

everything else has grown insignificant, unworthy of notice—even God.'

'Wealth is very apt to have that effect.' The beautiful cold voice was melting a little.

'That is the only explanation I can offer. I don't know why I am making it. When you came into the pulpit this morning I never dreamed I would be here only a few hours later telling you what a—what an imbecile, what a fool I have been. I thought you contemptibly young and inexperienced to address so intelligent an audience.'

The recent collegian laughed, a ringing, boyish laugh that brought a light to the dulled, shamed eyes of the erstwhile pompous banker.

'It is a fault we all have once—youth, and the easiest in the world to overcome: one has only to wait.'

'What you said opened my eyes somehow; what you said and how you said it. I don't think anything else could have done it.'

Father Stanley shook his head. His eyes grew misty.

'It was not my voice that reached your heart, my friend. It was the prayers of a sweet-souled old woman whom hardships and suffering and sorrow have not soured nor embittered. The prayers from hearts like that win marvellous graces from the Divine treasury.'

'Do you mean that that woman to whom I was so brutally unkind has been praying for me? I deserved her curse, rather. She does not know me, does not know who it was that wished to have her sent away. I acted on my objections through others—'

'She has been praying for you, nevertheless, for the man with the cold heart. She guessed you needed prayers. When it comes to that we all need them, you know.'

Fordham was silently thoughtful for quite a long time. Father Stanley waited patiently.

'It is well that she prayed for me. But it was you who delivered the message. I have not gone to Mass for months, not for more than a year—not since a year last Easter, in fact. Do you not find it strange that I should be there when you delivered that sermon?'

'It is stranger still in view of the fact that it was not at all the sermon I intended to preach. I had prepared a sermon on the Gospel of the day. But that incident had persistently recurred to me. I could not get it out of my mind. Something in the attitude of the congregation this morning stirred me up, an atmosphere of self-satisfaction, of smugness, and it all came out.'

'I was the smuggest of the lot,' Fordham said humbly. 'But I think, I hope, that I shall not be like that again. You have opened my eyes to the supreme folly of it. And you can help me further, if you will.' He looked at the young priest appealingly.

'Yes?' The voice that could so denounce was encouraging.

'You can help me find that woman, you can help me set this straight. You said you had given her a hope of assistance, so I know that you have not lost sight of her. It is a lot for a snob like me to ask of you, to take up your time with—'

Father Stanley's eyes were shining with a boyish eagerness and happiness that was good to see.

'Come, my friend,' he said, 'let us go to her now. She has need of cheer. You could not ask of me a thing I would be more willing to do.'

He held out his hand again, and Tom Fordham laid his hand within it, feeling its warm clasp the greatest honor he had ever received.—*The Magnificent.*

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LIFE-PICTURE

It was late in March. Slush was under foot, the air was damp with a chilling fog and one could scarcely see twenty feet ahead.

But in spite of all discomforts the poor must go to work. Through fog and slush, past newsboys, a thin, struggling line of workers wended its way to the street car. Down in the morning, back at night, day after day, for weeks, for months, for years. If they fell sick there were others to take their places. They were cast aside as broken parts of the great human machine. Other workers stepped in, the broken parts were forgotten, and the human grind goes on and one with never-ending clocklike regularity.

At a house in East street dwelt one of these poor working people. The building was a narrow, three-storey wooden house of dull red color. On the ground floor was a grocery store, on the second lived the proprietor of this store and on the third a working girl and her widowed mother.

In one of the small, dingy rooms on the third floor sat a pale, emaciated girl of nineteen eating her breakfast. A cup of tea, a crust of bread, and a bit of dry cheese composed her meagre meal. Her mother bustled about the room, preparing a lunch for her daughter. She was as thin as the child, but more wiry and with all her hurried work she never ceased to look at the sickly girl and to urge her to eat her breakfast.

'Don't hurry so. You've lots of time. Won't you have some more tea? No?'

Her mother looked at her anxiously and sorrowfully.

'I must get something for that cold,' she said, 'I must do it to-day. I'll get—' she stopped abruptly and her eyes became moist, for she recollected that she had only eighty-seven cents in the house and the girl would need ten cents for carfare.

'Oh, never mind, it will soon be warm weather and then the cough will leave and I'll be better.'

Taking her lunch she went down the creaking stairs into the cold, foggy air to take her place again as one of the wheels in the great grinding machine.

At the factory door she entered—one of 320—and was registered by the recorder in the hall. At 7.30 work began and continued without cessation till noon; then time was given for dinner; after this work was resumed till 5.30.

Her particular work was cutting in the men's clothing department. The damp weather of March had brought on her coughing spells, and to the annoyance caused by the dampness was added that occasioned by the fine, penetrating dust that is often present in a large factory. The overseer had inhumanly reprimanded her for delaying those around her. This day she was coughing almost constantly.

'Miss Margrave,' said the overseer to her, 'if you don't work as you should I'll discharge you. I'll not stand it any longer. Remember.'

The girl almost sobbed aloud, but exerting herself with a heroic effort, she managed to brace up sufficiently to avoid being discharged.

Coming home one evening she met Father — at the big church at Southport and Lincoln avenues. He was speaking to some workmen. She had seen the priest occasionally, as she had to pass the parish house and church on her way to work, and he always had a kind word for her. She looked up to him as she passed, and the priest, turning from the men, greeted her with a friendly 'Good evening' that went straight to the poor girl's heart.

It was the first word of true friendship she had heard since leaving home that morning. It greatly gladdened her poor soul and made her feel that, after all, life could have some soothing balm in it if people would only be kind. She answered 'Good evening,' and walked on with a lighter step.

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