

robbed of all its fruits, and pitiable in its barrenness.

He sat at the window and watched the snow falling. His father said it was the wildest storm he had ever seen on Christmas. Jacky was half glad. Perhaps it would storm and storm, and then there wouldn't be any Christmas tree, and the 'Irish kids' wouldn't be crowding over him because his church didn't have Christmas trees. Why didn't his church have Christmas trees, anyway? He was tempted to ask the question at supper, but he had a clear idea that that was a religious difficulty, and hence dangerous for the priest's reputation; and so he ate his supper in silence and worried along the time till the command came for him to go to bed.

But there was no sleep for Jacky. He could see that Christmas tree, big as a house, and high as the elm tree in his front yard, all like a fairyland, with ever so many lights and sparkling things and presents for everybody. He was sure there was a present there for him; that is, if Father Foley saw him there. And why shouldn't Father Foley see him there?

It was a happy thought. If he only could go to the church and peep in, and see the tree, only just for a second; and perhaps he would be invited in and be given his present. Then he would come home and go to bed again, and no one at home would be the wiser.

All the company was in the parlor singing and talking and laughing. No one cared for a little boy—only to take away his Christmas presents because he made a noise with them, and then send him to bed early, away from all the good times. He just wouldn't stand it! It did not take him long to dress. It was rather a testy operation in the dark, but Jacky was never a Beau Brummel, and the fear of looking untidy was scarcely enough to keep him from a Christmas tree. It was risky perhaps to venture out in the storm without his rubbers and heavy coat, but what was the use of asking a mother to find them? She would be so unreasonable as to keep a fellow in and send him back to bed; and so Jacky crept down the back stairs and out into the night.

Hastily he glanced at the priest's house. Perhaps he would meet Father Foley. But the house was all dark; every one was at the church. It was hard on the little legs trudging along in the deep snow, but the goal was in sight, and he soon found himself at the door of the church. There it was! the gorgeous tree! Oh, so large and so beautiful! No one noticed him, so Jacky walked in boldly and took a seat in the last pew, where he remained, eagerly watching the tree and the improvised stage, where the entertainment was going on. He soon forgot that he was an intruder, so interesting was the glorious spectacle, which quite surpassed all his former experiences. All too soon it ended. But then began the most interesting part of the performance—the coming of Santa Claus to distribute his presents. Jacky clapped his hands for joy. He wondered if Father Foley had told Santa about him. But perhaps Father Foley did not like him after he gave back the money. Despite his misgivings, Jacky sat there and listened to the names of the 'Irish kids' being called and saw them go up to receive a smile and a gift from old Santa. But alas! no John Alexander Curtis Cushing was called. A lump arose in the lad's throat. The priest did not like him any more, and so, while the children were singing the *Adeste Fideles* to close the evening's performance, Jacky ran out and down the street, angry with the priest, with Santa, and with that old Christmas tree; and there was something like the sob of a child mingling with the moan of the night wind.

When Father Foley, happy at the success of his first Christmas tree, turned homeward, the snow was still falling. The streets were blocked and he made his way with difficulty. As he passed the Cushing house, involuntarily, he glanced up at Jacky's window. 'Poor Jacky!', he said to himself. 'I hope he enjoyed Santa Claus.'

Jacky! Was he dreaming? No, it could not be! and yet it was—it was Jacky lying there at the gate, apparently lifeless! In a moment he had the boy in his arms, and bearing him to the house still brilliantly lighted, he rang the bell violently. Impatient of the delay, the priest thought it was an age before the door was opened by Mr. Cushing himself.

'It's Jacky,' said Father Foley; 'he was lying in the snow and is nearly frozen.'

The father was silent: his heart seemed to stop beating as he beheld his little son in the enemy's arms. Then—'Thank God he is alive,' he whispered, brokenly. 'I will take him upstairs before I tell his mother. You will come—Father?'

The priest nodded assent and followed to Jacky's room. In a moment his overcoat was off and he was working over the boy while Mr. Cushing sought his wife. When he returned, Jacky's eyes were open, eagerly taking in the strange scene, while his little brain was trying hard to understand the presence of his father's enemy, the 'priester.' Later he told them all—his longing for the Christmas tree, his departure, his disappointment, and then the struggle homeward, when he fell at the gate, unable to rise or to call for help.

'You have saved my boy's life, Father,' said Mr. Cushing, as he grasped the priest's hand and held it, 'and I thank you, and ask you to forgive my—my brutality. Hereafter I hope we will be friends as well as neighbors.'

'I hope so,' said the priest, 'for Jacky and I were always friends.'

Jacky could hardly believe his senses. Was he dreaming again? Did he really see his father shaking hands with the priest? And did his father say the priest saved his life? The priest was a good man after all, and little boys were right sometimes. That fact brought more joy to Jacky than if he had received all the Irish Christmas tree.

'Good night, Jacky,' said the priest, turning to go. 'Good night, priest,' said Jacky, 'but, say, I suppose you ain't got that nineteen cents I lent you that day?'

And Jacky got back his nineteen cents with interest.—Donahoe's Magazine.

An Episcopal Friend

A notable figure in the episcopate of France about the middle of the last century was Monsignor Sibour, Bishop of Digne. The following authentic incident in his life is as illuminative as would be the lengthiest biography.

Having spent the evening on one occasion at the prefecture, he returned to his palace at a late hour. His secretary at once told him that a young woman had called to see him twice during the evening; and that, the second time, she appeared so agitated and begged so earnestly to see the Bishop that he had taken it upon himself to bid her wait Monsignor's return. She was now in the reception room.

Bishop Sibour, somewhat surprised, sought his visitor, and found her to be the daughter of one of the principal business men of the town. The young girl threw herself at his feet, weeping distractedly. He raised her, soothed her, and encouraged her to tell him her trouble. Her story was to the effect that unexpected losses had come upon her father, that he had heavy payments to make the following day and could not possibly meet them. In face of this certain dishonor he was so unmanned that his wife and daughter had watched him and discovered that he intended to commit suicide. The girl added that she had come to seek the Bishop as the only one capable of turning her father from this fatal step.

Ten minutes later the Bishop was at the despairing merchant's side. At first the threatened bankrupt denied everything; but, moved by the prelate's touching exhortations, he speedily confessed that he found it impossible to survive his dishonor. Notwithstanding this statement, however, the words of Monsignor Sibour so affected him that at last he solemnly promised to suffer with courage and put away all thoughts of self-destruction.

When the Bishop had brought him to this point he asked how large a sum was needed to tide him over his difficulties.

'Twenty-five thousand francs,' replied the merchant. 'Well, take courage. Those twenty-five thousand francs I am possessed of, and I shall give them to you.'

'One may easily imagine the joy of the afflicted family,' and the warmth of their gratitude to the generous prelate.

Bishop Sibour attached only one condition to the gift—that the merchant should preserve absolute silence with regard to it.

'You understand,' said he, with exquisite delicacy, 'that if you were to speak of it your credit would be injured.'

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