

the police after us. You bet the switchmen have been telephoned along the line to keep a lookout, an' we dasn't stop nowheres. We're lost if we take to the fields.'

'Yes, that's so,' assented two other voices. 'What'll we do?'

'I don't think the tall guy ought to get to the city. It's not good for him to be out this time o' night,' said the first voice, with some humor in it; and the others laughed grimly.

'What's the superintendent helpin' the warden for?' said the coarse voice. 'What's it to him?'

'Money!' put in a third voice, laconically. 'An' you seem to forget the B and L, Bill.'

'I'll give him worse'n that wreck,' replied the coarse voice, fiercely. 'D'ye remember the pile o' ties over near the passenger track at the tunnel? That's the track they'll take, and it's mighty dark right there. It ain't far an'—'

'We got to hurry,' broke in the first speaker, 'or they'll be gone. That'll keep 'em here.'

Christie clung to the iron network and peered over. Three shadowy figures crept out from among the weeds and dropped to the cinder path below them. In a moment they had disappeared, going in the direction of the tunnel.

The boy hurried to the end of the bridge and scrambled down to the tracks. Then he ran like mad to the freight office. If only God would let him get there before the superintendent's car left!

The engine, with a tender and one coach, was just pulling out as the boy came near the office. Unmindful of his mother's repeated admonitions, he swung himself into the cab and fell panting against the side.

'You can't go!' he gasped to the engineer. 'Tramps—a wreck—'

The engine was stopped, and as soon as Christie could get his breath his story was told. The superintendent and his party hurried forward to find out the cause of the delay. The boy repeated what he had overheard and seen. In the group that listened eagerly to him was a boy no taller than himself—a fair-haired lad in a black Oxford suit of faultless cut, with a little cap on the back of his head. He looked in unutterable admiration at the slight youth before him, who was unexpectedly taking a man's part in the action of that night.

'That's the three we're after!' cried the superintendent. 'The ties are big Bill's idea, a reminiscence of his B & L wreck in '96. We haven't any time to lose. The boy has done us a good turn.'

The fair-haired lad approached Christie.

'Do you suppose you'll have to call any more to-night?' he asked.

'Oh, yes,' answered Christie, shyly. He was still breathing hard.

'I guess I'll go with you, if you don't mind,' said the other. 'Do you?'

'No, indeed; I'd be glad to have you.'

'May I go, papa?'

'Yes, if Christie promises to take good care of you, and if you promise to be guided by him.'

'All right, sir,' they said in a breath.

Then the boys took Christie's lantern between them, and, in that wholesome fashion of comradeship so peculiar to boys, they were soon swinging along together through the dark streets of the town like old friends.

'Aren't you ever afraid?' asked the superintendent's son.

'N—no,' replied Christie, bravely.

The other lad looked over his shoulder into the shadows.

'Two of those escaped men are murderers,' he said. 'I think I wouldn't like to be a caller—always.' He laughed.

'I guess many of the tramps we see here are escaped somethings,' remarked Christie; 'but I don't believe they'd hurt anyone, poor fellows.'

Christie led the other boy to his home and introduced him to his mother. That was very early—before there was a streak of light in the sky. Afterward they went again to the office. Thanks to Christie, the criminals had been caught and were being taken back to the penitentiary on the superintendent's special.

At seven o'clock, when the streets were sprinkled with men going to and from work in the big freight-yards, the superintendent's son went to breakfast with Christie at the latter's home. Christie's mother had set an extra plate for the guest.

It was a plain, clean, wholesome, appetising meal—the first one of its kind that the son of wealth had ever eaten. He ate with a relish, for his all-night walks had made him hungry. The early sun shone in through the spotless windows, lighting up the grey tones of the kitchen and the simple furnishings of the table. The boys laughed and talked without restraint, recalling the experiences of the night.

After breakfast Christie's mother brought out a pillow and a coverlet and laid them on the couch in the neat little parlor.

'I know you're tired,' she said. 'and Christie sleeps all day. Won't you lie down until your father returns or sends word to you.'

'Oh, I am sleepy, ma'am,' answered the boy, 'and I thank you for the chance to rest.' And a little while afterward he was fast asleep upon the couch, his fair head thrown back, his body under the quilt in an attitude of boyish abandonment—much as tired Christie was sleeping in an inner room.

It was noon when a man of commanding bearing ascended the steps of Christie's home. Christie's mother rose from her chair to greet him, gathering her sewing

in her apron. She trembled in spite of herself. When one is poor and lowly it is a matter of some stir when one meets a being of wealth and power.

'Good morning, ma'am!' he said. 'They told me at the office that my boy was here, and I thought I'd come for him myself.'

He smiled pleasantly, and then his face was like the boy's.

'I'll call him, sir,' the woman replied, a little regretfully; he was sleeping so peacefully.'

When they were ready to leave, the superintendent's son said:

'I'd better not wake Christie to say good-bye, but please tell him that I have had a fine time, and I'm ever so much obliged.'

He put out his hand to Christie's mother in a cordial way.

'You're a nice boy,' she said frankly, as she shook his hand. 'God bless you!'

'I've been talking to the men in the office,' the superintendent here broke in, 'and I'm glad you didn't sue the company for your husband's death. You might have been told that you had grounds for a suit, but getting mixed up in law isn't good for a woman. Still I think your son is quite too young to be a caller, and I've told Mr. Carter to put some one older in his place. I know you'll agree with me that he'd better go back to school. So good-bye!' And he hurried off with his son.

Christie's mother put her hands to her throbbing temples and leaned against the door-jamb, all blackness before her and around her. Was her boy to be discharged like this? What had he done to be thrown out without warning, when the little he earned was so sorely needed? God knew that she would willingly work her fingers to the bone if she could keep him from the dangers of the railroad and give him an education. But could this man be so ungrateful to the lad who had saved his life? She tottered and sat down limply.

Presently the superintendent's son came running back from the corner where his father stood.

'Oh, I say,' he cried, as Christie's mother opened the door for him, 'father says he's been so upset by last night's doings that he can't think of everything in order yet. He forgot to tell you all he wanted to say, and has let me have the pleasure to speak for him. He'll see that you get a good sum from the railroad, because your husband's death was not clearly his own fault and you never sued the company. And as for Christie, because of what he did last night, father will see that he gets an education and a good start, if he's the kind of boy that father thinks he is. He's to call on father at the railroad station in the city to-morrow at noon. Say to him how glad I am for his sake, since he told me he just longed and longed to go to school and learn.'

Christie's mother could not utter a word. The good news was too much for her. Could it all be true? She clasped her hand and raised her dim eyes up toward God, while tears of joy and gratitude ran down her cheeks.

'Oh, don't—please don't!' the boy exclaimed. 'My mother would be crying with a broken heart this morning if it hadn't been for Christie; and now you must share her joy that my father's life was saved.'

But Christie's mother wept without restraint. After all, God always answers our prayers. She had asked for many things for her boy, but latterly her entreaties had, outside of spiritual graces, narrowed down to one favor—that he might be spared from the dangers of a caller's work; and now the Almighty had given her all—safety, a little fortune, an education, a helpful friend, and a promised start in life—all of which she had ever dreamed and had hardly dared to ask.

Truly the good son of a good mother is certain to prosper in God's own time and way.—'Ave Maria'

It is peculiarly appropriate that the late Sir Charles Gavan Duffy should have had the spiritual comfort of an Irish priest in his last illness. For a few years past Father John Fitzpatrick, a distinguished member of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, has been staying at Nice, and enjoyed the friendship of the aged statesman. It is not generally known that Father Fitzpatrick, who was born of Irish parents, near Birkenhead, in 1859, is a clever poet, as well as a prose writer. Under the pen-name of 'A Pressman,' he published some very fascinating works 10 years ago, and his verses have been highly praised—being strongly redolent of the Wordsworth school. He has written much on Faber, the great Oratorian, who was unquestionably a charming verse writer, and was at one time regarded as the equal of Wordsworth. Sir Charles Gavan Duffy's end was truly Christian, and he died fully fortified by the rites of the Catholic Church, of which he had always been a devout member, ever since the time when he was wont to serve Mass for the Rev. Dr. McMullen, parish priest of Monaghan, in 1825.

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