

But owing to the unscientific character of the Jewish calendar it was impossible to find that out after the lapse of forty or fifty years. So another starting point was looked for. As the 15th Nisan (the day of Christ's Death) must fall on or about the spring full moon, that is, the full moon nearest to the vernal equinox, it was determined in Rome at least from the time of Pope Sixtus I. (117-126) that Easter should be celebrated on the Sunday after the full moon following the vernal equinox.

It would be a decided advantage in many ways if Easter Sunday were fixed, say, to some Sunday in March or April. With this end in view a number of Catholic scholars have put forward various schemes during the past twenty years or so, and are still engaged in the work, but it is not an easy matter, and it is not certain that their reforms would be acceptable to all the Governments of Europe.

## The Storyteller

JIM

Father Thorne arose from his desk and walked to the study window. A frown of annoyance wrinkled his brow, as he stood gazing into the yard. Patches of dirty snow disfigured the lawn, and black pools of water lay close to the walk of the adjoining church. The last golden rays of the westering sun tinted the steeple and flung iridescent shafts of light into the murky pools.

The watcher paid little heed to his surroundings. His troubled brain was catching at words for an important letter. Returning to his desk, he took up a pen and wrote:

'Grayson, N.Y., April—

'The Right Rev. Francis Donan, D.D.,

'Your Lordship:'

He poised the pen for a moment, then dashed it aside with a mutter of impatience. Donning his hat and coat, he quit the house.

The April air was sharp. A stiff wind blew across the hill and rattled the naked branches of the trees. An early robin shivered on a waving bough and dared to sing a few notes to the dying day. The scene jarred upon Father Thorne like the clangor of discordant sounds. Turning to his left, he walked slowly along the main street of the village and entered a building serving as general store and post office.

The stage had just arrived from the railway station in the valley. The mail was carried behind the desk and the priest decided to wait until it was sorted. He stood near the front window, absently surveying the village green, humorously called Central Park by some of the village wags. His mind thus occupied, he failed to notice the approach of a buggy hitched to a pair of spanking bays, until it drew up in front of the platform, directly in his line of vision. A young man leaped out of the carriage, and entered the building. Seeing Father Thorne, he raised his hat with a cheerful greeting and passed smilingly toward the rear of the store.

The newcomer's appearance aroused the priest's interest. At a glance he took in a tall, well-proportioned, manly fellow, dressed tastily. He was light-complexioned, with wavy brown hair, and blue eyes, that danced with merriment and shone with an untold happiness. The refined young man seemed out of place amid the boxes and barrels of the gloomy old store, and still he was perfectly at home, the moment he entered, bantering and laughing gaily with the loiterers, but never losing his natural dignity. Who and what is he? Father Thorne mused, watching him intently.

The priest was aroused from his reverie by a soft voice calling: 'Your mail, Father.'

Taking a bundle of letters from the postmistress, he quit the store and walked moodily homewards. The happy, smiling countenance of the young man haunted and mocked him. Could one so educated and refined, so energetic and vigorous, be forever content in this wind-swept, lonely village on the hills? Father Thorne

shuddered and turned up the collar of his coat. Instead of entering the rectory, he proceeded slowly up the road, and entered the cemetery that crowned the top of the hill.

The scene around him was weird. The sun hung like a red disk over the western peaks, shooting a few feeble beams through the silver mist. To the priest's right was Grayson, a straggling village that clung tenaciously to the hillside. Red and white farmhouses decked the slopes and lay scattered throughout the surrounding valley. From the centre of the village a white road wound in and out among the woods and gullies, like a great snake, until it ended abruptly as a railway station in the hollow.

On his left, midway between the summit and base of the hill, was a quarry. All day long the breaker ground and dumped heaps of stone into immense buckets. These were carried on a cable to cars waiting in the valley, and then shipped to a nearby city, to be used in making soda, borax, and other household necessities.

The loneliness of the village, the barrenness of the hills and valleys, that had just cast off their winter shroud, seemed to the watcher the epitome of desolation. He loved the city and its call was in his ears. The flare of the electric lamp, the jangle of cars, the rush of the auto, and the thousand noises that pulse and throb in a city's bosom, all appealed to him. And then his large congregation of energetic parishioners—he had left all to come to this. He had been here but a week, and oh, how he longed to get away! With a sigh, he turned back to his house.

Supper was over, and Jenny, the old housekeeper, entered to clear the table.

'Jenny,' the priest said, standing in the doorway, 'I met a young man in the post office to-day. I wonder if you know him?'

Father Thorne gave an accurate description of the person in question.

'I think they called him Jim,' he concluded.

Jenny's face lit up with a knowing smile.

'It was Mr. Rockwell. A very fine boy. He and his sister live at Oakdale, the country home of the Rockwells for generations.'

'I wish to meet him and know him better.'

'Call on him, Father. He and his sister would be glad to see you. They are very nice.'

The priest turned into his study and sat at his desk. The letter he had started lay before him, and he resolved in his mind what he was to write his superior.

'Your Lordship:

'After a week's residence at Grayson, I find it absolutely impossible to remain longer. Remember, you promised—'

He could get no farther, for a feeling of shame at his cowardice came over him. A low wind moaned through the pines outside his window, and the bright, happy face of the mysterious Jim Rockwell flashed before him. He could write no more that night. Dropping his pen, he took up a book to while away the crawling hours.

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One morning, a week later, Father Thorne drove along the road that led northward. Ten minutes passed before he turned into a lane, lined on each side by tall oak trees. He drew up in front of the house and leaped from the carriage. With a cheery welcome a little old man came around from the barn and took charge of the priest's horse. Father Thorne mounted the broad steps that led to the verandah, but before he could ring the bell, a door swung open.

'Good morning, Father,' a clear voice called.

'Mr. Rockwell, I presume?'

The two clasped hands.

'You don't mind this unsolicited call?' the priest continued as he followed his host into the hall.

'You are a thousand times welcome. I am delighted you came. I heard that a new priest would take charge. I would have called, but I have been away since I saw you in the post office.'

Father Thorne cast a quizzical glance at him. Rockwell noticed it and smiled.