

until something concrete is before the country.

"There was near being a serious split in the S.F. camp a few weeks ago. It was learned that the Government intended to suppress by force any meeting of the Sinn Féin M.P.'s. The leaders agreed to abandon any public meeting for the present. To this the Volunteers strongly objected, stating their men were prepared to make any sacrifice in defence of the right of the Dail to meet in public. However the matter was got over through the influence of Mr. de Valera with the extreme men.

"I asked would the Volunteers give the same trouble if Mr. de Valera accepted Dominion Home Rule. He assured me they most certainly would not, but on the contrary would be perfectly reasonable. But they must first be sure the Government mean business and that there would be no more foolery either at home or in America. Failing that confidence they are ready for anything and so is the country. Dillon and his crowd are dead and gone.

"If the country had only shown the same sense a few years ago, all would have been so different. However, it is a consolation to know they have at long last learned a sound lesson in the school of experience. If they are honestly dealt with, all will be well, but God help the Government that will try any further tricks on them."

*Private and Confidential.*

Criccieth,

14th July, 1919.

Dear Mr. O'Brien,

I thank you for sending me the interesting extract on the attitude of Sinn Féin towards Dominion Home Rule. There is nothing I would like better than to carry through any measure which would terminate the long, dreary, and baffling feud between Britain and Ireland. Frankly, I am not in a very hopeful mood. I have made two or three attempts, and when they seemed to be on the point of success—accomplishment eluded one. That seems to me to have been the experience of almost every man who has striven to settle the Irish question. I think you were fundamentally right when you sought an agreement amongst all sections, creeds, and classes of Irishmen. I am afraid settlement is impossible until that has been achieved. All parties in Britain, Liberal, Unionist, Labor, are equally pledged through their leaders not to coerce Ulster into the acceptance of any measure of autonomy which would have to be forced on the population of that Province. On the other hand, Irish Nationalists are equally pledged not to accept any settlement which would not put Ulster into the same position as Munster or Connaught. How are you to reconcile those inconsistent positions? Home Rule is within the reach of Nationalist Ireland the moment it extends its hand, but if Nationalist Ireland says she will not have Home Rule unless she can have Ulster, with or without her will, then I am afraid a settlement is remote.

(To be continued.)

Both given the knock-out by "NO-RUB-BING" Laundry Help—hard work and disease bacteria concealed in soiled clothing.

# A Complete Story

## THREE BLESSINGS

(By ALICE DEASE in the *Magnificent*.)

"May God's blessing attend you, and when your time comes, may you not pass out of this world without the assistance of your clergy."

It was the first time Hugh L'Estrange had come in contact with anything Catholic. He laughed to himself—the idea of either death or clergy seemed incongruous in connection with his vigorous life. But he did not forget the blessing that the old Irish woman at the corner of a Liverpool street had bestowed upon him. A gust of wind had sent her battered bonnet flying, and before her old limbs were set in motion he had stepped out into the road and recovered the truant headgear. Returning it, with something in addition to replace the mud-stained trimming, he noted anew her patient, poverty-worn face. In return she again called the blessings of heaven upon him.

On Sunday when he sat decorously in his new pew while the clergyman of his parish read the prayers in a monotonous voice, the Irish woman's words recurred to his mind. He repressed a smile at the thought of how much he would prefer Mr. Drake's absence to his assistance, even when death should come to him.

For an instant, too, the thought flashed across his mind that a religion of which the ministrations of the clergy were a vital part might hold something worth having for the poor and the dying.

At this juncture Mr. Drake's high-pitched call to prayer brought him back to the duty of the moment, and he rose to his feet with his neighbors.

Though he did not know it, the blessing of God was attending Hugh L'Estrange. For after this, often this Liverpool man of business came in contact with things Catholic. Possibly it was only some reference in a society paper, or the name of a church which he had never noticed before, or the knowledge that one or other of his many workmen was Irish, and therefore Catholic. Then he gave a thought to the old woman, whom, curiously enough, he had never forgotten.

Perhaps the second direct contact that Hugh L'Estrange became aware of was one day at a meeting of the Board of Charities. The case of a Catholic boy was brought forward on account of some oversight in his registration on the workhouse books. He was to be brought up nominally in the Church of England; practically according to the views of those with whom he was to be boarded out.

The child, a sturdy young Lancastrian of eight or nine years, was standing near Mr. L'Estrange whilst a heated discussion went on between the other guardians. Touching the boy on the shoulder, Mr. L'Estrange spoke to him in an undertone.

"What do you think you are yourself,

eh?" he asked, with a movement of the head to show that he referred to the theme of his guardians' conversation.

The boy looked at him squarely. Without hesitation he answered: "I be a Catholic."

Then he added: "If you weren't a Catholic, what would you be?"

A Baptist, a Methodist, and a Congregational home were being discussed in turn.

"If I weren't un," replied the boy sturdily, "I'd be one."

"By jove! so you shall!" exclaimed L'Estrange, throwing himself into the discussion in which heretofore he had taken no part. So insistently did he press his point, declaring his intention of calling in legal opinion if necessary to support his claim, that before the meeting closed the boy was inscribed a Catholic on the books and handed over to the manager of a Catholic boys' home. Afterwards Mr. L'Estrange noticed the boy pointing him out to the priest, who was losing no time in freeing him from the workhouse.

"Young George here tells me what you have done for him, sir," said the priest as Mr. L'Estrange passed him. "God will reward you for this."

That was the second Catholic blessing he received.

The third blessing came through no act of his own. He was only a spectator of a scene, and that, it seemed, by chance. Afterwards he understood that God's blessing was attending him.

The instinct of Isaak Walton was strong within him, and the yearly holiday he allowed himself from business was always spent where fishing might be had. It was only natural, therefore, that the west of Ireland should attract him. There, late in the autumn season, he found himself in a primitive riverside inn. During his stay the equinoctial gales changed the Atlantic into a gray, cruel sea, till, rising in mountains of water and foam, it seemed like a huge wall of roaring liquid rushing against the sky.

A pier to make safe harborage for the boats coming in from the islands had been built in the congested districts, but on this night the little gray wall was one mass of seething whiteness, which seemed to offer neither shelter nor safety to any craft. Yet here it was Hugh L'Estrange, watching the storm with Barble Joyce, his boatman on the lakes, his self-constituted guide along the river, saw, hardly believing his own sight, a small craft cresting the huge billows for an instant, then falling away out of sight. It reappeared at intervals, however. Each time it took more certain shape in the fitful light of the fleeting moon. "A boat! God help them this night!" cried Barble, steadying himself against the pier and straining his eyes to see when the black, oblong shadow rose again on the waves.

**J. Lewis**

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