sing His praise. They do so by showing forth His power and splendour, by lifting up man's thoughts, by ministering to man's wants and faithfully obeying the laws their creator imposed on them.

But their contribution towards His glory must always remain indirect. Without man they are voiceless, not having intellects to know or hearts to love. Man alone can directly approach his maker and offer Him glory.

When God surveyed the works of His hands at the close of the fifth day the scene was fair.

The sun blazed from the blue canopy. The

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streams flowed and sparkled in its light, and the woods resounded with the fresh songs of birds. Yet from all that young world not a syllable of glory went up to God. Man had not as yet come upon the scene, and that world lay like a mute organ awaiting the master's touch. Every element from the starry wonders that dash along their paths of fire to the creature that roams the tropical forest or darts through the ocean depths must contribute towards its creator's glory, but man alone can present their offering. They pour incense into the benediction boat, but it is only when the high priest—man—swings the thurible, the cloud of glory rises.

What kind
of Praise?

Certain it is that the praise that goes to constitute the glory offered to God must be of a higher order than were wonder or cold admiration. The warm stream of benevolent love must form a strong constituent element.

The full meaning of this distinction will become evident by an illustration. A young man wanders into a beautiful palace where the highest artistic genius triumphs. It is surrounded by woods and gardens of rarest blooms. The air is laden with delicate perfumes and the ear soothed by the playing of fountains.

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This picture of loveliness, while it excites his admiration, causes no quickened heart beat or heightens not the colour on his cheeks, he gives it his admiration but as yet no glory.

Now, however, a change comes. A hand is placed on his shoulder : he turns around and finds himself face to face with the king.

"I see you are admiring this palace, but do you know for whom it was built?"

"No, your Majesty."

"It was built for you."

Ah, how changed the light in his eyes now. He no longer looks at the palace through the medium of cold, distant admiration. His heart wildly beats and the rose-coloured light of love fills his vision. His personality, in a sense, goes out and blends itself into his surroundings.

The king continues—"Perhaps you do not know that you were born in slavery and that I ransomed you at a great price. Now I not only make you a present of this palace but I adopt you a prince of the royal household."

That young man pants for the day when he may perform some signal service to show his gratitude for such lavish generosity.

Here you have true glory—*Clara cum laude*

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notitia—the mind penetrated with a deep conviction of all he owes and the heart pouring out waves of grateful love.

Take up that story in detail and see how it fits into your own life.

Look around the earth when spring has wrapped it in vernal beauty, when the flowers are flinging perfume on the air and the woodlands thrill with melody. And to get a larger view turn the telescope towards the starry world of space. See the countless suns, the fiery meteors dashing onward and the graceful comets with their trails of splendour. Yet all these are but dim reflections of the beauty of our real home—heaven : and if the outside be so beautiful, what must the inside be.

For what were all those wondrous worlds fashioned, for what this earth draped in loveliness?—“For us men and for our salvation” (Nicene Creed).

Were not you, too, born in slavery?—Yes.

You lay a grovelling babe upon the ground
Polluted in the blood of your first sire,
With your whole essence shattered and unsound,
And coiled around your heart a demon dire.¹

¹ Dream of Gerontius.

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Did He not purchase you. And at what a price?

Has He not lifted you up and given you for associates the royal princes of His own court?

"Who is as the Lord our God.

"Raising up the needy from the earth and lifting up the poor out of the dunghill.

"That He may place him with princes, with princes of His people" (Ps. cxii.).

One of these princes He sent to take your hand at the baptismal font, they surround you when you kneel before the tabernacle, and when your last hour is passed they will welcome you and hail you as a brother in your Father's home.

How vastly greater are your obligations even to those of that favoured young man we left in the beautiful palace with the generous king. Therefore, since you know God and realize the wonderful benefits He has showered upon you, benevolent love should pour out His glory. The outflowing tide of glory finds three channels.

The *heart*, where the fountain dwells. "My Cord. heart and my flesh have rejoiced in the living God" (Ps. lxxxviii. 3).

By the *mouth*, when the triple stream of Ore. Faith, Hope, and Charity blend in the wave of prayer.

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Opere. By work, "*If you love Me, keep My commandments*" (John xiv. 15). Not only by holding your life free from sin, but by forwarding His interests and creating Him in the hearts of others.

The young man surely would not be satisfied with merely keeping the king's laws. That he would consider a very poor return. His spirit would yearn for conquest, he would burn with desire to extend that king's dominions, to make his name respected and his will obeyed.

The text placed over the first chapter tells us that man's duty towards God is not only to give praise and service but also reverence.

Reverence. When you have acquired all contained in this one word, the coping stone of your perfection is set : the topmost point is reached.

Internal reverence is nothing less than living a life of interior recollection, with the light of faith constantly upon your eyes, enabling you to perpetually realize the presence of God and walk in the splendour of His face.

To a man who has acquired this reverence sin is difficult. For, when the devil tempts you, should Christ appear before you and, pointing to His thorn-crowned head and bleeding side.

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asking—"Will you crucify Me again?" would you for a moment dally with temptation? But the man of interior recollection lives constantly in God's presence and sees Him as clearly with the eyes of faith as you would with the eyes of flesh in that hour of trial. It is this spirit of living faith that gives holy persons such power. A virtue goes out from them. There is an unction in their words. Unseen waves from the furnace chamber within are flowing out, and the hardest hearts melt and wills the most stubborn surrender. Quench that inner life of faith, and, though gifted with the eloquence of Demosthenes, you become sounding brass. Should your achievements surpass those of Alexander, if not vitalized by that secret fire, they will fall as feeble monuments of sand.

But, when your life is surrounded by the light of God's presence as the fishes are surrounded by the sea, you will do wonders, although your gifts are of the humblest order : for by Faith you will see God, by Hope you will lean on Him, and by Charity you will feed on Him.

Then you can exclaim :—

"I live, not I now, but Christ lives in me.

"My beloved to me and I to Him."

CHAPTER III.

HOW ANGELS FELL.

Effect to
Cause.

So far we have fixed our attention exclusively on two points—God and the soul.

Now glancing along that avenue that separates the soul from God, we see flung across it a monster that bristles with danger. Its name is mortal sin.

But should the reader hope to get a complete knowledge of mortal sin let him at the outset dismiss that hope.

The powers of the human intelligence are limited, and there are giant evils that stand completely outside and beyond its grasp and the greatest of these is mortal sin.

For instance, what man has ever taken a thunderbolt in his hands and examined its parts under the microscope, or what man has placed his finger on the earthquake's fiery pulse and marked its throb. When we come to deal with evils of first magnitude we are compelled to

How Angels Fell

approach them indirectly, namely, from the effects before us we reason back to the cause.

An illustration will make this clear. A few years ago the fair city of San Francisco flourished in pride and beauty till the earthquake fiend stretched out its hot hands, grasped its foundation pillars and dashed its proudest palaces like cardboard toys.

Direct measurement of the earthquake's destructive energy was out of the question. No one suggested that it should be flung on the dissecting table or its constituent elements thrown into the chemical retort.

No! to get even a limited knowledge of its power the indirect method of reasoning alone remained. When the smiling picture that joyous city presented was contrasted with the mournful mass of ruins that remained after the catastrophe, some notion of the earthquake's might was formed.

This is the line of reasoning we bring to examine the angel's sin. We behold them before sin knew them and we then see them fallen and torn. By the contrast of these two pictures we hope to get a partial knowledge of the blighting power of mortal sin.

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Before
they Fell.

The angels, how perfect ! Created out of pure love and after God's own image. His eldest sons, the royal princes that clustered around His throne, draped in the dazzling splendours of His own perfections ; and rightly so, for what more natural than that the sons should bear a likeness to their Father.

Their
Bodies.

The angel body was not made of clay like ours, a prey to disease, the plaything of every element, shivering in the winter cold and swooning in the summer heats. No ! bodies of flawless spirit were given them.

Their
Minds.

Their intellects so illumined and enriched ! Ah ! what is the mind of man in comparison with the angelic ?

What does the tiny grub, coiled in its burrow of clay, know of the sun's beauty compared to the eagle that, springing from an alpine cliff, cleaves with his strong wing the blue ether, disports himself in the high fields of light and dares to fix his fearless gaze upon the sun ? When we gather a few stray beams of knowledge, years are consumed and the midnight lamp burned, and even then how feeble our grasp. We have scarcely laid hold of them till they vanish, and the end of the longest life how paltry our store !

How Angels Fell

We all feel with Sir Isaac Newton that we are children wandering by the seashore picking up here and there a few stray pearls of truth while the great ocean of wisdom lies unexplored before us.

With the angels how different. They lived in the brightness of their Father's face, and the floods of knowledge flowed down through the chambers of their minds without effort or labour, like the sunshine falling through the spring well, illumining the faintest nook, gilding the tiniest pebble. Hence the name Cherubim, which means—fulness of wisdom.

How the angels loved God! If the love the saints bore Him was so intense, as we see in the case of St. Francis Xavier and St. Philip Neri when crying, "Hold! enough, I can bear no more," they feared that the tension was so great that their hearts would burst. St. Stanislaus used to rush out into the frosty night air and tear open his gown to cool the passionate ardour of his breast. If these creatures, half spirit and half clay, flung on a little ball of earth, and far away from the splendours of their Father's face, could so love God, what must be the love of God's own angels who gazed on His

Their
Hearts.

From Dust to Glory

perfections? Hence again, the word Seraph, which means - burning love.

God
Loved
Them.

If God so loves us—and the crucifix and the sanctuary lamp speak that love with an eloquence that leaves human language dumb—who can hope to tell the love He bore His own bright angels?

It is natural that every father should love with a special love the child most like himself. This is strikingly illustrated in the story of the two Pitts. The younger, William, being too delicate to go to Eton, his father became responsible for his early education.

When the marvellous powers enshrined within that fragile frame were discovered, that father echoed his son's thankfulness that he was not the eldest and therefore need not go to the House of Lords. The world at that time held but one theatre worthy of his great gifts—the House of Commons—then lighted by the most brilliant galaxy of stars that perhaps ever adorned an assembly.

In after years that father was carried to the distinguished strangers' gallery, and when he looked down on his son, so like himself—the luminous mind and trumpet voice—and saw

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him crossing swords with the first orators of Europe, at an age when other boys were struggling with the difficulties of Euclid, the tears coursed down his cheeks ; for in that child he saw his reflected self. So, how intense must have been God's love for His own spirit sons in whom He beheld the reflection of His own glory.

To crown all He gave them free will as He gives to us. The forced service of slaves would be unworthy of Him and His children. Their free will was exposed to one trial, and if they stood firm they would be confirmed in grace and given eternal glory.

On this point let us have clear ideas. It was not God who made it a temptation. On His part it was but the announcement of a truth that they should know. When He declares that we should honour our fathers and mothers we do not complain that He is throwing temptation in our way. What was this truth that He revealed to the angels? According to a fairly common opinion it was the revelation of the mystery of the Incarnation.

See what was involved in this revelation.

Another nature was to receive the honour of

Their
Trial.

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being elevated to the eternal throne, and that nature was not the angelic, but one vastly inferior.

Secondly, the angels will have to adore Christ made man even in His darkest hour when He lay like a crushed worm in Gethsemane.

Finally, and perhaps this was their greatest trial, Mary, a creature entirely of the inferior nature, was to be lifted above them and made Queen of angels.

Pride was the root from which their ruin sprung. Lucifer wished to be like God, and by hypostatic union hoped to be His equal. The Incarnation shattered his ambitious dreams ; for now, not only will he remain inferior to God, but to God made man.

This point is too interesting to be passed over lightly. An illustration will drive it home with force and clearness and enable the reader to fully grasp the consequences involved by the announcement of the Incarnation.

The King
of Spain.

Some years ago there were constant rumours of the intended marriage of the King of Spain, and much speculation as to who his consort was to be. Now let us suppose him summoning the ladies of the noble families and declaring his intention of taking a wife.

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The announcement so far would cause fluttering in many a heart, and the question rising to every lip would be—Who shall be the queen of Spain? Their suspense is quickly relieved, for he informs them that he has determined to take his wife from a labourer's cottage. Their cheeks are blanched. Their breath is taken away. They gasp in whispers, asking, "Is he mad?" What! the daughters of the hidalgos passed over, the ladies of proudest lineage, the descendants of heroes whose names adorn the brightest pages of Spanish history, slighted for a workman's daughter! The consequences from this announcement are natural. The first is that those scions of the proudest nobility in Europe will have to bend their knees before this workman's daughter when she becomes queen, and, horror of horrors, they will have to bow their proud heads before the supreme lady at court who, of course, is to be the queen's mother, the erstwhile workman's wife. What a trial on their humility and loyalty! what a temptation to shout the cry of rage—Never!

This perfectly illustrates the trial the angels were subjected to when God announced that the angelic nature would be passed over and one

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vastly inferior was to be lifted to union with the Godhead. The person of Christ, always remaining divine, claimed their homage even in the hour of His lowliest abjection; and that Mary, being mother of God, should be revered as Queen of angels. Here was their trial, and we now see it was no small one. It demanded humility of intellect to implicitly believe and not dare to question the decrees of God, and humility of will to adore the Word made flesh.

Then
tell.

They pause; blinded by his own excellence and forgetting that every gift he had was the generous gift of God, Lucifer, voicing the determination of his brother rebels, raised the cry of rebellion: *Non serviam*—"I will not serve". *And behold a great dragon; and his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven* (Apoc. xii. 3).

Compressed within that short sentence you will find the essence of every sin committed since that hour. When the infidel shoots his lip of scorn and tosses his head in fancied superiority, asking does the world think that he, a man of genius, will bow to the declaration of the Church and accept a truth he cannot understand; that

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proud and insolent will echoes Lucifer's shout of defiance—"I will not serve". Oh, what fantastic tricks before high heaven does not the proud man play!

Poor creature! he prefers to be guided by the little glow-worm spark of his own intelligence than by the light of the eternal sun. When a man to gratify his own passions tramples on God's law, again we hear the words that lighted hell's fire—"I will not serve". Proud ambition has strewn this earth with wrecks of greatness. Alexander, weeping because there were other worlds that he could not conquer, and Napoleon, like a caged eagle, eating out his heart in St. Helena, are samples of millions. "By that sin fell the angels; how can man then, the image of his maker, hope to win by it?" (Shakespeare, "Henry VIII.").

"Depart from me." See how much that meant to the angels. Depart from whom? Con-
demned. From God, their Father, their King, the very centre of their existence.

In this country we are accustomed to witness painful partings when the outgoing exiles gather at the railway stations. The bell announces the incoming train—what wild shrieks—what wails

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of anguish rise. See the knotted arms of the daughter clasping her sobbing father's neck. Their very heart-strings are torn. But hope still remains, and who knows but they may meet again. Then they are going with the prospect of happy homes and not into a fire-lit hell. Who can describe the terror of these words : Depart from me ? It is the straining of a world, the tearing of a planet from its centre.

One sin lighted the fires of hell : eternity will not quench them. The illusion of temptation has now passed. THEY are stripped of every angelic glory and reduced to the hideousness of devils. They are not hurled over the battlements of heaven by God Himself, but by their late companions whom they now see confirmed in glory.

What a change !

O Lucifer, star of the morning, how art thou fallen !

Tortured
Minds.

Their minds, once the homes of tranquil joy, are now invaded by a thousand serpents—rage, dejection, despair.

And remember that all this was new to the angels. What keenness is given to the edge of sorrow by that fact ?

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The beggar's child, who often has to crunch the hard crust of poverty or go to bed supperless, feels the pinch of want very little.

But the child of the prince, around whose cradle the proudest of the land stood uncovered, whose delicate limbs were wrapped in purple and fine linen, whose every want, aye every whim was ministered to, should he find himself cast on the roadside an object of contempt compelled to stretch out a craver's hand or famish. Oh! the sharpness of his torture. Every instinct of his nature and every recollection of the past rises up to tear his heart with the teeth of rage.

Before that fatal sin their substances were, as Blasted
Bodies. the princes of God's court and His own eldest sons should be, arrayed in dazzling splendour.

The Holy Ghost thus describes Lucifer's perfections - "*Thou wast the seal of resemblance, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty; thou wast in the pleasures of the paradise of God; precious stones were thy covering, gold was the work of thy beauty. I set thee on the mountain of God, and thou didst walk in the midst of stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day of thy creation until iniquity was found in thee*" (Ezech. xxviii. 12).

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The blighting breath of one mortal sin passes over that picture of God-like splendour, and mark the result—He, whose covering were “precious stones” and who was “perfect in beauty,” becomes so repulsive, an object of such terror that the very pigs of our earth rush to commit suicide rather than keep company with this one-time star of glory.

In the fifth chapter of St. Mark's Gospel we read that when our Lord preached by the seashore, a man possessed of a legion of devils besought Him to expel them from his body. He did so, and at the request of these fallen angels permitted them to enter a herd of swine grazing close by. What happened? The filthy gutter swine, the vilest animal in creation, rushed and flung themselves into the devouring waves rather than associate with the one-time “pleasures of paradise”.

No gift of pen or tongue can paint the transforming power of a single sin half as eloquently as that naked fact.

Then, when I walked the streets in sin did God tear aside the veil that hid the repulsive hideousness of my soul and let men see it with the light of His eyes, those that would not

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drop dead from fright would run stark mad at that vision of terror. Yet the God that did not spare His own bright angels, who committed but one sin, spared me, perhaps guilty a hundred times.

The fallen angels suffer without hope. When Christ wept over Jerusalem and bled upon Calvary not a blood drop or a tear was shed for them.

How long must they suffer? They had suffered for four thousand years when Christ came on earth. They have suffered two thousand years since, and to the howls of their despair the caverns of hell hold but one echo—
—For ever.

Who punishes them? A God whose infinite justice will not permit Him to punish the millionth part of a hair's breadth beyond what their crime deserves ; a God also infinite in His mercy and goodness. So that, terrible as their punishment is when we see mercy and goodness restraining even justice, we are forced to conclude that the punishment is less than what the crime deserved.

Standing now on the brink of a fire-lit hell and looking up I see one-third of heaven

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desolate ; I then turn my eyes in upon my own heart and look down the years that have flown and what ghastly spectres rise before me—Sin sufficient to light a thousand hells, and though forgiven again and again I went back to my degradation. With head bowed down and a soul weighted with shame I now climb the slopes of Calvary to witness the murderous power of mortal sin as in no place else it can be seen.

Calvary.

Suppose a man, swept by a tempest of passion, should in a moment of blind fury murder his own father. He then goes home to sleep, and in the grey dawn awakens : the ghost recollections of last night's crime begin to form on his brain. In his half-conscious moments he flings out his hand with a gesture to repel the hideous image as the spectre of an ugly dream ; as he does so he starts, for that hand bears a crimson stain that assures him that his guilt does not belong to the world of dreams but the world of fact.

He rises and staggers towards the scene of his late crime. When he reaches the spot he sees the white dust clotted with his father's blood ; he marks the rigid muscles of a face that speaks

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pain from every feature ; he sees the track of his guilty knife in the dead heart.

There is another also there : his mother. She is speechless with sorrow. She is rocked in the convulsive throes of grief. She is tearing her grey hairs and cursing the black day that she ever gave birth to such a monster. What would be the sentiments of that man ? Sorrow ? No ! Sorrow is too feeble a word. His soul would be saturated with shame and confusion. He would call on the mountains to overwhelm him and crush him. He would beg the earth to open its jaws and swallow him.

WE have now reached Calvary's summit. Let us kneel down for our Father is dying. Look at His thorn-crowned head and wounded heart ; His flesh is hanging like purple rags around Him, and ask—

“O Christ, how does it happen that you, being eternally happy in heaven, should come to die on a gibbet ? ”

Listen ! listen ! see ; His pale lips are moving. He speaks. Oh ! Words of terror :—

“Mortal sin murdered me. When you committed mortal sin that day you murdered your own Father—Jesus Christ.”

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Bowing down before our dying Father let us ask—"O Christ, what have we done for you in the past? What are we doing for you in the present? What will we do for you in the future?"

CHAPTER IV.

THE FATAL FRUIT.

THE first thunderbolt of sin fell in the heavens. In the previous chapter we heard its crash, but from afar. The second burst upon our own earth through the persons of our first parents. To Adam's sin I now invite the reader's attention.

He was created and placed in a garden of delights, where there were no summer heats or shivering winter colds. A spring—like breath of perpetual balm tempered the genial air around him. From the generous earth fruits and flowers sprung in teeming abundance. It was a garden of delights ; in a word, it was Paradise.

Before he
Fell.

His own structure, how perfect ! His body, the immediate handiwork of God : peerless in its manly beauty, perfection without a flaw, healthy vigour never to be shadowed by disease or pain. Age was to leave no traces of decay, and the flight of years could bring no wrinkles

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to his brow. The energies of perpetual youth, and the undimmed sunshine of boyhood to remain for ever.

In mind, how happy! Sadness or sorrow could never blight its joys. The passions that rend and tear us might never invade the calm serenity of his soul. An intellect that looked up, knew God, and was filled with knowledge, and supremely happy. He revelled in every joy.

The Ten-
ure of
Paradise.

On what condition did Adam hold all this? On the simplest and easiest. How happy would you not consider a man who held an ample estate on the condition of paying what lawyers call a "pepper-corn rent"! a farthing, a nut, an ear of corn, some trifle merely to acknowledge that he was not absolute owner, but held it from the generous bounty of another.

Such was the tenure of paradise.

Now if God gave Adam the use of one tree, amply sufficient for his needs, we should admire His generosity. But behold His lavish liberality! The full range of paradise is his. One tree alone he may not touch. Why? for reasons the most salutary; to remind Adam of his dependence on God; to keep him in wholesome

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humility, lest pride might destroy him, as it destroyed the angels. The first pair revelled in every happiness ; they were constrained by one slender silken thread, and that to save them from themselves.

Adam rebels, and the withering blight falls on every portion of creation. The air above his head becomes charged with curses. The electric bolt that smites our proudest temples, ploughs the earth, and blasts life on its withering path, is the consequence of one sin. How many millions since have not perished in the freezing grip of winter ? See the retreat of the grand army that Napoleon led to Moscow, the arms dropping from the numbed hands of the soldiers, their frost-bitten noses and ears dropping off, and their stark bodies flung, like the links of a frozen chain, across the snows of Europe. The Fall.

What dreary sorrow does not the long snowy winter bring to the cheerless homes of our poor ? What millions, too, have not perished in the other extreme—heat—languishing to death in the droughts, scourged by fevers, or dying in the frantic agonies of thirst ?

Sin blights the earth under Adam's feet. The soil that teemed with luxuriance, sulks, and now

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will produce only briars and thistles. Its meagre fruits are gathered only in incertitude and fear, and then only when watered with the sweat of the toiler's brow.

The shadow of sin falls on the fairest portion of God's creation—the human intellect, and how dimmed its light, how crippled its powers become! Bright streams of knowledge are no longer poured in; an eclipse has taken place.

Before the fall the lamp of reason shone above the passions of the breast, and made clear their path. It held them in the cords of willing obedience, and controlled their movements. At the command of reason they rose in strong energy, or sank into quiet repose. But sin struck the controlling power of reason, and paralysed it. The passions rose in fury, tossed aside the bridle of restraint, and bid defiance to the once commanding reason. How many a time since did not the voice of reason ring in the drunkard's ear, telling him of the ruin before him? But the rebellious will swept him onwards to destruction, despite that warning voice.

Behold the body! See that pair that would be God's, begging the leaves of the trees for covering, and cowering before their judge to

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hear the sentence --“ *I will multiply thy sorrows and thy conceptions ; in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children* ” (Gen. iii. 16).

Take that one consequence of sin alone—the pangs of child-birth. What groans, tears, and living martyrdom has it not entailed on Eve’s daughters ! This punishment stands unique. Every other function of nature, such as sleeping, eating, breathing, is accompanied by pleasure. There is no exception to the rule but one. When science is asked to give an explanation, her lips are dumb. There is no explanation but the words of Genesis : *In sorrow shalt thou bring forth children.*

Every day discovered to them the miseries their crime entailed. With what anguish they beheld the first death, and the first guilty blood that stained the virgin earth !

The Crim-
son Stain.

They had two sons. God loved innocent Abel, and hated Cain, for the only reason that He can hate any creature—Cain sinned. In the primitive dealings between God and the first human family a knowledge of this was brought to Cain. His heart was devoured by jealousy, and the devil prompted him to an awful crime.

In the depth of the lonely woods he met and

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slew his brother. He sees that brother's blood dyeing the green grass : his hands are crimson, and when he looks towards heaven, a blood-stained cloud floats between him and his Father's face. The pure angels must have looked down with shuddering horror upon that scene, and the devils danced and screamed in wild delight around that guilty man. He ran in terror, "a fugitive and a vagabond on the face of the earth".

Adam searched long for his favourite boy. We see him rushing through the pathless woods, his unshorn beard sweeping his breast, his unkempt hair floating on the wind, his pallid cheeks, his staring eyeballs, and his quivering lips. He throws up his hands in agony, crying, "Abel! Abel!" and the forest echo gives back his words, "Abel! Abel!"

At length he stumbles on the corpse. He stands petrified with terror, asking, "What is this? What is this?" The face, form, and lineaments are those of his child indeed, but why those rigid limbs, this motionless form, that glassy stare? Poor man ; he had never seen a corpse before.

He carries the body home to Eve. They examine his wounds. They call him, but he will

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not speak. What! will those pallid lips never form the sweet word—"Mother"? Will those glassy eyes never beam with life? Is the throb of that young heart stilled for ever?

They are rocked in a stupor of grief. Through the weary hours they watch by their dead darling boy. It was the first wake. At last the truth breaks upon them; for the air grows tainted, and worms have come to claim their own. Oh, now they realize the Master's words: *In what day soever thou shalt eat of it, thou shalt die the death* (Gen. ii. 17). This is death! This is death!

Rushing through the poisoned air, they snatch the body, and place it in the first grave, and, as the dark mould covers their dead child, again they recall the Master's words: "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return" (Gen. iii. 19). The first corpse that rested on the earth was the corpse of a murdered man, and the first guilty blood that stained it was drawn by a brother's hand.

That one sin unbarred the sluice-gates of calamities; it has deluged the world with woe. Not a disease that has scourged humanity but can be traced to it.

To enable the reader to realise the greatness

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of the curse brought by Adam's sin, we shall take three pictures : a plague, an hospital, and a battlefield.

The
Plague.

The reader, perhaps, has heard of the terrible plague that swept, like the wing of a destroying angel, over the face of Europe in the latter half of the fourteenth century. It was called the "Black Death," and "The Plague of Florence". The roadside was lined with corpses, and from the city streets loads of dead were carted and shot into a common pit, without a breath of prayer or the sound of a passing bell.

Men who left their homes in health, staggered, reeled, and fell, without a hand to moisten their parched lips, or give their bodies decent interment. The streets, that, a month before, echoed the tramp of the swaying throngs, or rang with the busy sounds of life, became deserted. The grass grew between the paving stones of the squares of fashion ; and there was no sound to break the mournful stillness, save the stifled groan of the deserted victim, or the snarls of the hungry dogs that fought over human flesh.

Strong minds gazed in stupor ; but for those of more tender fibre the tension was too great. They snapped and plunged into riotous excess,

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or gave themselves up to the dismal ravings of fanaticism.

Stand in imagination on some neighbouring tower and look down on that charnel house of woe. See the terror-stricken fugitives, the tottering dying, the ghastly dead.

Listen to the roll of the corpse cart, and reflect that all that misery flowed from one mortal sin. Then, turning your eyes from that plague-stricken city, back into your own life—Oh! Merciful God! I have been guilty of sin sufficient to deluge a thousand worlds with ravages worse than these; and yet God gives me time to repent; opens wide His arms to receive the prodigal; and on His lips the whispering words of peace are formed. Shall I hesitate, then, to fling myself on that Father's neck, and wash with tears of blood, if necessary, a life so leprous and so foul.

Where do we see the concrete results of mortal sin more strikingly than in a large city hospital? Go into the wards from bed to bed. Look at the hectic flush on the wasted cheek of the consumptive, the white lips, and the fatal shining gloss in the eye. See the mute sorrow of the helpless paralytic. His limbs fall lifeless, and the tear of misery courses down his cheek.

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When you enter the surgical ward you see the tables glittering with knives and instruments. There is a young man in the prime of life ; he has met with an accident. While under the influence of the drugs he is dreaming of home and his young wife, or humming his infant child to sleep. When he awakens, the sad truth bursts upon him. He has lost his arm. He is stunned ; his head droops ; and from the depths of his broken heart utters the wish that he was never born, or that an early grave will quench his misery.

Come across to the fever department. Here is a fair young girl ; the star of joy that lighted up her father's home. Her innocent charms swayed all hearts, and disarmed even the tongue of envy. Behold her now. Her shaven head tossing on a pillow that sleep refuses to visit ; her reason gone ; her veins swollen with fiery blood ; her eyes staring at some image of disordered fancy. Listen to the shrieks, the sobs, the maniac laughter. What a contrast that poor sad wreck to the girl that a month ago was the joy of her parents and the pride of her village.

Stand in that hospital at midnight. The shaded lights are in the wards. Listen ! Above the soft tread of nurses comes the laboured

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breathing, the sharp cry of pain, the long drawn sigh, or the death rattle. Every breath is burdened with sorrow.

Glide softly in the curtain shadows and see the crystal beads of anguish standing on the pale foreheads, the damp brows, the tear-filled eyes ; and then turn from that home of misery into the still moonlight, and reflect that all that, and a million times more, is the result of one mortal sin committed six thousand years ago ; and under the bright stars gleaming down, like the mild eyes of God's mercy, I confess to have committed sin sufficient to hurl this whole planet into the living chambers of hell.

Perhaps the appalling consequences of Adam's sin are best seen in that deluge of loosened passions—that engine of human wreckage, called war. What a sight ! Men and brothers, children of the same God, redeemed by the same blood, destined for the same heaven : men who are the stays of aged parents or the heads of large families ; men who, in times of peace, are models of gentle kindliness ; men who would step aside, rather than tread upon a worm. What horror to see such men rending and slaughtering each other ! When the war blast rings upon

The
Battle-
field.

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the air, all the passions begotten of sin are unchained, the furies of hate and murder possess God's children, and man becomes a tiger, with a tiger's rage for blood.

Wellington tells us that no man that ever saw a battlefield the day after action wished to see another. Take a glance at that battlefield. The furnace blaze from the batteries is mowing down the advancing columns. Listen to the boom of cannon, the rattle of musketry, the exploding shells, dashing fragments of broken humanity to the winds of heaven, the shouts of onset, the blare of trumpets and the crash of military music. The very air is raining blood, and the iron hooves of the charging cavalry horses battering human skulls, and trampling human hearts that a week before beat in love.

Return to that scene a month after. As you approach it, you see a dark canopy hanging in the heavens above it. Make no mistake. It is not a rain cloud, but the tens of thousands carrion birds that have scented rotting humanity from afar. They are preparing to pounce down and pick the eyes that once beamed with tenderness, and fill their foul maws with the hearts of kingly men.

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Come a year after, and see the hillside bleached white with human bones, and the plains dotted with stacks and pyramids of human skulls ; fitting monuments to mortal sin.

As I ponder on that sad spectacle, I recognise myself a criminal. Yes, in a fatal hour I committed a crime that desolated heaven, lighted the fires of hell, converted this fair earth into a human shambles, and, worse than all, murdered the King's only son. That crime I have repeated again and again. Yet, the God that did not spare His own bright angels, not only spared me, but pursued me with His love.

Having pondered well on the dual crimes that blighted the angels and filled this earth with misery, we come now to gaze on the common legacy of Adam's fall : a deathbed. Kneeling there, before the crucifix, overwhelmed with shame and confusion at my own baseness, and filled with astonishment at God's wondrous mercy and love towards me, I again ask what have I done for Christ in the past? What am I doing for Christ in the present? What shall I do for Christ in the future?

CHAPTER V.

LIFE'S DREAM IS O'ER.

A MOMENT must come to every one when the last busy pulse-beat of life will die and the last breath of life flutter forth—that fateful moment when the soul passes across the threshold that separates time from eternity.

Let us try to realize the picture.

The Last
Scene.

The doctor no longer holds out hope. The priest is summoned ; my five senses are anointed with holy oil ; the blessed candle is lighted in my hand, and a group of weeping friends around my bed are answering the litany for the dying.

The framework of nature is dissolving, and I seem to sink into an abyss—there is nothing solid to lay hold of, and I sink, sink, sink.

A mist grows around the candle flame, and the voices of my friends seem as if coming from a distance that grows greater at each response, till at length they die into faint echoes from the

Life's Dream is O'er

shores of a world that is swiftly passing away from me, and the last words I hear are, "He is gone".

What happens at that moment? A number of important changes take place. With the last heart-beat time dies, and with time the period of merit vanishes. The imagination withers, and the passions fall off like scales. The bodily case-ment of earth crumbles and falls from me, and the liberated soul bounds into its native freedom.

The
Change in
Intellect.

Its powers, for the first time, get unfettered play—up to this its energies have had to struggle through the dark avenues of the senses and the feeble organ called the brain.

When sunlight falls through a forest, a part of it is swallowed up by the dark clumps, and a part dashed and broken by the swaying branches. In like manner, sleep, weariness, distraction, interrupted and baffled the outflow of the soul's activities. But the sharp sword of death has felled these impediments, and there it lies now a living structure of palpitating energy. Calmly, but piercingly, it surveys the multiform activities of the world it has just left, and appraises them at their true values.

What does the soul see?

What the
Soul Sees.

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It will assist the reader to grasp all involved in the answer to that important question, if for a few minutes he accompanies me to the scene I once witnessed in the Australian bush.

When the sunset trembled on the forest leaves and the warm breath was rising from the heated earth, I rode towards the "Station" of a patriarchal squatter.

His flocks and herds were large, and those of his sons and daughters roamed over many a square mile.

The occasion of Mass at his house on the following morning gathered his children and his children's children around him.

As I approached the house I saw him sitting in the sunset on the verandah. His white locks fell upon his shoulders and he leaned upon a stick watching the frolics of a dozen grandchildren—one group was chasing butterflies, another struggling for the possession of a glass marble, and a third pursuing a painted ball.

As I took a seat beside him, he said with a sad smile—"It is difficult for an old man to persuade himself that he was ever so foolish as those children who are burning out the energies

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of their lives for a glass marble, a painted ball, or a butterfly”.

Yes! that playground was the world in miniature. There could be seen its passions in full play; its meanness, its generosity, its ambitions, disappointments, and despairs.

Now, when my soul for the first time sees life in its true light and reads its true value, I shall find myself, like the bush patriarch, wondering that I was ever guilty of such madness as to burn my brain and empty out the treasures of my heart on the trumpery baubles for whose possession I now see the children of God wasting themselves.

What pictures of folly now unfold themselves to the soul when the light of eternity falls on it.

It looks into the busy marts and sees the human tide sweep swiftly to and fro. Men's foreheads are wrinkled with anxious thought, their eyes set, their lips moving in silent calculations, their brains on fire, and their hearts wildly beating. And all for what? For a few pounds that must drop from their hands when the icy finger of death touches them.

It looks into the social world to see the plots hatched, the schemes elaborated, the influence

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canvassed, and the money squandered that some man may write a few poor letters after his name.

Writers sometimes laugh at the childishness of the American aborigine, who put on airs and swaggered, because on a piece of string he wore a glass bead that Columbus had given him. Has his more civilized white brother improved in wisdom since? What sleepless nights, what energies wasted to-day to procure a button, a rosette, or a garter!

It now turns to the fashionable square to see a lady tossing her head on a sleepless pillow. Her eyes are red and her cheeks are wet with bitter tears, and why? Because of some trifling social disappointment.

Let me ask—Has the world outgrown the folly of those Australian children we saw at play? How little of its thoughts and energies are given to God and the eternal life before us, and how much to the painted balls, the butterflies, and the glass marbles! For what did I rob God of the love and service due to Him? For that poor corpse, that in two days will be flung to the worms.

Even now, I can hear the hammer on the coffin nails and the clink of the grave-diggers'

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spades preparing its last resting-place ; yet to pamper and decorate that crumbling clay, I neglected, perhaps insulted the God that I now see should have been my all.

When my glance sweeps over the swarthy millions roaming the African wilds-- those dusky children of God who never heard the sound of their Father's name--the crushing reflection will rise : If they got a millionth part of the graces poured on my life, how many of them would be uncanonized saints to-day ?

This is the first pain of purgatory. My soul has not yet gazed on God's face ; no flame breath has touched it, yet its punishment has already begun.

The regrets for neglected graces and squandered years will pierce through and through like swords of flame.

Such is the change that must come to the intellect immediately after death ; but a change vastly greater awaits the will. Here it is not a widening nor a deepening of its powers, but the awakening of a new passion, a passion that tranquilly slept during life and gave no sign till death touches and arouses it to stormy action.

Theologians assure us that deep down in the

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human heart, wrapped in slumber, there lies a force which they call the radical love of the soul for God ; but the moment the spirit shakes itself free from that envelope of clay, that passion will break into tempestuous fury. The newly caught tiger does not dash itself with wilder violence against the bars of its prison cage than does the liberated soul struggle to reach God.

A million years cannot weaken the energies of this passion, and the fires of hell cannot burn it out. This unsatisfied hunger of the soul for God is called the " Pain of Loss," and constitutes one of the most terrible punishments of the damned. A few illustrations will enable us to realize the nature of the soul's root-love of God.

The Lark. You go out in early summer. The sun has not yet risen. A light veil of darkness hangs over the landscape and grey fogs enfold the hills. Opal waves are now seen to float across the eastern horizon ; this pale light deepens into a rosy dawn ; and now a cupola of burnished splendour announces that the sun is at hand. The darkness swiftly melts, and around the mountain's shoulder, like guilty ghosts, the vapour fogs vanish. Then, as a warm wave of

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sunshine floods the meadow, the lark springs from her grassy couch, the dew-drops falling like crystal beads from her quivering wings. The sunlight has broken upon her and the passion of song that slumbered through the hours of darkness awakens.

Higher she mounts and more rapturous her strains become. The pent up stream of music is set free and every note trembles with intensity. Higher still she rises, thrilling as she pierces the ocean of light, and it seems as if her little heart is bursting in her throat. Now she has become a mere speck. It looks as if she was hurrying to join the angel choir and sing the praises of God, but, pausing at the gate of Paradise, she flings back on a lonesome world a farewell wreath of song.

At last she is lost to sight and the only assurance we have that she has, as yet, not darted into the heart of the sun or passed to join the spirit choir, is that down through the cool blue morning air a shower of silver melody is falling.

Throughout the hours of darkness the song passion slept within that little bird, and stirred not a fibre of her heart, but the moment the curtain of darkness was swept aside and the sun

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blazed out, it awakened and thrilled her being to the wing-tips ; it swept her from the earth and sent her shooting through the skies on her sunward journey.

So with us, at present the mists of time and the shadows of earth swathe us round, but the instant the soul springs into the sunlight of God's presence, the love-tempest that now slumbers within our hearts will burst forth and send the soul surging towards God.

The Star. Let us take another illustration from nature's book. The reader must have often observed the course of a falling star. At first it appeared a silver speck ; then it would seem as if the glance of your eye set it in motion, and lo ! it gracefully curves, but so far, it moves apparently indifferent to the earth's existence. Then a change is noticeable in its motion. It moves earthwards, but at the beginning on a slanting path. Now, however, the angle continues to grow acute till finally it heads perpendicularly towards our planet. It rushes to hurl and bury itself into the heart of the earth. The body that begun its journey in graceful ease is now tearing through the sky, lighting the ether and leaving in its wake a trail of splendour.

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In our present condition we are like that star before it was set in motion. We are tied to the earth, but when the shears of death liberate us and we set out on our homeward journey we will discover that God is our gravitating centre ; our very hearts will be sucked towards Him, and with all the fiery energy of our beings we will dash upwards and God-wards.

Finally, to bring home to the reader what is meant by the "radical love of the soul for God" —let us take the life-history of the butterfly.

She begins life as a caterpillar ; she then reaches the cocoon stage, shrivels up and builds a protecting rampart around herself, and rests, perhaps, in the recess of a loose wall till the final butterfly period is reached ; the down covers her ; her antennæ are formed ; her wings free ; the walls of her prison house are about to crumble, and she, a fully developed butterfly, is about to flutter forth into a new and strange world. In that world what surprises await her !

In the blue dome above there hangs a ball of fire called the sun, and the strangest wonder in store for the butterfly will be that sun's influence on her future life. Up to this her acquaintance with the sun was next to nothing. The caterpillar

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stage is long since passed, and in the cocoon stage the sun lay so much outside that tiny life that its existence would have almost to be taken on faith—but now it is to become the very breath of her life. It will lend its own colours to her wings ; and when it shines she will flutter up, feel a quickened energy and disport herself in its beams. Should a cloud sail between her and its brightness her life becomes darkened, her energies languish and she drops—a powerless trifle—into the heart of the opening rose.

At present we are in the cocoon stage, but when the soul bursts the frail casket of earth and springs into the sunlight of God's face, with a rush it will be borne in upon it how much God is to it, and it will bound upwards to Him with all the strength of its being.

These pictures from nature enable us to understand how that passion called the “radical love of the soul for God,” while it lies quiescent during life, breaks out into fierce activity after death in its efforts to reach and cling to its first beginning and last end—God.

Alone
with God.

Let us now accompany the soul to the judgment seat - I am standing *alone with God!*
What terror does not that thought bring to

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even the holiest! How our whole nature shrinks from it!

There are times in all our lives when we realize God's presence with a vividness that quickens the heart-beat and sends the blood rushing hot.

It may be that, after a sultry day's walking the busy streets, you turn for prayer and rest into a great cathedral.

In the
Cathedral.

The curtain of evening is drawing its noiseless folds. The shadows of the great pillars are lengthening, and on the stained windows the rosy blush of sunset is fading. As you pass up the aisle no sound breaks the solemn silence but the echo of your own footfall.

You take out your beads, forgetting that time is passing, the shades deepening, and the darkness closing around, till looking up you start, for like a purple star, the reflection of the Sanctuary lamp, grown large in the darkness, trembles on the Tabernacle door. Suddenly a vivid sense of God's presence is flashed upon you. You become conscious of those eyes that are looking out and searching through the chambers of your soul and counting the ugly defilements that meet His purest gaze. Your heart throbs and the shame spot burns.

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You rise and hasten to the door, that the roll of the tramcars, the newsboys' cries, and the sound of the city traffic may tear from your mind that thought that stabbed and became an agony, namely, that you were alone with God. Then with hot breath you thanked Him that time was still yours to redeem the past.

The
Moon-lit
Crucifix.

Or it may come this way.

You are lying awake and no sound breaks the midnight silence. The full moon is pouring in its chaste splendours and its white glory is lighting up the crucifix on your *prie-Dieu*. The lips of the dead Christ seem to move and the blood-drops stand out, and the thorns around His brow shine like tiny sprays of crystal.

That picture awakens your faith ; its flame lights up your mind. I am alone with God, and my unfolded past stands before Him !

Again you clutch at the one consolation : Time is still mine to atone for that sorry past and carve a future path that will be strewn with jewels of rarest merit.

The Mid-
night
Storm.

These moments of vivid faith may come without any external help.

There are times in all our lives when a faith-

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flame is flashed upon us, and, a second after, all is dark again.

When the searchlight is turned on, what does it reveal? Something like this :—

You stand on a bridge on a night of angry storm. The waters are gurgling, moaning like the choked voices of human despair. Then a blaze of sheet-lightning lights up the scene and shows you the turbid waters lashed to foam, coming rushing on. Down the river the mists have formed into spectral ghosts, wrapped in shrouds of grey, while the trees, bending under the storm, labour and toss their arms above the flood like anguished creatures.

In like manner, when the sheet-lightning of faith sweeps down the river of our lives, the moans of voices we thought long since dead return, and the ghosts long since laid stand out to confront us.

In these moments we are not only alone with God, but with God and our own past. What awe that thought inspires!

But all the while the grand fact still remains—Time is still ours. If the damned got five minutes of that time to repent, they would weep tears of blood and every chamber of hell would be empty.

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At the Particular Judgment time has already passed. The awful silence of eternity swathes me around, and I am standing alone with God, and with the worth or worthlessness of a life that for me has passed for ever.

The
Verdict.

At the Bar with the works of my life, no lawyer to plead. By these deeds my fate must be decided, and how miserable they now appear ! Yet in God's infinite pity, He picks out the few golden threads that run through the woof of even the most worthless life, and He actually thanks me ! Oh ! the thought of those thanks and the pain.

Purgatory's cleansing fires hold many a sorrow, but none so keen as that rising from those reflections : How grand is the God I now know—How much I might have done—How little I have accomplished. A trinity of agonies.

I now see that in the splendours of His face there is something intolerable in a stain. It is a relief to fly from His presence, to hate and loathe myself for ever, for having turned from a God so gracious and so tender.

I now recall the richness of His bounty to me, and the miserable return I gave. The sensual indulgence, the animal standards, the mumbled

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rosaries, the distracted Masses, the frozen prayers ;
life's rarest treasures emptied on foam-bubbles,
now burst for ever.

But a pain more subtle still remains.

When the glance of His eyes lights on a soul
it pierces it to the quick. "Thou hast wounded
My heart with one of thine eyes" (Cant. iv. 9).

The soul sickens, swoons, languishes, and
aches to fly to God's embrace. Thus, like St.
Francis while he bled the wounds of Christ and
shuddered with His anguish, at the same moment
his spirit quivered to fly upward and clasp Him
in the fiery embrace of love.

In like manner, my soul, wounded by a double
sword, shrinking from God for my worthlessness,
will pant and strain towards God for love.

I will then cry to my guardian angel to come
and take me to the prison-house, where I will
sing the lonely song of desire, and languish
through the night watch, till purged of every
stain I will fly to my Father's arms.

The angel that first took my hand at the
baptismal font, whose lips have often whispered
many a holy thought, and whose wings have
sheltered me from many a wound, now softly
enfolds me and poises me above the cleansing

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flood. Pointing to the red star of hope that hangs above my home of patient suffering, he whispers : “ Be brave ; be calm ; the night will soon pass, then, for the last time, I will take your hand and lead you to the splendours of our Father’s court ”.

Pondering on the drama in which I one day must play the principal part, I resolve that every day I rise I will determine to love and work and suffer, as if at the sound of the evening Angelus I were to stand trembling in the white light of the Particular Judgment.

CHAPTER VI.

THE TRUMPET-CALL.

STANDING up from beside the death-bed where the reader just now watched the soul wing its flight to the judgment seat ; and pondering on the great truths these chapters have so far unfolded, he resolves to rise to higher levels and tread the lofty path of perfection under the sunlight of God's love.

But a man is seldom benefited by general resolutions. It is only when they are translated into hard fact that his task is completed. To enable the reader to do this, he is presented in this chapter with pictures of the sacrifices men are capable of making when enthralled by the spell of a great personality.

Then, while his brain still throbs with the visions of self-denial and his will braced to do and to dare, he is asked to open the seventh chapter and behold Christ in, perhaps to him,

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an entirely new character—Christ, his Captain, holding the banner “Excelsior” pointing upwards and crying, “Arise and follow Me”.

The first portion of St. Ignatius’ celebrated meditation on “The Kingdom of Christ” may be paraphrased into one sentence—*There is a universal law deep-seated in the human heart that underlies all heroism, compelling us to trample on our most selfish interests whenever a man who towers above his generation demands our service.*

The proposition, so startling at first sight, will be found quite commonplace when we have examined history and observed the influence of great men over their fellows. Show me any man, who, by the commanding power of his intellect or the generosity of his heart, surpassed his own generation and did not hold the people’s lives and fortunes in the hollow of his hand, at whose feet they were not prepared to pour out their dearest treasures.

To illustrate how universal this law is, we shall not confine ourselves to one nation or period, but cull examples at random from various countries and times.

Napoleon.

As a first example let us take Napoleon.

Here was a man who towered, not only above

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the greatest men of his own day, but above the great men of all time ; and, as a result, see what treasures of life, blood, and money were poured out in his service.

For twenty years he kept France at war. Not a day passed that did not bring a fresh demand for men and money. The nation's life-blood flowed like water, and a stream of gold followed him through Italy, Austria, Spain, and Holland. France was in arms against all Europe at the same time. Her commerce was shut out from every harbour, and foreign war-ships blocked her own ports. Her fields were untilled, for the strong arms that should be engaged in cultivating the soil were dragging cannon over the Alps, or carrying muskets through the snows of Poland.

Before Napoleon's historic march on Moscow, the bones of three million Frenchmen were bleaching on the battlefields that stretched from Naples to Russia ; yet, when he demanded five hundred thousand—half a million—of men, besides the vast supplies of clothes, food, and ammunition requisite for that great army in a hostile country, without a murmur the nation answered to his trumpet-call, and he set out at

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the head of the grandest army that, up to that time, ever took the field.

On to
Moscow.

The history of that campaign is well known to the reader ; how the Russians laid waste their country before him ; how every sheaf of corn and pound of food was swept from his path ; how the Northern winter began to close upon him, and it seemed as if earth and heaven began to scourge him. Fighting for days for the shelter of a town to protect his men from the blinding blizzards, when the town at last was gained it was only to see it in flames. Lashed by frozen storms ; confronted by deserts, ashes, and starvation as they were, yet such was his influence over these soldiers that, though their feet were bleeding, their clothes in rags, and their stomachs without food, they marched through the snow-drifts madly cheering when Napoleon cried : “On to Moscow”.

Moscow at length. But horror of horrors ! the city is in flames ! Over the same awful ground the French Army has to retreat. They have to skin their horses and wrap themselves in the hides to save their very blood from being frozen. No sleep—for the terrible Cossacks are plunging on them night and day—and the

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Emperor, who set out at the head of half a million, stole into Paris at midnight with a solitary attendant—the faithful mameluke.

Oh, what sufferings were not endured for that man ! what torrents of blood and treasure were not poured out for his sake !

Now, you will say, the French people will surely pause. Their sacrifices must have some limit ; for a sound of mourning is rising from the land. Few are the homes unvisited by sorrow. Mothers have their sons torn from their arms. Widows are wringing their hands in anguish over orphan children whose fathers lie in the snows of Russia ; yet such was their frantic love for Napoleon, so great his sway over their hearts and imaginations, that when he asked for another army, three hundred and eighty thousand answered his call to arms and took the field again.

Now, however, the eclipse of his glory is at hand.

Almost a dozen nations have declared war against him, and a ring of steel encircles France. After prodigies of valour against overwhelming odds, he is compelled to abdicate, and retire to the island of Elba.

The French people at last have time to pause E.L.A.

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and let the fever that burned in their blood cool.

They look around and see their fields untilled and their harbours deserted ; there is scarcely a horse left to draw the plough. As they pondered on that picture of desolation, one would think that they would curse the very name of Napoleon.

No, after eleven months he escapes from Elba, and the last act in the dazzling drama of his life has come.

It seemed as if the very touch of his feet on French soil sent an electric thrill through the nation's heart. The sufferings endured, the blood and treasure poured out in his cause are all forgotten, and the old frenzy of devotion to him bursts into flame.

When marching at the head of his few followers, he found his way barred by an army, sent from Paris to arrest him. He watched the soldiers kneel and level their muskets at him. He stepped in front, threw open the breast of his overcoat crying : "Soldiers of France, now fire upon your Emperor !" The spell of his voice is upon them ; they dropped their rifles, sobbed, and leaping into the air shouted for the man whose name flung a deathless glory on their country.

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In the garrison towns the soldiers' hearts melted at the thought that once more he was amongst them ; and, despite the very tears of their generals, they flung themselves in thousands behind him.

He entered Paris and reviewed the Old Guard at Versailles. That day was perhaps one of the proudest of his life. As he galloped down the lines of these grey and grizzled veterans who had followed his eagles for twenty years, and on whose bodies were carved the scars of a hundred battlefields, and as the recollections of his great victories came thronging back—Marengo, Jena, Austerlitz—was it any wonder that they became delirious with joy, and frantically waving their sabres above their helmets they cheered with all the passionate ardour of their souls.

The reign of a hundred days, not one of which did not witness some new sacrifice, and then—Waterloo !

The manhood of the nation had perished ; boys and soldiers whose wounds were healed alone remained ; yet the very children broke from the schools crying for muskets to die as their fathers died.

Ligny was fought two days before Waterloo.

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That night he visited the wounded on the battlefield. Forgetting the very agonies of death when they saw him, they grasped their own limbs just cut off, waved them above their heads and cried, "Long live the Emperor". An English surgeon said to a dying soldier, "I have never seen your Emperor". The dying man smiled and said, "Cut out my heart and you will find his image there".

The last hour of Waterloo is now at hand. Wellington, protected by hedges, roads, and cornfields, was stubbornly holding his ground against charge after charge, and fervently praying for Blucher or the night to come and save him. An army was seen in the distance, and Napoleon, thinking it was his own General, Grouchy, gleefully rubbed his hands and told his staff that the battle was now his. The blue coats of the Prussian artillery soon showed him his mistake. It was Blucher.

There is no time now to be lost. His fortune is staked on one last charge. He orders the Old Guard to charge. Oh, the heroism that rose in answer to that trumpet-call! It was the parting flash of the setting sun of his glory. And as they rode furiously to certain death,

The Trumpet-Call

saluting the Emperor with waving sabres, they shouted the proud determination of heroes :
“The Guards know how to die !” — “The Guards know how to die !”

Here we have seen at every stage of Napoleon’s life that deep-seated law which governs human hearts, break out ; the law that impels us to spare no sacrifice in the service of a man who towers above his generation by reason of the greatness of his head or heart.

We now go back to a different scene and different actors, and witness this universal law moving human hearts to pour out their dearest treasures to men of greatness. Cæsar.

In Shakespeare’s admirable play — “Julius Cæsar” — there is a remarkable speech put into the mouth of Mark Antony after Cæsar’s death.

He rebutted the charges made by the murderers against the dead man. He then recalls to the people’s memories the proud recollections of the great Julius’ victories ; and when their hearts were softened, he made the final appeal, by holding up the dead man’s mantle, and saying :—

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“You all do know this mantle ; I remember
The first time ever Cæsar put it on ;
'Twas on a summer's evening, in his tent ;
That day he overcame the Nervii.”

(Act III., Scene 2.)

His reference to this victory touched the tenderest fibre in Roman hearts and swept their sympathies to the speaker. It reminded them how Cæsar had saved the republic at a critical juncture.

The Nervii were wild Gallic tribes that broke loose during the absence of the troops and slaughtered the Roman colony.

At the news, Cæsar hurried from Italy with an army, small indeed, but an army that included the redoubtable Tenth Legion. The Tenth Legion was to Cæsar what the Old Guard was to Napoleon — his personal bodyguard, the sharer of his fortunes.

The titles “Tenth Legion” and “Old Guard” symbolized all that was devoted, fearless, and brave.

When Cæsar arrived in Gaul he found these hardy tribesmen awaiting him in solid battle phalanx. He ordered his legions to charge, but

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the forest of Nervian spears was not to be shaken. Again and again the Roman ranks rolled back in broken waves. Panic began to seize them, and as a last resource he ordered the immortal Tenth Legion to charge.

Can he believe his eyes? The Tenth falter and turn their backs on the foe. Then with that lightning intuition sometimes given to genius, he saw that the decisive moment had come, and he alone could turn the tide of defeat into victory.

Throwing aside his mantle of state, and appearing now as a soldier only, he galloped after the fleeing standard-bearer, clutched the Imperial Eagles, and shouted to the panic-stricken soldiers :—

“Will the Tenth Legion follow Cæsar?”

Here was the trumpet-call. They pause ; they are maddened by the thought of the momentary weakness.

At the sight of the Great Julius grasping the sacred standard of Rome, the fire of their passionate devotion is ablaze.

Follow Cæsar and the Eagles of Rome ! Aye, to the death ! With wild fury they hurl themselves on the Nervii, whose ranks they shattered ;

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for what power could withstand the Old Tenth with Cæsar at the head.

Here again we see the universal law breaking out in the devotion of these men, who would bear to be cut in pieces rather than swerve from the path where Cæsar and the Roman Eagles led.

The
Japanese. In the war between Russia and Japan a striking example of the universality of this law was seen.

The Mikado is more than a king in Japanese eyes ; he is divine ; they uncover and bow when his name is mentioned. The onset is terrific when soldiers rush to battle invoking a name so sacred. In the late war a line of Russian bayonets glistened in front of the charging Japanese. What was the order of that charge ?

“Front rank, fling yourselves upon the bayonets ; rear rank, jump from their bodies and capture the position.”

What heroism did not that trumpet-call demand ! Yet, did they flinch ? With one wild cheer for the Mikado they rushed to fling themselves on that line of steel, that their bodies might serve as spring-boards for their comrades.

Look on that row of quivering hearts upon the bayonets and there read the sacrifices men

The Trumpet-Call

can make, and how little self counts when the trumpet summons us to the service of those whose greatness towers above us.

Once more we return to French soil.

Condé.

Two centuries before Napoleon, France had a general that in many points resembled the great captain. He obtained the rank of Marshal in his twenty-fourth year. He met the Spanish army at the battle of Rocroy. Two great facts confronted him. Spain then had an infantry whose record of heroism was without parallel. Its bugles never sounded "Retreat" or "Surrender" for over two hundred years; and the Spanish general had secured an ideal base—the Bridge of Rocroy, holding the key of position.

It was evident that whoever seized the bridge controlled the fortunes of the day; but it bristled with Spanish bayonets, and was flanked by the Spanish artillery. Five times Condé sent his bravest troops to take the bridge, and five times he saw their broken ranks tossed like foam before the wind.

His position was becoming desperate; he galloped amidst a shower of bullets to the bank of the river and flung his marshal's baton into the midst of the Spanish soldiery, and turning

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to his own army shouted, "Soldiers of France, will you allow your field-marshal's baton to lie in the hands of the enemy?"

Here was their trumpet-call to heroism.

This appeal fired them to madness. They formed line, and with one wild dash, leaping over the bodies of those who fell in front, captured the bridge, forced the Spaniards to retire, and gained the most memorable victory in the life of Condé.

Here again we see the law of self-sacrifice breaking out when the trumpet-call sounds.

Such was their devotion to their general that they rush madly to death to possess even the stick he held in his hand.

O'Connell. The last example we shall take is selected from our own history.

I wonder can we ever measure the large place that O'Connell held in our fathers' hearts. He was the pillar of light that marched before them in the dark night of their slavery. He was the Moses that led them from worse than an Egyptian bondage. He stood forth as the living embodiment of their hopes, their loves, and their dreams.

The nation's heart seemed fused into his own.

The Trumpet-Call

When he spoke it was Ireland spoke ; her passions rocked his soul ; her humour gleamed in his eyes ; her scorn flashed from his glance, and her sorrows choked his sobs.

Was it any wonder that he was the nation's idol? He had sacrificed his long life and great talents to his country. Single-handed he fought her battles against the world. The people saw the ranks of their enemies shattered before him, and citadel after citadel captured. He exercised a sway over nine millions and commanded a devotion that no emperor could hope for.

It was this mastery over the service and affections of the people that won emancipation. The king had sworn to abdicate rather than emancipate Catholics. O'Connell ordered all the young men to assemble at a number of monster meetings on a given Sunday. Two hundred thousand stalwart specimens of manhood marched in military order. It was a sight to make even a bigot king pause.

Wellington well knew that had these two hundred thousand arms in their hands, and should O'Connell sound the trumpet-call, they would ask leave of no king ; they would emancipate themselves. He saw the Irish regiments

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in Dublin break loose from their officers, and waving their bayonets over their heads cheer O'Connell as he passed.

He also knew that behind these were nine millions prepared to spare no sacrifice should O'Connell sound the call.

These were the real forces that won emancipation.

When he held his monster meetings at Tara, five hundred thousand human beings surged around him. There were no railways; the modes of conveyance were most primitive; yet whole families travelled five days, many sleeping out by night. For what purpose? To gaze upon the Liberator; to hold up their children in their arms and bid them fix their young eyes upon the giant who struck the fetters from their fathers' limbs and made them free.

Here was a man who towered above his generation as a pyramid above the desert, and as a result, the whole nation was prepared to root through the Alps, or march through a wall of flame.

I think that the reader by this time is perfectly convinced of the truth of the proposition with which we started, namely: There is a

The Trumpet-Call

universal law deep-seated in the human heart that compels men to trample on their most selfish interests when a man lifted above his generation demands their service. A firm conviction of this all-pervading law will be necessary when, in the next chapter, the bayonet-point of practical resolution touches our own breast.

In this conviction the reader will then discover the motor force with which to drive that resolution home.

CHAPTER VII.

THE BAYONET-POINT.

The
Kingly Ex-
cellence.

Is the second part of the meditation on "The Kingdom of Christ," St. Ignatius puts before us the picture of an ideal king. Ideal indeed is the character here portrayed; so much so that did we not know the author to be the thoroughly practical man he was, we should be tempted to say that this picture of kingly excellence bordered on the extravagant; for his history records the character of no such monarch that even in a single point is comparable to him.

First he is called to rule directly by God Himself. Heaven puts the seal of approval on his wars. Of what commander can this be said?

Was it not the voice of greed, ambition, or lust of power that summoned most of them to the field of battle? Outside the crusades, few wars have been sanctified in the motives from which they sprang.

The Bayonet-Point

Secondly, this ideal conqueror will share the labour, fatigue, clothes, and food of the common soldier. The spade will be found in his hand in the trenches, and the knapsack on his back on the march. The dry crust or the sentinel duty he will not shirk.

What a generous heart ! Who would dare to propose these terms to a Condé or a Napoleon? See how this pictured king eclipses all we know.

Thirdly, he is assured by Heaven of victory, and no man who follows him shall lay down his life on the field. Here is a condition that makes him unique.

The fame of all the conquerors with which we are acquainted was fed on blood ; their thrones were built on dead men's bones, and even then, victory was not an assurance, but a chance ; but here is a king to whose soldiers Heaven not only guarantees victory, but life.

Fourthly, think of the conquered lands he will parcel out among his followers. To this royal generosity we find no parallel.

The poor common soldier, whose blood and toil purchased kingdoms for sovereigns, is told to be very grateful for a medal and a shilling a day.

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Here, then, is the argument definite and clear -- if millions lavishly poured out their blood and treasure for such imperfect men as Cæsar and Napoleon, who could limit the sacrifices that would be placed at the feet of a king such as we have described, were he to appear on earth. So great of mind, so large of heart! Called by Heaven, assured of victory, sharing the common toils and distributing the conquered lands. Would not men rush to his standard in thousands? Would not the earth rock with the tramp of the eager millions behind him?

The reader may here object that this king is not a real but an imaginary one. The lights and colours of his character are not drawn from fact; fancy's fingers have woven the brilliant garment flung around him.

Not only is all this admitted, but the reader himself is now invited to add the wealth of his own imagination. In portraying this ideal let him lay the colours on the canvas with a Rembrandt richness, till each princely quality of intellect and heart stands out with dazzling splendour.

When his last effort is exhausted we will bring forth a real king whose name is *Christ*, and

The Bayonet-Point

placed side by side the ideal paragon of royal perfection, though draped in the richest colours that the imagination can suggest, shrivels and grows dwarfed by the contrast. The virtues that made our pictured hero transcend all that history showed us, reach their highest altitude in Christ.

Is He not called by Heaven?

Listen to the thunder voice that broke on the ears of His dazed Apostles on Mount Tabor : "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased : hear ye Him" (Matt. xvii. 5).

Does He give an assurance of safety to His followers? He tells them that any man who lays down his life for Him shall find it. Does He share the food and toil of those who follow Him? The poorest among them will never be called upon to bear His privations.

He was born in a stable, His dead body was laid in a grave of charity, and while the foxes had holes and the birds of the air nests, He had not whereon to lay His head.

Does He divide the spoils of victory? Listen to Him—"I will not now call you servants, but I have called you friends" (John xv. 15).

"There are many mansions in My Father's house."

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“You shall sit on twelve seats judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Matt. xix. 28).

“Every one that hath left house, or father or mother for My name's sake shall receive a hundred fold and shall possess life everlasting” (Matt. xix. 29).

“Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man what things God hath prepared for them that love Him” (1 Cor. ii. 9).

Here we have compared point by point the perfections of our true King, Christ, not only with the highest types of the world's heroes—with these He should not be mentioned in the same breath—but with a man around whose character we lavishly flung the richest splendours that even fancy could suggest, and still Christ towers above him as the Alps above a mole hill.

So far the reader has viewed the question as one lying completely outside himself; as a subject that for him had no personal concern. Yet all the while, unsuspected by him, the argument was growing and converging with the directness of a bayonet-point which we shall see just now touching his own breast.

The Bayonet-Point

When we lift that picture out of the framework now, he will discover that it fits into every detail of his own life, and its lessons play around his heart-strings.

The day you were baptized Christ became your Father. The morning on which the seven-fold splendours of Confirmation were poured upon your soul, Christ became your General, and you became His soldier.

The Test
of Ear-
nestness.

Now, when your Leader stands before you and turns His flashing eyes upon your face, and bares His sacred heart and shows it to you, throbbing, aglow for conquest, panting for victory; and He asks you to follow Him, will you begin to bargain and count the cost? Will you be outdone by those millions who poured out not only their wealth, but their life-blood, and writhed in agony for such selfish creatures as Condé and Napoleon, when the grand Christ, whose perfections surpass even the highest limit of fancy, sounds the trumpet-call and cries "Follow Me"?

Look out and see the world's battlefields strewn with monuments of devotion, and look to whom you have sworn allegiance.

Will you be deaf to His call? Eternal

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shame if you were ! Before marching, however, to external conquest, He bids you pause and carefully search your own heart, and there you will discover lurking in its recess, a household traitor whose name is sensuality—the love of self, the love of friends, the love of your own ease, the love of money, the shrinking from the cross, even when made of straws.

This domestic foe will hamstring you in the hour of battle ; he will paralyse your arm when raised to strike. Then smite and give no quarter to such an enemy.

You ask, what is my weapon?

Listen to your General—“He that would be My disciple, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow Me”.

The cross is your sword and the only weapon that can carve the royal path to victory.

See now how this works out in practice and how the bayonet-point touches the very core of your heart.

Traitor or
Trumpet.

When in the morning the Mass bell rings, it is the trumpet-call of Christ --Arise, take up your cross. And what better guarantee for the sanctification of the day could you have than that your first act was to embrace the cross?

The Bayonet-Point

Does not the incense of that act float down and perfume the remaining hours?

But the household traitor lurking in the foldings of your soft heart whispers a plea for self-indulgence.

Which will you obey, the traitor or the trumpet-call? Ah, look at the French soldiers marching to Austerlitz gathering stones on which to lie so that the snow water might flow under their bodies. They sleep on the rough rocks in the snow-covered fields to serve a petty tyrant, while you cherish your sensual flesh by soft indulgence and refuse to obey the trumpet-call of the grand Christ.

The chains of drunkenness or impure slavery weigh you down. The call of Christ has perhaps sounded many times within your ears, and the Holy Spirit has poured light upon your eyes and pointed to the General marching before you.

He wears a crown of thorns; no soft indulgence for Him; His path is traced by blood.

He calls on you, it may be for the last time, and says, "Arise, deny yourself, burst these degrading fetters". But the traitor sensuality puts his soft lips upon your ear and whispers, "You are not equal to these demands". Here

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again is the question—Which will you obey?
'The traitor or the trumpet-call?

Look at the flashing eyes and the waving sabres of the Old Guard charging the cannons' mouth shouting, "The Guards know how to die!" Their flesh is torn by ball and bayonet, still they cheer and ride to death for their general, while you refuse to take a tiny pin-prick for the grand Christ though your salvation depends upon it.

Souls are bleeding to death, perishing under your roof; the pens of evil writers are stabbing your children's virtue, a deadly miasma exhales from the books in their hands; or it may be that your servants' virtue is blasted on the midnight streets.

From the high sanctuary of Heaven Christ cries to you, "Save, O save them!" But this would mean arousing yourself to the duties of a Christian parent, or looking into the one place in God's creation where you hate to look—your own conscience.

Ah! see the soldiers of Condé rushing to slaughter for the capture of a stick, because it belonged to their general.

What efforts are you making to rescue those

The Bayonet-Point

living souls, sprinkled with the blood of Christ, on whom the devil is daily tightening his grasp?

The day comes when you have to bear a toy mortification, abstain for one or at most two days in the week from meat, deny yourself some pleasure to attend to your religious obligations. Sensuality whispers, "Don't; you might injure your health or get a headache". Which will you obey?

Look at the soldiers of Napoleon in the Russian snows; their feet are bleeding, their stomachs famished, their clothes fallen to rags, yet when he leads and cries, "On to Moscow!" they follow, cheering madly, through the blinding drifts.

Oh, what wretched service Christ gets compared with the splendid devotion poured out at the feet of the world's pigmy heroes!

When our hearts are drained empty of every poison-drop of sensuality, then the liquid fire of the Holy Ghost will come down and fill them. Then the career of the true soldier of Christ begins.

But no matter how intellectually convinced of the necessity of self-denial or how braced our will may be to-day to cut a path of perfection,

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even though the sword-edge should fall on the tenderest heart-strings, when we honestly look back into our own past and see the human weakness and unstable wills, we are almost tempted to cry in despair : "Where, O Lord ! shall we find strength to carry out the purpose these pages have inspired".

Turn to the two fountains all divine that Christ opened on Holy Thursday and Good Friday.

CHAPTER VIII.

EARTH'S PRICELESS TREASURE.

HOLY THURSDAY.

FOR an ideal picture of contented happiness this world holds few more interesting than a brood of chickens clustered under a mother's wing. Mothered
and
Mother-
less.

Our Lord has made this picture sacred. He used it to illustrate His own yearning affection for the city of His love. It is not, however, with the solicitude of the mother, but the satisfied restfulness of her offspring we are here concerned. Look at her and her tranquil family on the roadside. A half-dozen tiny heads are peering out through the sheltering wings blinking in the sunlight or occasionally snapping at a stray fly that incautiously wanders across the danger zone. Another group is nestling in the downy warmth of their mother's breast, muttering their contentment in broken, drowsy under-

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tones preparatory to sleep. And one, more venturesome than the rest, has contrived to climb upon her back and settles to slumber in the friendly comfort of that ample couch.

What a complete picture of happy content !

Now, from that, turn towards the door of an incubating house. The sound of your approaching footsteps awakens a chorus of expectant chirrups. When you open the door, orphan birds run from every side towards you, stretching out their necks and peering into your face, uttering a cry that cannot be mistaken : it is the cry of some hungry want.

What a contrast to the reposeful family we saw hiding behind their mother's wings, dreaming in the sunshine.

Some acute craving is felt by those incubated birds, otherwise why the eager running towards the sound of approaching footsteps, the craning of necks and the piteous cry of need.

Your first thought is to suggest—food. No ! there is abundance. Well, perhaps, heat is what they want. No ! For though the spirit-lamp is a poor substitute for a mother's body, it diffuses sufficient warmth to make them tolerably comfortable. They have food and heat and shelter, but

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they are craving for love and the personal presence of a parent.

Their crops are full, but their hearts are empty. Their natures are starved and cheated out of a mysterious something for which neither food nor heat nor shelter can compensate. And so their life is an agony, while for their little cousins on the roadside it is a dream of unruffled bliss.

These discontented birds of the incubator, clamouring for a parent's wings to enfold them and a parent's love to feed them, perfectly typify the conditions of the human family before the first Mass was said and the first Holy Communion came to still the passionate cry breaking from the heart of man for a closer union and a more affectionate intimacy between His Father and His Father's children.

Go back to the four thousand years that intervened between Adam and Christ. Though religious beliefs and rites varied and multiplied beyond number, behind this diversity you will discover one strong note common to all—a yearning desire rising up with a strong voice to God, imploring Him to come down and satisfy the aching hunger of His children who were

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wailing through these four thousand years for His personal presence and warming love.

The poor artificial heat of the spirit-lamp symbols and shadowy sacrifices, was no substitute for the passionate glowing Heart that *now* burns behind our tabernacle doors, or the heat-waves of fiery love that overflow the Chalice-lips to feed the clustering souls around.

That crying desire for a personal union with our Father received its appeasement on the first Holy Thursday night when the great High Priest celebrated the first Mass and distributed the first Holy Communion. On that night this earth ceased to be an incubator--henceforth man was no longer an orphan.

Mass and
Incarna-
tion.

Before proceeding further let me point out the striking resemblance between the Mass and the Incarnation.

The leading note in the Incarnation is—humility.

God stoops down, and the lower He stoops the more evident his love becomes.

An illustration will enable the reader to grasp the fulness of this truth.

Should a titled lady fling aside the trappings of her state, her table delicacies, her refined

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companions, her ease and comfort, to become a farmer's wife, to share the rough toil of his kitchen, and associate with people that a week before she could not know; and if she did this through no caprice or passion or from a selfish motive, but solely to serve a friend, men would marvel at this exhibition of self-sacrifice. But should that same lady do all this not only to become the wife of a farmer but of a farm labourer, language would fail us to express admiration for that royal-hearted woman.

Now mark how every grade downward is a fresh proof of the intensity of her love.

The meaning of the sentence heading this paragraph is now growing clearer: "God stoops down, and the lower He stoops the more evident His love becomes".

But another example will afford us still fuller light.

Should a king, while still retaining his kingship, throw aside his purple, dismiss his servants, sell his carriages, abandon his palace, and stand in workman's clothes on the market-place to be hired, should he toil in the summer sun and through the winter rains and share the lowly condition--the hard crust and the poor cottage

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—while all the time retaining his title as king ; and should he do all this not through a selfish motive but to serve a man and that man his enemy and a rebel, people would rush in thousands to see this prodigy of generous love and self-sacrifice. They would cry, “Surely the age of wonders and of heroes has not passed”.

Now, did all this happen when God left the splendour of His throne, the homage of angels, and the glory of Paradise, to come down on this little ball of clay and assume the nature of His own creature—man, a rebel?

So stupendous a humiliation was involved in that action that when it was announced to the angels one third of them flew into rebellion rather than serve a God who would so lower the dignity of His state.

No wonder they were astonished, for St. Paul says, “He emptied Himself out”.

Is this a rhetorical exaggeration?

See : He was omnipotent, yet He became a helpless babe.

He was Lord of all things, yet He begged a crust.

He was king and He became an outcast.

Surely, you will say, the deepest depths of

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humiliation were sounded when the God of splendour shivered in a stable, toiled as a village carpenter, lay like a crushed worm in Gethsemane, or hung wrapped in the torn rags of His own flesh upon Calvary.

No : a deeper depth still is reached when Christ becomes incarnate in the hands of the priest at Mass. For, though on the Cross or in the workshop His divinity was shrouded His humanity remained ; but in the Host both humanity and divinity disappear from human vision.

And for what purpose? That Christ might sink to a state when, in full personality, He could march into the heart of His once rebel creature--man.

Humility is the keynote of the Incarnation and the Mass, and our Lord never more emphatically proclaims Himself meek and humble of heart than when He speaks from the altar-stone.

This interesting resemblance between the Incarnation and the Mass is brought out in many ways.

The
Silence
of the In-
carnation.

Go back in fancy to the first twenty-fifth of March.

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Mary is locked in the silence of a humble chamber. Her head is bent in prayer, her thoughts are fixed on God, and the waves of hot love rising from her heart are flowing across her lips.

A light more dazzling than the noonday sun fills the chamber. The angel announces God's will, and Mary, bowing to the decree of Heaven, says—" *Be it done unto me according to Thy word*" (Luke i. 38).

What happened at that moment?

The most wondrous event that was ever witnessed in earth or heaven. More wondrous than when darkness resting on the face of the deep, God said, "Let there be light," and instantly the curtain of darkness was swept aside ; and from the blue canopy the sun blazed out in his new-born glory ; and the stars took up their place in the firmament. More wondrous than when on that day Mount Sinai rocked and the thunder rolled and the lightning danced in terror amidst the clouds as God gave Moses the tables of the law. More wondrous than when the rivers of Egypt turned into blood and the waves of the Red Sea paused and became as dry land.

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What is this stupendous event that has taken place? Just this : A moment before and Mary's blood coursed through her veins, every drop of it her own ; another moment and the Holy Ghost has formed from that blood a body most perfect, united it to a soul ; and quicker than the lightning flash the divine personality is joined to the newly created Man.

"And the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us" (John i. 14).

As the glass globe clasps within itself the brilliance of the electric flame, the body of that Virgin Mother tabernacled the awful splendours of the Divine.

Now when all the momentous action took place the world paid no heed.

Silence and sleep settled down on the drowsy village of Nazareth. One by one the window lights went out. The stars in silence marched across the midnight skies. The lily had folded its leaves and drooped its head, and now and again the shepherd's watch-dog broke the stillness of the night. The morning sun rose red in the cold vernal sky, and the villagers went about their usual occupations, and all the while the greatest event that earth or heaven ever witnessed

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has taken place, and no one knew of it but Mary.

Now, change the scene.

A priest in a remote country church goes to the altar. The quiet stillness of the fields hangs over the landscape, the falling rain is pattering on the window panes, and a few poor worshippers are silently telling their beads. Bread is on the altar and wine is in the chalice.

At one moment the Son of God is at His Father's right hand. The blaze of His splendour ravishes the angels who fall in prostrate adoration. Then a few trembling words are spoken by the priest, and that same body that was fashioned from Mary's blood and that same divinity that stands beside His Father's throne, the King of angels, the Creator of worlds, the victim and propitiation for our sins, lies within that Host and in that Chalice.

Again, "*The Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us*".

What a striking resemblance. The only difference being that, while the Incarnation took place but once, Mass is offered every hour of the day and in every land from the fringes of

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the northern snows to the islands washed by the warm water of the South Pacific.¹

Let us now try and realize what takes place at the Consecration. Should God give power to the sun to gather up its beams and compress all its splendours within the small dimensions of a gold coin while at the same time it hung undisturbed in the heavens; that is—it was enabled to live simultaneously in the coin and in the sky, this would give us some notion of what takes place at Mass.

Sun in the
Coin.

See what this would mean to the sun.

Look for a moment at the sun in the blue dome above, in all its power and brilliancy. A group of eight planets, of which our earth is a small one, are swung around it by the mere force of attraction.

From that central sun these planets draw light and heat and colour. The green mantle that wraps the earth in spring, the gold and purple of the opening tulip, the bars of beauty on the wings of the bird, and the brilliant

¹ For this beautiful thought on the resemblance between the Mass and the Incarnation, the author is indebted to Father Faber's work, "The Blessed Sacrament".

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colours of the butterfly are all borrowed from the sun.

Should it withdraw its beams to-morrow and refuse to shine upon us, this world would lie stark and lifeless in the iron grasp of frost.

When we look at the sun in Ireland, we are apt to fall into the delusion that at that moment it shines in Ireland only. No, just then it has left its hot breath steaming up through the cinnamon groves of Persia, drawing out the perfume of the spices and sending them floating on the scented air.

On the western side it is warming the chill coasts of Labrador, or sparkling on the placid waters of the Pacific.

Life and
Sun.

But its influence is not confined to heat and colour and air, life is notably affected by it too.

When you visit those tracts of the earth where there is little sunshine, animal and vegetable life almost disappears, but when you turn to those belts of the globe over which it pours its richer beams, you find life in teeming abundance. Down through the tropical forest the sunlight falls and lo! the cedar springs up in graceful majesty and waves its plumed head to

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the skies, the creepers, the shrubs, and giant ferns are here in prodigal luxuriance ; while the air resounds with the buzz of a thousand insects, and the jungle palpitates with multitudinous life.

Now that we have some idea of its power, let us attend to its beauty. How often have you not watched with rapture the sunset in a July sky.

It flings a mantle of molten gold around the woods that hang on the bosom of the western hill. Broken spears of light quiver along the sky line, and waves of splendour are floating out, painting the flowers and enriching them with perfume.

Now imagine the sun, with all its power and beauty, clasped within the rim of a small gold coin while still continuing to hang in the heavens, and you will have some notion of what takes place at Mass when the words of Consecration are pronounced.

The power and majesty of God are held within the small circuit of the Host, while at the same time He is visible to the adoring angels of Heaven.

But the comparison does not end here.

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The
Planets
and the
Sacra-
ments.

As the eight planets that revolve around the sun depend upon it for light and life and beauty, so the other sacraments cluster around the sacred Host, draw from it power to give life to souls that are dead, vigour to faith that was languishing, to generate virtue and drape with beauty souls that lay hideous in darkness and sin. The other six sacraments are the channels conveying the Precious Blood on its way to irrigate and fertilize human souls, but within the Sacred Host is the grand fountain from which they are fed, the source from which they derive their power. *So the Host is the sun of the spiritual world.*

Mass in a
Century.

Now that we have some notion of what takes place when the priest goes to the altar, let me ask : "If only once in a hundred years the Sacred Host was elevated above this earth, what preparation would not be made for that Mass?" To begin with, the priest so privileged would, like the Baptist, be set aside from infancy lest a speck of the world's soilment should stain his soul. A long life would be spent in the communion with God, like Moses on the mountain, till sanctity had rendered his soul as bright as a crystal vase filled with purest water. An angel, taking a live coal from the altar, should purify

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the lips over which the words of Consecration were to flow. Purer than the solar ray should be the hand destined to divide the body of Christ, and fire-flame alone could cleanse the mouth that was to be purpled with the Precious Blood.

As the day for the Mass drew near, millions from every clime would march in procession; and those who beheld the uplifted Host and Chalice would leave the recollection of that vision as an heirloom, and their children in after years would boast: "Our father assisted at the Holy Mass; in the golden casket we hold a precious relic—a silk handkerchief with which he touched the altar—and it seems to us that the fragrance of the incense and the perfume of the altar flowers still linger in its folds".

Now, all this and a million times more would not be adequate preparation for one Mass.

Why, then, is it that Mass is celebrated not once in a hundred years but daily and at our doors? In the grand cathedral, in the mountain church, under the canvas tent on the gold field, and in the shade of the forest primeval. Like a rainbow, holding the jewels of the Precious Blood, it stretches from pole to pole and flings a robe of splendour across the world.

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Because God consults not what is due to His own dignity but the wants of His poor children—that their hungry souls may have daily bread, their sick souls daily medicine, and their weak souls daily strength.

The Near-
ness of
God.

How near does not Mass bring God to us? He no longer speaks from a cloud, a high mountain, or a burning bush. He is Immanuel—God with us. He walked beside the disciples on their road to Emmaus, but He does not walk *beside* us but in the Communion; He walks into the inmost chambers of our hearts.

The events of Holy Thursday and Good Friday do not belong to the domain of history; through the Mass they become the living actualities of our daily lives. We do not look on them through the telescope of two thousand years; we hourly touch them and breathe in their midst, since Mass is the Calvary of the new law.

Now suppose you stood on that hill on that day when the earth rocked and the lightning flashed, and looking down on your own soul you saw it stained with guilt. What would you have done? When the purple tide broke from the wounded side of Christ, you would rush to

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catch it in the hot chalice of your heart and offer it to the Eternal Father in atonement for that sinful life ; you would send its waves floating down the past to purify those years of shame. And when the awful tragedy ended, you would come down the hill striking your breast, indeed, with sorrow, but your joy would know no bounds. You would walk as in a dream. Oh, the privilege of kneeling before the dying Christ and offering His Blood for my guilt !

Now that privilege can be yours, not once in a lifetime, but every morning you attend Mass. The same Victim lies on the altar-stone that hung on the Cross, and the same blood that sprung from His side grows ruddy in the chalice.

How precious is the time we spend at Mass !
Those thirty minutes are by far and away the most important in the twenty-four hours. Mint them into thirty beads of gold ; coin them into thirty pearls of great price.

How to
Hear
Mass.

From the time the priest comes to the foot of the altar our fervour should increase, till, by the time the Sanctus bell rings, the light of faith growing brighter should enable us to see, with St. Louis, the heavens opening and trooping angels descending to do homage to their coming King.

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Before the Elevation plunge your heart into the chalice that the words of Consecration may flutter over and sanctify it, that the hot waves of the Precious Blood may cleanse its every chamber, and the fire of the Sacred Heart burn out every stain.

Let the altar be your Thabor, Christ is here ! Christ is here ! and His sacramental garments are as white as snow, and the fragrance of the Precious Blood is floating around, and censers are swung by angel hands, and seraphs are singing songs not given to mortal lips to utter ; and the Eternal Father, looking down from the cloud of glory that rests over every altar before which a sanctuary lamp burns, cries to you as He did to the chosen three, *This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, hear ye Him.*

CHAPTER IX.

THE GARDEN'S GLOOM.

GOOD FRIDAY.

I.

THE memorable drama of the Last Supper is drawing to a close. The first Mass is said, the first twelve priests ordained, and in the deep recess of that holy house, the first sanctuary lamp is lighted ; it flings a trembling veil of purple over the first tabernacle that sheltered the Sacred Host. Christ, with His disciples, rises to sing the hymn before parting.

The
Paschal
Picture.

As the lamplight falls fully on the Master's face, the Apostles notice how it beams ; joy radiates from every look and feature. There is a thrill of satisfied love in His voice. As the hymn proceeds, however, a shadow steals across His face, and a suggestion of sorrow breaks through His tones ; it deepens into pathos till the last verse sobs with wailing sadness. But

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a strange energy returns to His words when He says, "Arise, let us go hence". It is the trumpet-call to battle.

The door of the cenacle has closed behind them. Christ and His Apostles are in the chill streets. The thoroughfares are quiet, there are few abroad ; each family is gathering around the supper table to celebrate the victorious passover of their fathers. In the aristocratic quarters, and the neighbourhood of the temple, lights of hurrying messengers are to be seen passing to and fro. The Sanhedrim is summoned ; Judas and his new masters are driving their blood bargain.

One by one, through the blue curtain of the skies, the silent stars are breaking. The rising moon is silvering the summit of Olivet, and whitening the roofs of Jerusalem. It suggests a scene of tranquil repose ; yet, before its pale splendours wither in to-morrow's sunrise, it will witness the most dreadful conflict ever raged on earth, when the Son of God shall wrestle with the powers of darkness. Gethsemane is to be the battlefield.

Christ, with His Apostles, glides through the dimly lighted streets ; a mile and a half lies

The Garden's Gloom

between them and the olive garden. In turning the road that winds around the base of Mount Moriah, the moonlight falls on the face of Christ. What a change from the Christ who beamed and glowed over the chalice in His hands! The Apostles gasp; they do not dare to speak; they clutch each other's arms and whisper, "Look! What ails Him?" And now a moan breaks from His heart. Why, His strength is failing; see how heavily He drags His footsteps.

They reach a bower in Gethsemane, where He halts. Eight of His disciples are feeble. Their eyes had not seen Him speak with the law-giver and the prophet, when His face shone as the sun and His garments became as white as snow on Mount Tabor. Their faith was not strengthened by the vision of His transfigured glory. Their ears did not hear His Father's voice ring from the clouds. So, in pity, lest their faith should fail, He compassionately spares them the sight of His agony. "Sit you here, till I go yonder and pray" (Matt. xxvi. 36). Three who had recollections of Tabor to lean on for support, these alone He took. Yonder lies the garden of olives, with its high walls.

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It is a sacred spot ; small wonder He was accustomed to come here to pray !

The ashes of Mary's parents rested there, and close beside the tomb of Joachim and Anne is the grotto where the first pair found shelter when they fled from Paradise. Here they bitterly wept their fatal sin ; to this grotto now comes the second Adam, to wail over every sin of their fallen children.

With the chosen three He ascends a gentle slope, and reaches the wicket that led to Olivet. He pauses to look back for the last time on the temple. The moon by this time had climbed the eastern sky ; it was flinging a peaceful glory on half the landscape, leaving the portion shadowed by the mountain in darkness. What a proud picture the temple presented that night ! Its high walls stood boldly out, its white colonnades glistened in pure beauty, while, high above all, the Pylon towers flung their gold-tipped spires to the heavens. There it stood silent and majestic, against the blue background of the sky—a huge casket of gold and ivory draped in the white splendours of the Paschal moon. One long last look at His Father's house ! Great temple, your fate is sealed !

The Garden's Gloom

Even now the spirits of despair are sobbing through the midnight winds, wailing a requiem dirge around your gilded porticoes, and echoing the prophetic words of last Sunday, "Not a stone shall be left upon a stone". By the setting of to-morrow's sun your purpose shall have died, the old law vanished, the veil of your sanctuary rent in twain, and profane eyes gaze on the spot once shadowed by majesty. O fated temple! O doomed city! fare thee well! He turns and plunges into the dark garden of sorrow.

As they pass along the cedar walk, the sounds of their footfalls die on the soft clay, and a mysterious stillness hangs in the air. They reach a smooth, round rock that rises above the surface of the garden. Here Christ halts; it is the last milestone of His journey. His eyes are streaming, His voice shaken with grief, as He turns and says, "*My soul is sorrowful even unto death; stay you here and watch with Me*" (Matt. xxvi. 38). The disciples, drawing their garments around them, group beside the rock. They try to pray, but the past day has been one of incessant activity and strong emotions, and the very atmosphere seems charged with a

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heaviness that weighs them down ; so they sink into a troubled sleep, while the moaning Christ staggers forward about fifty yards to His death agony. “*He began to grow sorrowful and to be sad*” (Matt. xxvi. 37). Here He gives the signal for the conflict to begin.

II.

The
Battle-
ground
Surveyed.

Two powers are arrayed in a deadly struggle—the powers of Christ and the powers of darkness. To get the knowledge of the conflict we must analyse the opposing forces. Before approaching the task, it is necessary to readjust all our previous notions of pain and merit, for on the side of Christ the great fact that stands boldly out is :—

It is God
who
Suffers.

I. The nature is indeed human, but the person is divine ; therefore, His faintest word or slightest sigh is of such value that eternity alone can measure it. If we would, then, sound to the full the depths of Christ’s agony, like a fixed star of light, we must keep before our minds, and never lose sight of the fact, that it is God who suffers. The soul and body on which the tempest beats are indeed human, but the

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sufferer is divine, and, therefore, His every act is infinite in merit and in dignity.

2. His sufferings are interior, and, therefore, intense. What is the pain of nerve or body compared with the anguish of mind? The soul is the real seat of suffering, the body but the channel through which it passes. The true home of pain lies within. The deepest scar of flesh will heal with time; but who can minister to the mind diseased, or pluck from the heart a rooted sorrow? Men's heads have whitened in a night from grief; a sudden sorrow has often snapped the chain of reason or stilled a heart for ever. Therefore, to measure Christ's agony by His wounds and ignore His mental anguish would be most misleading.

His Sufferings are Interior.

3. There He lies, like a crushed worm, yet no man has touched Him. Why? Because His sorrows were obedient to His will, and in this His agony differs from all with which we are acquainted. We are caught up in a storm; when we ourselves suffer it is in spite of ourselves; we make every effort to shake off the grip of pain; we rebel against it, and, as the bird dashes itself against the cage, our wills struggle for freedom and escape. We are human, and,

His Sufferings were Voluntary.

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therefore, the playthings of the storm ; He was God, and at His beck the tempests of His soul, like the angry billows of Genesareth, rose in fury, or were stilled into hushed repose. Not only the winds and the waves obeyed Him, but the emotions of His breast sank or swelled at His wish. When He rejoiced, it was because He commanded joy to enter ; and when He sorrowed, it was grief, like all created things, obeyed its Lord, and came to fill His heart. He deliberately measured and controlled it. Did He so will, the inflowing tide would stand on its course or turn back. In Gethsemane, then, He dismisses His attendant angels, opens wide His arms, bares His breast, and bids Lucifer, with his dark hosts, approach and put forth their powers against Him. "Now is the hour for the powers of darkness." "He began to be sorrowful." The bolts and fastenings are loosened, the sluice-gates thrown open, and the angry waves dash in fury on the inner sanctuary of His heart.

Without
Distrac-
tion.

4. In sorrow we seek distraction ; we read to our friends to coax their thoughts away from pain, for we know that by lessening consciousness we lessen pain, and where con-

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sciousness is completely destroyed there is no pain.

The wounded soldier in the din of battle sees the blood, but feels no twinge. The shouts of onset, the blare of trumpets, the roar of conflict, tear away his thoughts and, therefore, kill his pain ; but Christ did not permit a distracting breath to disturb the awful stillness of that inner chamber of His soul, where His spirit and the spirit of agony were clasped in deadly embrace.

By grasping these facts—that the sufferer is God—that His anguish is not of flesh, but of thought—that His sorrows are voluntary and undisturbed—we are greatly assisted in our efforts to penetrate the mysterious agony of Gethsemane.

5. What kind of an instrument is the human Soul of Christ, across which grief, sorrow, and sadness swept? This is the important question, for as the beauties of music are measured by the perfection of the ear into which they flow, so pain must be measured, not so much by the blow struck, as by the nature on which it falls.

You wound a tree or flower ; it droops and falls, but feels no pain, for a flower has no sensation. You strike a brute, and the twentieth

The Soul
of Christ.

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stroke is but one stroke disassociated with any other, for a brute has neither reason nor reflection.

With a man how different ! His mind looks back and forward, and gathers up all into an undivided whole. The twentieth punishment to him is the last drop of bitterness falling on nineteen others held within the cup his reflective powers have clasped. Each moment, too, that prolongs a human sorrow adds to it a new life, a new edge.

Now, let us push this reasoning one step further. Amongst men, by reason of their different natures, there is a great diversity of pain. On men of coarse and cloddish clay sorrow falls with blunted edge ; but there are souls like *Æolian* harps, whose strings vibrate with the faintest whisper and tremble at the slightest touch. Oh, how deep the wound, how undying the pain even of a little word ! Like the sea-shell that keeps ever murmuring the music of its native deep, the muffled chimes of sorrow keep ringing down the avenues of such souls.

Now, higher than the heavens above the earth did the soul of Christ surpass that of the most perfect man in beauty and sensibility.

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Such was the instrument across which the dark tide of sorrow swept in Gethsemane.

III.

A. Let us now turn to examine the weapons that the powers of darkness are discharging against the suffering Christ. Four Sources of Sorrow.

There He lies ; but what causes His breast to heave, what sends the cold sweat teeming through the pores of His body, what wrings that anguished wail from His heart ?

The causes are four, but the main one is the contact of an all-pure and an all-holy God with the foul repulsiveness of sin. Let us try and understand what this meant.

We carry sin lightly, because we cannot realize the shame of our load. But between God and sin there is an eternal antagonism. Under other circumstances the All-holy would drive it from His presence ; but now not only has He taken created flesh, and submitted to its laws, but He is exposing the inmost recesses of His soul to the foe. He has put on the hideous apparel of our crimes, substituted Himself a victim for us. "He has borne our iniquities, He has carried our sins."

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As Jacob clothed himself in the garments of Esau to secure a parent's blessing, so Christ put on His brothers' vesture of shame, and brought on Himself His Father's malediction. His soul was wrapped in a robe steeped in all that was loathsome in human crime. Crime clings around His heart, it flows over His intellect, it fills the pores of His memory, it covers Him like a moral leprosy, it burns like fire, it roasts like poison, it dries the very fountain of life.

If we have to bear the shadow of another's guilt, if we have to rest under a false suspicion, no matter how trivial, we wither ; life becomes unbearable. Oh, with Christ it was no shadow ; the awful torrents of others' sins flowed over Him.

Did you ever, in some hideous nightmare, imagine yourself clasped in the folds of a slimy monster of the deep—a huge sea-serpent? In fancy you felt its clammy coils entwine you, and you watched the red tongue thrust forth to pierce your breast and lap the hot blood from the living chalice of your heart. You leaped into the air with a scream of horror, while your heaving breast and cold sweat attested your

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agony as you thanked God it was only a dream. With Christ it was no dream ; it was ghastly reality.

There He kneels in Gethsemane. Like another Samson He lifts up His strong arms and draws down upon His head the charged clouds of His Father's wrath. The blood of Abel, the crimes of Sodom, the guilt, the lusts, and blasphemies of all times ! He quivers in every nerve ; the blood is rushing through His veins in terror ; He wails piteously and falls prostrate. " He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins " (Is. liii. 5).

The persecutors of the early Church believed they discovered the master scheme of human torture when they hit on the plan of tying a Christian to a corpse.

When he slept it was in the cold embrace of a corpse ; when he awoke at midnight, the stony eyes of the dead stared him, and the stripped teeth of a skeleton grinned in mockery. He dared not shake himself free from the loathsome companionship. He moved in a cloud of sickening odours, till life became a hell, and he staggered and fell, a corpse within the arms of a corpse. Even this gruesome picture gives

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us no idea of what the revolting companionship of sin meant to Jesus.

Procession
of Shame.

Look ! in that silent midnight hour, see the trooping spectres come in grim procession. All the criminals that were ever, or e'er shall be, march past.

There is Cain in the purple sheet of his brother's blood, rank with the foulness of his crime ; there is Herod, dripping with the gore of the young innocents ; there the wretche reeking with the abominations of Sodom ; and each, as he passes, discharges the foulness of his life on the pure head of Christ.

Crime flows over Him, crime streams down His vesture and drips from His beard, till He almost seems to be that which He could never be. O God ! those hands of Christ that were never lifted except to soothe the sorrowing or raise the wretched, they are purpled with the blood of a thousand murders. Those lips that breathed sweetness, that were perfumed with mercy, they are black with blasphemies, they reek with foulness. His eyes are filled with evil visions, and His ears are ringing with the roar of strife and the bacchanal shouts of revelry. His heart is frozen with cruelty, hardened with

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avarice. His memory is laden with every sin from Adam to the last man. There He lies, moaning and crushed beneath the weight. "He hath put on cursing as a garment." "He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins."

But see, now He struggles to His feet, His knees totter, His form is bowed. Staggering under the weight of man's guilt, He seeks the solace of His chosen three. Alas! they are asleep. "I looked for one that would grieve with Me, but there was none; for one that would comfort Me, and I found none" (Ps. lxxviii. 21).

With difficulty He reaches them, drops on His knees. Placing His hands on the ground for support, He bends till His breath falls hot on the sleeping face of Peter. "Simon, sleepest thou?" With these words He falls prostrate from exhaustion.

The startled Apostles hasten to raise Him. When they turn His face in the moonlight, a cry of horror breaks from them. How changed in a few hours! He has grown an old man! They would not recognize Him except for the halo of light that played around His head.

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There He lies in their arms, His eyes swimming with tears, His beard dishevelled, His hair matted with sweat, and the ashen pallor of death upon His features. He sobs and cautions them against the trials before them, and implores them to stand fast.

Then He goes again towards the bitter chalice that will not pass from Him. The weeping Apostles kneel and stretch forth their hands after His receding figure. They embrace each other, sobbing, and asking, What ails Him? What ails Him? Christ falls prostrate, and the second awful stage of His agony commences.

A Picture
of Pain.

B. What was the new source of grief? He looked into the clear mirror of His divinity, and saw reflected there the horrors that to-morrow had in store. All His life, His Passion was before Him. At Bethlehem, when His infant eyes gazed in silent wonder on the starry heavens, while the air was still thrilled with angels' song, even then Gethsemane spread itself out before His vision, and His ears rang with the yells of the murderous mob.

He was God, without a past or future ; all was the living present. He looked through the incense cloud that rose from the adoring Magi

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at His cradle, and beheld the purple agony of Olivet.

This ever-present vision, so far from causing sorrow, made His heart pant for it. "I have a Baptism with which I am to be baptized. How am I straitened till it be accomplished?" (Luke xii. 50). He calls it "His hour," for it was to register His victory over sin, to mark the fulfilment of His mission, and the liberation of humanity. How is it that, when He finds Himself confronted with death, fear shakes His soul and sorrow convulses Him? Because the future triumphs of His Passion are now pushed to the background, and He stands face to face with grief alone.

The patriot soldier, while planning his country's liberation, sees only her chains falling, hears only the chimes of victory and the plaudits of rejoicing thousands. But on the day of actual battle these visions die; the cry of pain and the sight of blood alone are present.

Through life Christ and agony stood at a distance, now they are face to face; death is stretching forth his hand to seize his victim, and his cold breath chills His brow.

He was God, and to-morrow lived, throbbed,

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and palpitated before His eyes. He saw not confusedly, but counted and pondered over every detail of the ghastly tragedy—the hideous embrace of Judas, the kiss that burned to the bone like a drop of corrosive poison, the breath from the traitorous lips that reeked with the fetid airs of hell. There stood before His vision the speechless agony of Mary, the flight of His Apostles ; He saw His honour trampled on when He was mocked as a fool ; His shame insulted when He stood bleeding and naked before a jeering rabble. The scourge, the nails, the whole bloody drama, to the last expiring sigh, passes before His aching eyes.

Is it any wonder that His breast heaves and swells, and His sacred heart, like the wine-press, distils the red drops ? They burst through His pores, they glisten on His brow. And now He turns His eyes from the picture of His own pain to a new scene that unfolds itself—all His friends would suffer.

For My
Name's
Sake.

Anxiety for those he loves is the uppermost thought in the mind of every generous man. "I can die myself, but I cannot bear the sight of my starving wife and child," was a saying often heard in famine years. But pain wears a double

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edge when they suffer, precisely because they are our friends. They are struck for the crime of our friendship alone.

And, oh! how Christ loved His friends! He goes so far as to identify Himself with them. "He who touches My anointed ones touches the apple of My eye." "Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" (Acts ix. 4). The blow from Saul's hand struck Christ when it fell on His Church. The stones flung at Stephen wounded Him, the fire that roasted St. Laurence burned Him.

His eyes are now looking down through the vista of future ages. He sees millions of martyrs pour out their blood; He sees His Apostles hurled from the Temple's pinnacle, or torn on crosses; He sees Nero's garden illuminated by the roasting Christians tied to lamp-posts and smeared with pitch; He sees their blood dashed over the sands of the Colosseum, or dripping from the jaws of beasts. And while His gaze rested on that picture His body swayed like the reed in the night wind, and the blood gathers in great drops and falls, while the rushing tide of sorrow sweeps Christ prostrate to the earth.

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Quae
Utilitas.

And now the agonizing Jesus turns to view the last and most distressing picture of all.

Instead of the chaste beauty of the Paschal moon, the caverns of hell are spread before Him. He sees the tongues of hissing fire lapping around the very souls for which He bleeds—souls glorified by the jewels of Baptism ; souls that glittered with the seven-fold splendours of Confirmation ; souls that, like Judas, fed on His own body. As He beholds them, swept like autumn leaves into the fiery gusts of hell, He piteously moans, “*Quae utilitas in sanguine meo?*” (Ps. xxix.)—“What is the use of My blood?” How few they are who take advantage of it and save themselves!

He sees the heretic rising out of the bosom of His Church and lifting Lucifer’s standard of revolt, and schism tearing her seamless robe ; and as she lay wounded by the roadside, the very men she nourished, like the Levite of old, pass her by and stretch out no friendly hand.

While His streaming eyes wander on that sad picture, Satan comes mocking and asking, “Is it for these you suffer? What folly to die for such ingrates!” The angel who held the bitter chalice for a moment thought He would send it

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away untasted, when Christ, lifting His face, takes it in His trembling hands, and as of old, when He pardoned a whole city in consideration of even five just souls, now, for the sake of those who would avail of His Passion, He lifts the cup to His lips and murmurs, "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt" (Matt. xxvi. 39).

Once more He staggers to His feet. But what a sight! His eyes are blinded with blood, their lashes purple; His mouth is filled with blood, His beard drips, His hair is clotted, His garments soaked in blood.

Not a hand has touched Him, not a nail or scourge has tapped a vein. But the life-stream, impatient of fifteen hours' delay, comes surging from the Sacred Heart to pour itself over souls that are perishing, and to appease an angry Heaven. His disciples watch Him tottering towards them through the olive shadows. They are speechless with terror when they see that ghastly spectre of sorrow bathed in blood.

For the last time He leaves them, His cousins, James and John, supporting, and the first Pope following, weeping.¹

¹ See Newman's "Discourses to Mixed Congregations," Discourse XVI.

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IV.

Proces-
sion of
Triumph.

But His agony is now over ; the death anguish of Christ has passed.

As for the third time He kneels, the heavens open, and a trail of splendour comes floating towards the earth, and the trooping angels hasten to minister to their Lord. Three hours ago the victories to be purchased by His Passion, the visions of anticipated conquest, were veiled and put aside in order that His soul might be laid bare to suffering. Now the comforting angels recall them one by one.

Christ now sees Limbo freed, the gates of Heaven flung wide open ; Joseph, His great precursor, with the myriads of the just, are hastening to share the triumphs of His Precious Blood. There before Him passes, too, the long procession of His martyrs, with their waving palms and shouts of victory. He beholds His Apostles planting His banner on pagan lands, His Doctors beating back the foe with the sword of light, His Virgins ennobling humanity by their triumph over our baser selves, and the tens of thousands of chosen souls that would to the end of time rejoice the heavens and widen the empire

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of the Precious Blood ; and as the vision of triumph glowed before His eyes, sorrow, fear, and sadness fled like guilty shades, and rapture cheered His freezing heart, and strength returned to His limbs, as with a firm step He seeks His Apostles, to deliver Himself up to the howling Jews, led on by Judas, and already battering at the gates of Olivet.

Here we pause. We have watched by His death agony. On the Cross He calmly makes His will and yields up the ghost.

Fifteen hours before death came He passed through death's anguish. Why? Because His death was the work of man, and God alone could create the tempestuous sea of sorrow through which His spirit passed, but all the fury of men and devils could not inflict the millionth part of suffering that His own deliberate will measured out.

By these two facts—that His sufferings were so intense and yet absolutely voluntary—we measure the enormity of mortal sin, and the unfathomed love of His sacred heart.

We rise from adoration of the sorrowing Christ with another thought, it is this :—

The reader can scarcely have failed to notice

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the striking contrast in the conduct of the friends of Christ and the friends of Lucifer. The latter knew no rest, nor food nor sleep that night.

We see the lights of hurrying messengers flitting to and fro. Look at these men—their faces are pale, their eyes are flashing, and their voices charged with passion. Some are instructing the false witnesses in what they are to swear, some debauching the pagan soldiers, and others goading the mob to madness. No thought to spare for food or family. The very air is electric with passion, they are aflame with their master's—Lucifer's—interest.

Turn from that picture to the agonizing Christ staggering under the weight of our sins. He goes to seek the solace of His friends. How sweet to that freezing heart will be the warm word of comfort, the tear of sympathy, and the strong arm flung out to support His tottering form!

Surely He has a claim on all this—for who are the friends whose consolation He seeks?

From all Adam's children He chose twelve. Now from those twelve so favoured He makes a further exclusive selection—He takes three; they nestled around His heart; they stood with Him on Thabor. Now, in His darkest hour, He

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has a good right to expect that men so favoured would comfort Him. Alas ! while He bends above them moaning in agony, they are sleeping ! they are sleeping !

We have knelt in reverent adoration with our divine Lord through the darkness of Gethsemane. We now leave the shadows of that garden behind and turn to fill our eyes with the light of His risen glory.

CHAPTER X.

THE LIGHT OF VICTORY.

EASTER SUNDAY.

THE Good Friday darkness that overspread the earth seemed to typify the complete failure of the Divine Victim that hung upon the Cross and the triumph of His foes.

They vented their rage upon Him with impunity ; they branded Him as a seducer ; they challenged Him to come down from the Cross. They saw His body lie stiff and mangled in death ; they followed it to the tomb ; that tomb's entrance they closed with a massive rock ; upon that rock they put the seal of public authority ; and to make assurance doubly sure, they obtained a guard of Roman Pretorians to protect it.

No wonder they rubbed their hands in glee and congratulated one another. Here was a

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victory complete in every detail—a triumph without the suspicion of a flaw.

As hours, however, wore on, the tempest of unbridled fury began to abate, and sanity asserted itself. The sun that evening set over a city of conflicting thoughts and strong emotions.

Thousands did not witness in vain the darkened sun, the rent rocks, and the ghosts issuing from the sepulchres. They went home striking their breasts, and many would rush to the other side of the street in terror on the approach of the principal actors in the awful tragedy. The garments of these men seemed to smell of blood.

There was an anxious searching of hearts on every side—even the friends of Judas are not so secure that their victory over Christ is quite as complete as they would wish ; for these repeated promises of His rising on the third day from the grave come flitting back and send a chill through them ; and the accusing angels of His innocent blood are lashing their consciences.

It was an anxious Saturday in Jerusalem—but one more day for friends and foes, and all will be decided. Should He rise—His triumph

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Resurrexit, will be complete ; should He fail---His miracles will be forgotten, and black ruin must stare His disciples.

The Paschal moonlight is glinting off the burnished helmets and the glittering shields of the Roman guards in the garden of Joseph of Arimathea. Through the stillness you can hear the measured tread of the sentry beside the sepulchre, and the clang of his javelin on the stony path.

The night grows old and streaks of pale opal mark the eastern horizon. The Roman guards pause ; a mysterious terror is creeping over their hearts ; they tremble ; the earth heaves and rocks ; and sweeping through the now brightening skies, an angel-form descends. He bursts through the sepulchre, rolls back the stone, and high above the prostrate forms of the terror-stricken guards resplendent towers the figure of the Victorious Christ.

“Resurrexit, sicut dixit, Alleluia.”

(“He arose, as He said, Alleluia.”)

Limbo. For a brief moment we must retrace our steps.

The evangelist dramatically closes the history

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of Good Friday's tragedy with one word—*expiravit*—He gave up the ghost.

When the soul of Christ passed from His body, He went straight to Limbo, where the saints of the old law were detained till Heaven was thrown open by His conquering death. He announced to them that their redemption was complete ; the long-sighed-for hour was come ; and by the glories of the Beatific Vision He transformed Limbo into Paradise.

As His glance swept over that home of patient longing, what a venerable assemblage presented itself. There were the prophets whose inspired tongues had announced Him ; there was the last and the greatest of the prophets—John—the precursor, who, on the Jordan's bank, lifted the veil from the picture they had painted, and cried, "Behold the Lamb of God" ; there was holy Simeon whose lips had fashioned the sword for Mary's heart ; and above all, there was His foster-father—St. Joseph.

What a flood of recollections throng back to Joseph now—the wrapt ecstasies of the first Christmas when the midnight skies thrilled with the angelic "Gloria" ; the cloud of incense that

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rose from the adoring kings ; the anxious flight and the privations of their journey into Egypt ; the wondrous love that sanctified their humble home ; and, above all, the last sigh he breathed in the arms of the God that now stands radiant before him.

Christ now leads up this sainted host to Calvary—He shows them His body, His torn flesh, His thorn-crowned head, and pierced heart, to enable them to realize what a price has been paid for their redemption.

And when they sighed over that wounded heart, He checked them, for this was no time for sighs or sorrow, and He then showed them Its future glories. They saw religious orders and great confraternities marching to conquest under its banner, stately basilicas and convents sheltering under its shadow, and the love it was to symbolize wrapped around the world like a fiery flame.

Christ then entering the tomb re-invested Himself with His body, and lo ! what a transformation ! Every trace of Good Friday's shame is consumed in the blaze of its new splendours. The transfigured glories of Thabor, multiplied a thousand times, returned.

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It hangs around Him transfused with glory, every wound blazing with the splendours of a rising sun. Death, decay, or suffering have claim on it no more. It is endowed with the properties of Spirit—to sweep from pole to pole in the twinkling of an eye, and pass through the walls of the closed chamber without impediment.

But the risen Christ has other friends to visit.

Although the scriptures do not expressly mention the fact, it has been the unbroken tradition of the Church that the first person to whom our risen Lord appeared was His mother. Naturally, for not only was she His mother, but the chief sharer of His sorrows, and the chief mourner at His Cross. The honour of the first visit was then eminently due to her. Mary.

The reader is familiar with the beautiful picture, "The Descent from Calvary". The Blessed Virgin, Magdalen, and St. John are returning on Good Friday. Lowering clouds, in dark broken masses, fill the horizon behind them; but a streak of sweet light is falling on the Virgin's face. It was a symbol of the hope that sprung up within her heart that hour. Whoever else might forget His repeated promises to rise, she would not. His *Resurgam*—

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I will rise, kept sounding like a trumpet through the halls of her memory ; and if through the night-watch her heart for a moment trembled, it came back to feed her courage.

What an anxious night for Mary must have been that vigil of the first Easter. She looks out into the midnight skies and strange splendours are floating through them. White birds of paradise glide and circle around. The flowers have opened their chalices and are pouring forth their fragrance to perfume the air through which their Maker is to pass. And now there came melodies floating as if from some far-off sphere—the air is pulsing with heavenly harmony.

She recognizes those angel voices—thirty-three years ago she heard that heavenly choir at Bethlehem. Now they have come to sing the second birthday of her Son, who has just sprung from the womb of Earth.

“Regina coeli, lætare, Alleluia,
Resurrexit, sicut dixit, Alleluia.”

(“Queen of heaven rejoice, Alleluia,
He has risen, as He said, Alleluia.”)

A brilliant light now dazzles her, and Jesus,

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radiant in His risen splendours, is in the arms of Mary. Three days ago that body lay in those arms, mangled, torn, bleeding. These same arms now enfold it, glorious and resplendent.

But Christ is not alone, for He has brought the hosts of the liberated just, amongst them Mary's parents and her gentle spouse, St. Joseph. For them He paints the tragic splendours of her past, the heroic part she played in man's redemption; and then in the presence of the combined citizens of Earth and Heaven, He proclaimed her Queen of Angels and of Saints. Then the voices of the angelic choir and the liberated just united in chanting the Canticle of Jesus' victory and Mary's dignity :—

“Queen of heaven rejoice, Alleluia,
He has risen, as He said, Alleluia.”

Though the scriptures merely records the bald Peter. fact that He appeared to St. Peter, it requires small effort of imagination to picture that meeting.

Two passions are devouring Peter's heart since Good Friday—sorrow for his dead Lord, and remorse for his own denial. While his soul is now thrilled with joy at the sight of the

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risen Christ, the tear trembles and there is a painful twitching at the corners of his mouth, and the rising flood of anguish is ready to rush from his heart—but Christ reminds him that this is a day of triumph. No mourning *De profundus*—no weeping *Miserere*. The lamentations and the *tenebrae* are all swallowed up in the bright Easter Alleluia.

He consoles Peter by telling him that he will have the honour of redeeming the past by laying down his life—that for the one Pope who denied Him, thirty will pour out their blood, that though Peter's enemies, like those of his Divine Master, may seal the tomb and place Pilate's guard around the Papacy, the Papacy will burst the rock and rise triumphant.

For a moment they are silent, then their eyes turn towards a black figure swaying in the morning breeze against the sky-line—it is the carcass of Judas. Again the gulp comes to Peter's throat—"O Christ, out of twelve that you chose, two were traitors". Once more Christ reminds him that this is Easter morning, and its full joys leave no room for sighs.

Then, lifting up His hand, our Lord draws aside the curtain of the future and shows him

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the reparation that would be made for the dark crime that avarice prompted.

The long line of the crusaders passes before his eyes. He sees nobles pawning their estates, and kings pledging their jewels, sighing for the day when, with bare feet and ashes on their heads, they might walk in reverence over the streets consecrated by His blood last Friday. He sees millions of religious in every land and age turning their backs on this world's wealth, that they might embrace poverty as a mother. He sees high-born men and women tearing the diamonds from their ornaments, and kings the jewels from their crowns, and feeling honoured when they are permitted to set them in glittering circles around the Sacred Host in the Benediction Monstrance, or to stud the Tabernacle roof, that, while Christ sleeps in His sacramental swaddling clothes, they might let their imprisoned light fall upon Him like the light from the star of Bethlehem. By the time that vision of glorious reparation had passed before him, the sighs and tears of Peter were dissolved in joy.

Magdalen was anxious, according to the custom of her country, to embalm the body of Christ when it was laid in the tomb, but the

Magda-
len.

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Sabbath day began with the sunset on Friday, and she dare not walk even to the garden, which was only a mile and a half away, so this labour of love had to be deferred till the dawn of Easter morning.

During the night, Mary and the other holy women were engaged preparing the spices of embalmment, and the box of aromatics that she poured on His feet at Bethany was replenished.

It is not yet dawn when we see her hurrying through the narrow streets and over the rough pavements, swept onward by the tide of love ; the tempest of her affections will brook no delay.

She reaches the sepulchre—only to find it empty ; and hurrying back she ran towards the city to tell the Apostles that the body of Christ was stolen.

The day was now breaking, and Peter and John, terror-stricken at Magdalen's story, ran towards the garden, she swiftly following. We see her rich tresses blown by the morning breeze, her eyes dilated, her quivering lips, and her face pale with terror against the whitening dawn.

The Apostles, finding the tomb empty, return to Jerusalem. Not so, however, Magdalen—

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she goes around the garden moaning, sobbing, wringing her hands in anguish.

To the sepulchre she once more returns, where she sees two angels in white who ask : "Woman, why weepest thou?" (John xx. 13). "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him."

Hearing footsteps behind her, she rises and finds herself face to face with one she takes to be the gardener, who repeats the angels' question : "Woman, why weepest thou?" "Sir, if thou hast taken Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away."

"Him," "Him"—the word burns through every sentence. Her love for Christ fills her heart and speech.

The dramatic moment of her life has now come. Christ, fixing on her a look of compassionate love, utters but one word—"Mary". Oh! the tone in which that word was spoken—it thrilled every fibre of her being. The music of that voice kept singing down for many a day through the chambers of her soul.

The day she first heard it she was an outcast, and passion's tempests raged and held high revels within her heart; but as on that night

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when, with fluttering garments and flowing hair, Christ walked in majesty over the billows of Genesareth, and shaping His power into speech, cried, "Peace, be still!" that same voice broke above the tempest of her soul; a heavenly peace descended, and, like the waves of the Galilean sea, the angry passions obeyed His voice and troubled Magdalen no more.

She heard it again when she passed into Simon's banquet chamber, when she sank at the feet of Jesus and poured the alabaster box of ointment upon them. On that day she read a flame of indignation and the ring of manly chivalry in His words as He scourged her scoffers: "Simon, dost thou see this woman?" but His voice melts with tender softness when, over her bowed head, He breathed absolution, "Thy sins are forgiven thee" (Luke vii. 48).

Once more she heard His voice—His eyes were swimming with tears, and an anguished moan was breaking from His heart, when it rang with power divine through her brother's tomb, crying, "Lazarus, come forth" (John xi. 43).

But sin, anger, and death belong to a world that has passed—love, and love alone rules now.

The Light of Victory

He permits the splendours of the divine to radiate His countenance, and His face once more did shine like the sun, and His garments became as white as snow ; with a voice trembling with compassionate tenderness, He softly breathes—"Mary"—and the music of all the spheres seemed to break upon her soul with that one word, "Mary". She sinks at His feet ; her heart is in her throat ; with the lips of that heart, she too utters but one word, "Rabboni—O my Master—O Master mine !"

The morning sun in splendour burst above the garden that framed the most wondrous picture that hangs in the gallery of time—Christ, radiant in the glories of His resurrection, with Magdalen bent in reverent adoration trembling with her new-found joy, crying, "Rabboni, O Master mine".

The first human censer, after the heart of Mary, to send up the incense of love to the Risen Christ was the heart out of which He had cast seven devils. The first pair of eyes on which the light of His Easter triumph fell were not those of sinless John, but the eyes that were washed by the tears of sorrow. What

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comfort to those, who, like Magdalen, sinned in the past, but who, like her, resolve to do penance in the future.

With Mary, Peter, and Magdalen we rejoice in the victory of our King, and our joy is not unselfish since we are destined to share His glory: “He will reform the body of our lowliness made like to the body of His glory” (Phil. iii. 21).

Yes! all nature points to our resurrection—the sun sinks into the sea, but sinks to rise again; stars disappear and return; flowers droop and die, but come to life again; so we shall pass from temporary death to our true home—Heaven.

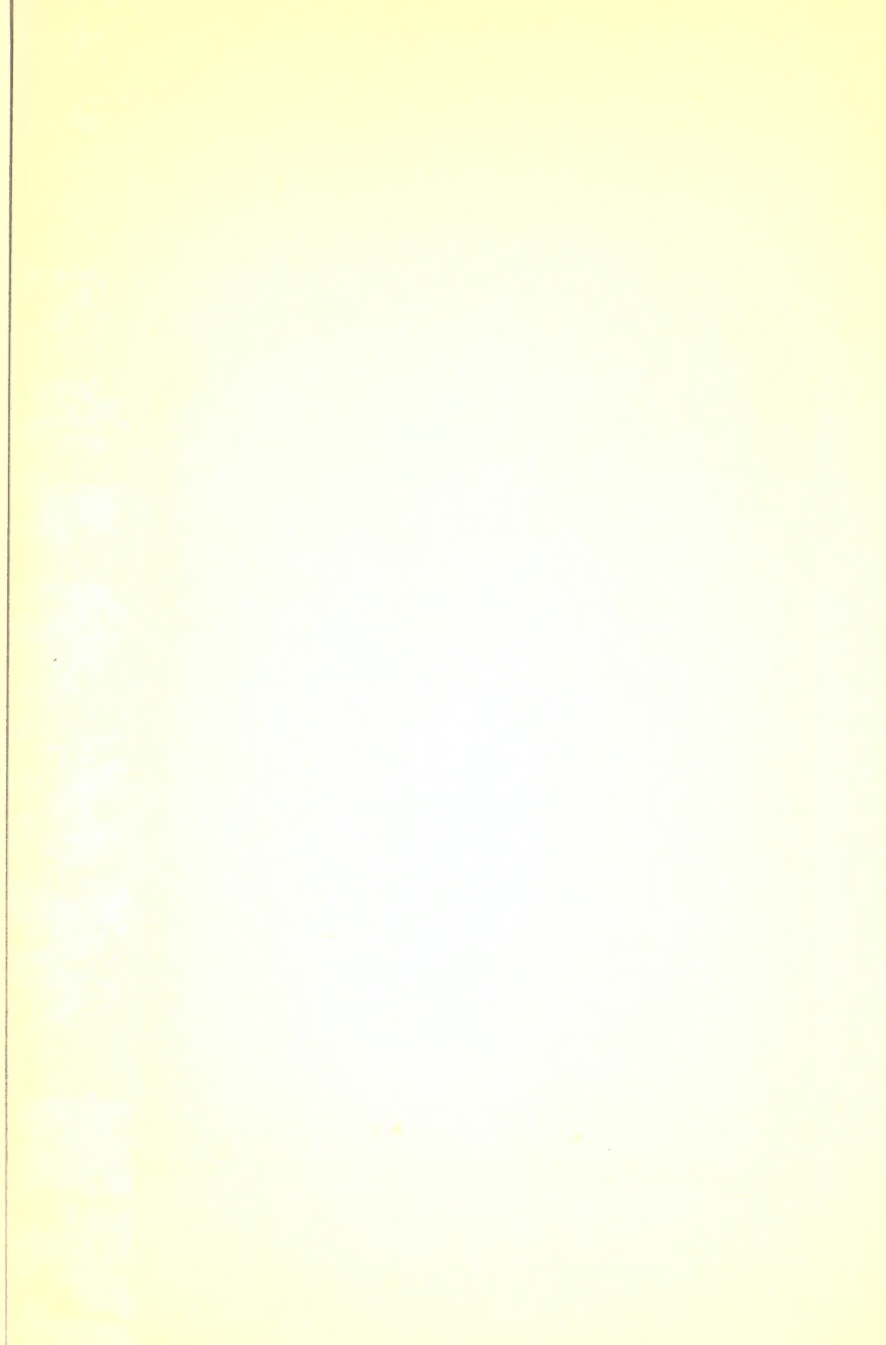
Now if there was never a hell to punish sinners, should not the happiness of that paradise be sufficient to induce men to serve God. Think of it—No suffering, no death, no parting from friends, no blighted hopes, no broken hearts; beauty, immortality, the company of angels, joy without an end.

Look around the world and see what sleepless energies, what scorn of toil, what anxious years men consume for a patch of land—a purse of money—a social honour.

The Light of Victory

Yet the hour will strike when all must vanish.
Even sceptres moulder, thrones topple, and
empires pass like a dream.

To you, dear reader, who have followed the life-story of man from the dust-shell, as you saw him in the first chapter, to the glory-crowned king that you now leave him in the last—to you a parting word: while you see men draining life's dearest treasures to grasp at the shadow prizes here, will you hesitate to strain every energy of soul and body for the conquest of that glorious kingdom where "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man what things God hath prepared for them that love Him" (1 Cor. ii. 9).



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