

teacher herself? Why don't you get her to tell you folks how to do something?"

Mrs. Billy sat up with a jerk. Her eyes widened and her cheeks reddened. "Why, Billy, what a good idea—and you had it!"

"Thanks awfully!" said Billy, with a bow.

"That would put her on her mettle," said Mrs. Billy. "She'd have to learn something. Why, Billy, the more I think about it the better I like the idea! It has never occurred to any of us that she could teach us anything!"

The club, interviewed individually, hailed the idea with some faith but more derision, and Mrs. Billy was deputed to suggest to Mrs. Sims in a delicate way that it was her turn to benefit the other club members.

Tuesday and the time set for the usual covered-dish luncheon rolled round again before Mrs. Billy could find Mrs. Sims at home. The other club members had all assembled at Mrs. Jordan's, and were watching as their delegate, cool and collected, in her white pique dress, mounted the steps of the corner house.

Some moments later she emerged, looking altogether different. Her face was warm and her manner curiously agitated. Her hat rode unheeded on the top of one pink ear.

"Quick!" she panted as soon as the hall door of the Jordan house closed behind her. "I must tell you before she comes, so you won't be as dazed as I am. She thinks we have known all along what her business is—"

"Business!" interrupted a dozen voices.

Mrs. Billy fought for breath. "Yes, business! She does the marketing for twenty families in this city, and plans all the meals for some of 'em. Wealthy families, you know, some of the legations, and—and like that; and she'll teach us—here she comes—we'll all need notebooks and more brains than we've ever used in this club!"

Mrs. Billy's voice died away as Mrs. Sims entered. She bore a covered dish of muffins made by her oldest daughter, and apologised for being late. "I was bargaining with a poultry raiser from the northern part of the State, and couldn't get away earlier," she explained.

A few hours later Mrs. Billy sat limply down on the arm of Billy's chair. Her self-appreciation was at low ebb. She held a sheet of paper close to Billy's eyes—too close for him to see its contents of addresses and figures, while she discoursed on the events of the afternoon.

"Think of it, Billy. She says we've been so lovely to her that she wants to teach us how to buy, and what to buy, and what not to buy, and all those things that she has made a study of for years. O dear, I never felt so ignorant in my life! I don't know anything about the very foundations of my business as a house-keeper, the raw material side, and Mrs. Sims will teach me—us, all of us. She says we can come to her at any time, and that we can go with her whenever she buys—and it all came out in such a lovely way that she looks at us as nice, well-meaning children, and she's been longing to teach us for some time. O Billy, she pays her daughters a regular salary, and it makes them want to help in the house before they're really old enough."

Billy's twinkling eyes looked over Mrs. Billy's sunny head and descried a man going down the street. Billy's voice was mischievous.

"There goes p-o-o-r Mr. Sims. By the way, dear, he told me to-day he had bought the corner house because his wife is so much in love with this neighborhood—says she never lived in a place before where there was so little gossip and so much kindness floating around." *Youth's Companion.*

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'STAND FAST IN THE FAITH'

(A Weekly Instruction specially written for the N.Z. TABLET by GHIMEL.)

INDULGENCES.

Cardinal Newman once had occasion to investigate a story to the effect that on the door of the Church of St. Gudule, Brussels, one could read a list of sins with the price for having them forgiven. There was indeed a list, and a list of prices, but the prices were for the use of chairs in the church. As great an exhibition of ignorance has lately been given (if report be true) by a high-placed lecturer. The subject-matter was the hoary old one of Indulgences, and the lecturer informed his audience that an indulgence was a permission to commit sin. Let us explain for the forty-second millionth time what our penny catechism teaches in this matter.

An indulgence is not the remission of sin at all. We hold that sin is taken away by the infusion of sanctifying grace in or at least in connection with the sacrament of Penance. An indulgence, however, is given outside this sacrament. I might easily gain heaps of indulgences though I had not been to confession for fifty years.

It is not a remission of venial sin. Venial sin may be taken away by the sacrament of Penance, and with that an indulgence has nothing to do. Or, it may be taken away outside that sacrament, but then he who has sinned must have some measure of hatred for his fault: when he does his part, God alone intervenes and directly takes away the guilt. An indulgence comes directly from the Church.

Most emphatically an indulgence is not a permission to commit sin. Outside lunatic asylums, no Catholic could possibly hold such an idea: the expression of it sounds in Catholic ears like rank blasphemy, and it is time we had a rest from the odious calumny. Catholics above all men in the world have too exalted an idea of God to imagine that He could possibly allow us to commit sin.

Nor is an indulgence even an easy way of obtaining forgiveness of past sins. It would be heretical for any Catholic to say so. The sacrament of Penance was set up in the world to forgive sins: an indulgence has nothing whatever to do with that matter.

An indulgence, then, is the remission not of sin (let us repeat it for the last time), but of the whole or part of the temporal punishment due after the sin has itself been forgiven. The Church grants indulgences, but it does so by making use of the overflowing merits of Christ and His saints. And what the Church does here below, God, its Founder, ratifies in heaven.

To explain a little: Take the case of one who commits a grievous sin. That sin at once involves the withdrawal of grace from his soul and exclusion from the love and friendship of God. This exclusion from God's love is the punishment for the sin, and if the person died in that state the punishment would become eternal. There surely ought not to be any difficulty in seeing that sin deserves punishment.

But now let the sin be forgiven owing to the sinner's change of heart. That forgiveness implies that the sinner is restored to God's favor. Is that to be the end of the whole transaction? Hardly. An earthly parent ordinarily punishes a disobedient child even when the disobedience is past and forgiven, for it is justly felt that the child will thereby become more sensible of its offence, and will make some satisfaction for it according to its powers. God Himself—so we read in our Scriptures forgave the very serious sin of our First Parents, and thereby removed the eternal punishment that otherwise would have fallen on them. Yet He still thought it wise to punish them—nay, it was part of His plan to punish us as well, who had in a sense nothing to do with that first sin. The greater punishment was removed at the bidding of God's gracious mercy, but the same sweet and wise mercy thought it well to inflict a less punishment. Our First Parents—and we, too—would thereby learn the much-

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