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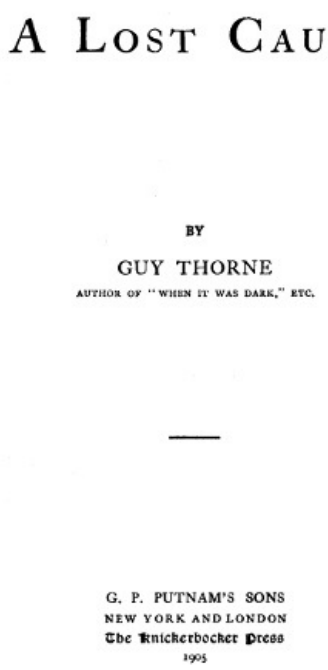
A LOST CAUSE

BY

GUY THORNE

AUTHOR OF "WHEN IT WAS DARK," ETC.

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
NEW YORK AND LONDON
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PREFACE

A few words are necessary in preface to this story. After *When It Was Dark* made its appearance, the writer received a great number of letters from his readers, and up to the present moment he still continues to receive them.

Out of nearly two hundred communications, a large proportion are concerned not so much with the main issue of the tale, as with controversial matters in the Church of England arising from it.

The definitely Catholic[1] tone of the first book aroused, as might be expected, vigorous protest, and no less vigorous commendation. The five or six Bishops—and many other dignitaries—who preached or lectured about the story avoided the controversial sides of it. But the writer has received innumerable letters from the clergy and others to the following effect.

It was pointed out to him that while the extreme "Protestant" party was constantly employing fiction as a method of propaganda, churchmen were almost unrepresented in this way. The Catholic Faith has been bitterly assailed over and over again in books which are well enough written, and have sufficient general interest to appeal to the man of the world, who is often indifferent to the points debated.

After considerable discussion, the writing of *A Lost Cause* was resolved upon. The author desires to thank those priests who have assisted him with their counsel and experience, and begs leave to explain here something of his aims in publishing the tale.

At no period in modern Church history has the Church been assailed with such malignance, slander, and untruth as at the present. "Protestantism" within the Church is a lost cause, it is dying, and for just this reason the clamour is loudest, the misrepresentation more furious and envenomed. Shrewd opportunists are taking their last chance of emerging from obscurity by an appeal to the ignorance of the general public on Church matters. Looking round us, we see dozens of uneducated and noisy nobodies who have elected themselves into a sort of irregular prelacy and dubbed themselves "Defenders of the Faith," with about as much right as Napoleon crowned himself emperor.

Church people do not take them very seriously. Their voices are like the cries of hedge-birds by the road, on which the stately procession of the Church is passing. But the man in the street is more attentive and he enjoys the colour and movement of iconoclasm. He believes also that the brawlers have right on their side.

But there is an inherent fairness in the man in the street, and, if this story reaches him, he will have his opportunity to hear the Catholic side of the argument.

The author begs to state that no single character in this tale is a "portrait" of any living person, or of any real person whatever. The imaginary folk are designed to be merely typical, their methods are analogous to much that is going on to-day under the pretences of patriotism and love for religious liberty, but that is all.

There will probably be the usual nonsense written, and the braves of "Protestantism" will give the usual war-whoops. Whether this is to be so or not, the author is profoundly indifferent.

He attacks those of the extreme "Protestants" whom he believes to be insincere and who rebel against the Truth for their own ends. He does not say or think that all "Protestants"—even the extremists—are insincere. He has endeavoured to point out that there is as much difference between the street-corner "Protestants" and the pious Evangelical Party within the Church as there is between Trinitarians and Unitarians.

The incident in the tale where the Archbishop of Canterbury compels a "Protestant" publicist to give up the Blessed Sacrament, which he has stolen from a church for purposes of propaganda, is founded on fact. It has not before been made public, except in a short letter to the *Church Times* a few months ago, which was written with the design of preparing Church readers for the detailed publication of such a painful incident. The facts, however, have been supplied to the writer to make such use of in the story as he thinks fit. The authors of this disgraceful profanation have, naturally, been silent on the matter. It is not an isolated instance. But it is not to be thought that the imaginary characters concerned in the affair in the story, are intended to represent, or do in any way, the real heroes of this great blow struck for "Protestant" truth.

Finally, the noisiest "Protestants" are hitting the Church as hard as they can. The author has endeavoured to hit back as hard as *he* can—of course, in that spirit of Christian love in which the "Protestants" themselves tell us these controversies are always conducted.

The brawlers have enjoyed an astonishing immunity hitherto, and it is only fair that battle should be joined now. And, however inadequate his forces and generalship, that is the writer's aim. He is, of course, a *franc-tireur*, but he fires his musket on the right side, and with a perfect assurance of the justice of his Cause.

G. T.

[1] The term "Catholic" is here, and throughout the book, used in the sense in which it is employed by a certain division of the Church of England and of the Episcopal Church of America.—The PUBLISHERS.

CONTENTS

A LOST CAUSE

CHAPTER I

THE INTERRUPTED EUCHARIST

The Church of St. Elwyn was a building of brick that went up to a great height.

In the crowded district between Hornsey and Wood Green, it was one of the largest buildings, and, though not externally beautiful, acquired dignity and impressiveness from its setting of small villa houses, which made an interminable brick wilderness all round it.

It was nearing the time of the High Celebration on a Sunday morning in summer. Matins had been said in a side chapel, to a scanty congregation, at half-past nine, and now the central act of the day was to take place.

The interior of St. Elwyn's was severe but beautiful, save for one or two minor blemishes here and there.

The eye was caught and carried away down the aisles till it found its focus on the high altar which was set like a throne, above many marble steps, in the curve of the distant apse. The sanctuary was lighted from the sides and so the eye was not disturbed and distracted by hideous windows of stained glass with their clamorous coal-tar colours, but could rest quietly upon the altar with its green and gold, its flowers and central cross.

The organ was hidden away in a side gallery and the pulpit was a stone bracket high in the sweep of the chancel arch, to which it clung like the nest of a bird on a cliff side.

All this was as it should be. In so many English churches the object of the builders appears to have been to destroy all the dignity and beauty possible in a service. The organ and the pulpit are elevated to the importance of shrines, and dominate everything like Gog and Magog in the Guildhall. Everything is done to minimise the place and office of the altar, to exalt the less important functions of worship, and to prevent comfortable consciences from being uneasy in the realisation of the presence of God.

Only one tawdry note could be detected in this beautiful church. The pictures which hung on the walls round the aisles, and represented the stations of the cross, were ill-drawn, and stiff in colour and design. These pictures, which were said by the ignorant and unimaginative to be idolatrous, or at least "Roman"—a little understood but very efficacious term of reproach in the parish—were sufficiently like the hideous stained-glass figures in the Evangelical Church of St. Luke hard by to have satisfied the most pious lover of ugliness. But those folk, who so vehemently preferred the medallion portraits of their respectable ancestors on the walls of a church to any other form of symbol or decoration, did not see this. They spoke bitterly of the pictures as being "high," suggesting to outsiders unfamiliar with the parrot cry of the partisan that they had been kept too long in a warm place.

Since Father Blantyre had been appointed vicar of St. Elwyn's, the congregation had increased until few of the rush-bottomed chairs were empty, and on days of great festivals, people would be found kneeling in the aisles. The opposition party in the parish frequently commented on this custom, which was thought to savour of heathenism or worse. One or two people who had spent holidays in continental towns, and had made excursions into foreign cathedrals in much the same

spirit as they went into the chamber of horrors in the wax-work exhibition, had brought back news that this habit was in vogue among "the Catholics." It was felt that real salvation could only be found in a pew, with one's name legibly written on an ivory tablet at the end and the vestry-clerk calling for the rent once a quarter in the decent old-fashioned way. Any one who knelt on the uncushioned stone showed an anxiety to worship and a superstitious abasement quite unworthy of a bluff, honest, British Christian; and his doings must be displeasing to a Deity who, the objectors were persuaded, was—though they did not say so in actual words—a great *English* God.

The single bell that summoned the people to Mass—that word which church-people are becoming less afraid to use in this century—had ceased. The server was lighting the Eucharistic candles with a long taper.

As the people came in, it was noticeable that they proceeded to their places without side-looks at each other, or muttered social greetings. They went to their seats, young and old, men and women, and began to kneel and pray.

No one, apparently, had come there to be seen by his fellows.

Since the Catholic Revival in the English Church, no fact has been more obvious and easily determined than this. It is one which the bitterest opponent of churchmanship has never been able to deny and has never attempted to deny. The most prejudiced observer paying an alternate visit to a church where the Faith is taught and to another which is confessedly "Protestant" cannot fail to observe the difference. At the celebration of the Eucharist in a church of the former type, there is an absolute stillness and reverence. The congregation kneels, it worships.

In the latter, there is an unrest. People do not show marked consciousness of being in the presence of mysteries. Whatever they may think, they do not give the observer the impression that they think God is there. They sit rather than kneel, they notice the clothes of other people, there is a certain sense that they are doing the right thing in "patronising" the church, and the Sunday dinner looms large over all.

The man lit the candles. A moment afterwards Father Blantyre entered with the servers and the service began.

The singing was simple but harmonious. There was nothing especially noticeable in the hymn or the chanting of the Kyries after the commandments.

The priest went into the pulpit, kissed the white stole, and placed it, as a yoke, upon his shoulders. Over his head was a crucifix. He was a small man, dark of hair, and swarthy of complexion. The nose was prominent and aquiline, the eyes bright, with a net-work of fine wrinkles round them, the mouth large and mobile. There was almost a suggestion of the comedian in his face, that is, in its extreme mobility and good-humour. One could imagine him as a merry man in his private life. But mingled with this, one saw at once the lines of an unalterable purpose, and of conviction. Any strong belief stamps itself upon a man's face in an unmistakable way. When that belief is purely holy and good, then we say that the man has the face of a saint.

For a moment or two, Mr. Blantyre looked round the church. The eyes, so puckered at the corners, very much resembled the eyes of a sailor, who is ever gazing out towards a vast horizon and through furious winds. Men who are much occupied with the Unseen and Invisible sometimes have this look, which is the look of a man who is striving to see God.

The subject-matter of the sermon itself was not very remarkable. It was a sermon dealing with the aids to worship that symbol gives, showing how a proper use of material objects may focus the brain upon the reality behind them. During the last week or two, the local paper had been printing some violent attacks upon the services at St. Elwyn's, for there was a by-election in progress and one of the candidates was seizing the opportunity afforded by a "No Popery" cry.

The local writer, the vicar pointed out, was obviously alarmed lest people should worship too much. He spoke of the attacks with sincere good humour and more than once his words provoked a smile. The journalist, with the sublime ignorance of lesser local scribes, had spoken of Queen Elizabeth and expressed a fervent desire that the times of "good Queen Bess" would come again and that the Royal Spinster could descend on the purlieus of Hornsey and sternly order all Romish toys to be removed. Father Blantyre quoted Elizabeth's letter to Sandys:

> The queen's majesty considered it not contrary to the Word of God—nay, rather for the advantage of the church—that the image of Christ crucified,—together with Mary and John, should be placed as heretofore in some conspicuous part of the church, where they may the more readily be seen by all the people.

The last few words of the sermon were preparatory for the mystery that was about to begin, an earnest exhortation to all there to make themselves ready to receive the Lord, who was presently coming among them.

There was nothing in the short discourse that was remarkable, but its delivery was extraordinary. The words were uttered with a great tenderness and solemnity, but quite without any formal note. There was almost a gaiety in them now and then, a spiritual gaiety that was very impressive. Father Blantyre leaned over the rail and talked to his people. The voice, which sank into a whisper at times, and at others rang out with a sharpness that echoed up in the lofty roof,

never once lost its suggestion of confidential intimacy with those to whom it spoke. In the entire absence of the usual "preaching" note, the sermon gained immensely in value with this particular audience. Anything academic would have been endured, but it would not have gone home.

While the offertory sentences were being sung, the congregation saw that a small group of people had entered the church, presumably to hear Mass.

One of the churchwardens was able to find seats for the party about half-way down the central aisle. The new-comers were four in number. All of them were men.

It is perhaps strange to speak of one of their number as being the "leader" of the party, but that was the impression he gave to those members of the congregation immediately around him. At the close of the service, moreover, several worshippers agreed with each other that this person had suggested that to them.

He was a shortish, thick-set man of some five and forty years of age. His large, intelligent face was clean-shaved. The eyes were small and very bright, shifting hither and thither in a constant flicker of observation. The mouth was large, and though the lips were thick and loose, there was nevertheless a certain resolution in them. They were frequently curved into a half-smile which had something indescribably sinister and impudent about it. One saw that, in whatever situation he might find himself, this person would not easily be abashed or unready.

He wore a frock-coat of shining broadcloth. The waistcoat was cut low, not as well-dressed people would wear it, showing a large expanse of imitation shirt-front through which a black stud was thrust. A small bow of black ribbon served as necktie. In some nameless way, he suggested a peculiarly unpleasing type of irregular dissenting minister in his appearance, and this was enhanced by the fact that under one arm he carried a large Bible of limp leather, secured by an india-rubber band.

Yet, with all this, the new-comer had a remarkable and even arresting personality. Wherever he went, he would not easily escape notice.

By his side sat a tallish youth with sufficient likeness to him to proclaim a near relationship.

The young fellow's complexion was somewhat muddy, his hair was smooth and mouse-coloured, his mouth resembled his father's, except that it had not the impudent good-humour of the elder man's, and was altogether more furtive and sly.

The two remaining members of the party were men apparently of the prosperous small-tradesman type, pursy, flabby with good living, who had added mutton-chop whiskers to their obvious self-esteem.

To one or two members of the congregation there, the father and son were not unknown. The thick-set, clean-shaved man was Mr. Samuel Hamlyn, the editor and proprietor of a small local journal,—the *Hornham Observer*,—and the youth was his son, who acted as reporter to the paper and signed himself S. Hamlyn, Junior.

Both were well known in local affairs; Hamlyn was a member of the school-board and held one or two kindred positions. His religious sympathies had hitherto been supposed to lie with the numerous dissenting sects in the parish, all of whom had their bills and other announcements printed at his office.

The momentary interest and stir created by the entrance of the party died away almost immediately and Mass continued. Certainly no one in the church realised that in a few short weeks the fat man with the smile would be notorious all over England, and that they were to be present at the very first step in the career of one of the shrewdest of vulgar opportunists the country had ever known.

The seats reserved for the churchwardens were on the opposite side of the aisle, but almost upon a level with those in which the new-comers were seated—perhaps some two rows of chairs behind.

Accordingly Doctor Hibbert, the vicar's warden, had a clear view of the four men just in front.

Hibbert was an upright, soldierly-looking man, who had, in fact, been an army surgeon, and had now bought a practice in the parish. He was a skilful doctor, and a man of considerable mental strength, who had made himself indispensable in the district and was in the way of becoming a wealthy man. His earnest churchmanship had not militated against his success, even among the most extreme Protestants and Dissenters of Hornham. He was known to be a first-class doctor, and he was too strong a man for any one to take a liberty with, and of such superior power and mould to the mass of lower-class people whom he attended that his opinions were respected.

But going about as he did, among every one in the parish, the Doctor knew far more of its internal state than any one else. Nothing is concealed from a medical man in general practice. Confession is compulsory to him; he sees the secrets of men's lives, knows the tarnished story of the "respectable" person, as sometimes the heroism of the outcast. Hibbert had his finger on the public pulse of Hornham in a measure that Father Blantyre himself could hardly achieve.

It was therefore with some little uneasiness and a good deal of conjecture that the doctor had noticed the advent of Hamlyn and his party.

The disturbances to public worship which are so familiar to-day were quite unknown at that time. Hibbert anticipated nothing of what actually occurred, but his eye was watchful nevertheless.

The Mass went on.

The servers knelt on the altar steps in cotta and cassock, the priest moved above them in his stiff, flowered chasuble, robed in the garments of the Passion of our Lord.

The Comfortable Words were said, and the Sursum Corda began.

A deep throbbing sound came from the organ, and, in one great outburst of solemn avowal, the congregation lifted up their hearts to God.

SURSUM CORDA!
HABEMUS AD DOMINUM
GRATIAS AGAMUS DOMINO DEO NOSTRO!

Ever since the days of the Apostles, the Mass had been said thus, the most solemn part of the service had begun with these profound words of adoration. The doctor forgot all else as he worshipped.

Let it be remembered, in the light of what follows, that the vast majority of the people there believed this, were waiting for *this*—they believed that when the priest said the Prayer of Consecration, our Lord Himself had come suddenly among them.

Throughout the rite there was a growing sense and assurance of One coming. Most of them were quite sure of it.

Human hearts, worn with the troubles of the week, sick to death, it may be, of a hard material lot, now bowed in contrition and repentance, or were filled with a certain Hope. Everything in this world was as nothing, because, upon the altar before which the priest was bending so low, they believed that God had come.

In what way, or how, they did not know and could not have explained. Did they *imagine* it week after week as they knelt in church? Most of them *knew* that it was no imagination or delusion that caught at their hearts, that changed the air of the building in a swift moment, that caught up heart and soul and spirit in one great outpouring of love and faith and adoration.

Was *this* a fable, as folks sometimes told them? This which dissolved and broke the chains of bodily sense, banished the world, and enfolded them with its awful sweetness, its immeasurable joy? What else in life had power to do this, power to hurry away clogging, material things as in a mighty spiritual wind, to show them once more the stupendous sacrifice of the Saviour—what else but the indubitable presence of our Lord?

The priest held up the Host.

At that supreme moment, Doctor Hibbert, whose state of mind may be taken as typical of many others there, bent in humble adoration and contrition.

An absolute silence lay over the church; there was not the slightest sound or movement in it.

A chair was pushed harshly over the tiles, there was a heavy shuffling of feet. Such sounds in that holy moment affected some of the worshippers as a physical blow might have done.

But few people looked up. Many of them did not hear the sound, their ears being tuned to harmonies that were not of this world.

The doctor heard the noise with his ears, but for a merciful moment it did not penetrate to his brain. And then with a horrid clangour the visible things of the world came rushing back to him.

He looked up.

The four men just in front of him had risen in their places. The two tradesmen were red in the face and manifestly uneasy. They breathed hard, a breath of ostentatious defiance.

Young Hamlyn was glancing round the church with swift, malevolent movements of his head. His eyes flickered hither and thither until they finally settled on the motionless figure at the altar, the figure with the upstretched arm.

The elder Hamlyn held a paper in his hand, from which he began to read in a loud, unsteady voice:

"*I, Samuel Hamlyn, a lawful parishioner of St. Elwyn's parish, Hornham, do hereby rise and protest against the illegal and blasphemous fable of the Mass as performed in this church. And as a member of the Protestant Church of England I give notice*——"

Every one had risen to his feet. In a distant corner of the church, a woman began to shriek. A murmur broke into shouts, there was a crash of some heavy body falling.

A horrid tumult seemed broken loose, as if it had been confined till now and had broken its bars with one great effort.

In a second, the four men were surrounded by a pushing crowd of men, beside themselves with

horror and anger. Sticks began to quiver in the air, the crash of the chairs as they were overturned was like the dropping rattle of musketry fire.

The hard voice of the brawler had gone up a full tone. In its excitement, it dominated an abominable chorus of shouting.

In half a minute, the doctor and other members of the congregation had Hamlyn and his son gripped by the arms and were hurrying them towards the west door without any answer to their frantic threats and menaces. The other two men followed stolidly.

Nearly every face was turned away from the altar.

The one or two people who had fallen trembling upon their knees when the riot was at its height saw that the vicar was also kneeling in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

A loud metallic *clang* resounded through the church. The door was barred, the brawlers were shut out.

When the maimed, polluted rite was at last concluded, amid deep sobs from men and women alike, Father Blantyre gave the blessing. They saw with deep sympathy that the tears were rolling down his cheeks also.

But the doctor saw, with a sudden quickening of the pulses, that the first finger and the thumb were joined still. It is the custom of the priest, after he has broken the bread, that the finger and thumb are never parted till Mass is said.

They were not parted now.

The fact comforted and cheered the doctor. He had been on battle-fields and had not known the fear and horror he had known to-day.

CHAPTER II

MR. HAMLYN AND SON AT HOME

Mr. Hamlyn lived in Alexandra Road, Hornham. The actual name of his house was "Balmoral," and it was one of seven or eight other residences gathered together under the generic title of "Beatrice Villas."

The father and son turned into the little path which led up to the imitation satin-wood door some twenty minutes after the gate of St. Elwyn's had been barred to them. Their companions, Mr. Burgoyne and Mr. Moffatt, had left them at the corner of the street, very flustered at what they had done, and with a dull remorse flitting about their thick skulls, that they had joined in "Hamlyn's little game." Nor did the repeated assurances of the journalist, that Mr. Herbert—the Liberal candidate—would "see them through it," help them to recover their peace of mind. Visions of police-court proceedings and an unenviable notoriety in the daily papers were very vivid, and they parted with their chief in mingled sorrow and anger.

Mr. Hamlyn let himself and his son into the little hall of his villa. A smell of roast meat gave evidence that dinner would soon be ready. Both men turned into the parlour on the left of the passage. It was a room which showed signs of fugitive rather than regular use. Two or three long boxes bearing the name of a local draper stood upon the round table in the centre. The contents showed that Miss Hamlyn, the agitator's only daughter, had been occupied in the choice of corsets.

The walls of the parlour were covered with a rich mauve and gold paper, which gave a dignity to the cut-glass lustres of the chandelier. The pictures, heavily framed in gold, were spirited representations of scenes from the Old Testament. On the rack of the rosewood piano—which stood open—was a song called "Roses that Bloomed in my Heart."

The chairs, arranged around the wall with commendable regularity, were upholstered in plum-coloured plush. On one of them was a card-box of a vivid green, containing several clean collars of the particular sort Hamlyn Junior wore; on another stood the wooden box where his father's silk hat was kept when not in use on Sundays and other important days.

Mr. Hamlyn took off his frock coat and removed the reversible cuffs that were attached to the sleeves of his flannel shirt by means of an ingeniously contrived clip. He then put on a loose coat of black alpaca. His son, having gone through something of the same process, followed his father to the sitting-room next the little kitchen.

As the parlour was not often used for ceremonial occasions, the Hamlyns not being very hospitable people, it served as an occasional dressing-room also, and saved running up-stairs.

The sitting-room window looked out into the backyard, immediately by the kitchen door, which led into it. As the Hamlyns came in, they were able to see their servant throwing some hot liquid —the water in which the cabbage had been boiled, as a matter of fact—into the grid in the centre of the yard.

The table was already laid for the meal. As, however, it was rather a long table and the Hamlyns were only three in family,—Hamlyn being a widower,—the white cloth was laid only on half of it. One or two volumes of the Heartsease Novelettes and some artificial flowers, with which a hat was to be trimmed by Miss Hamlyn, were thus left undisturbed.

"Dinner didn't ought to be long," Mr. Hamlyn remarked.

"'Ope not," said his son shortly. "I'll holler to Maud."

Miss Hamlyn came in soon afterwards, followed by the maid with a joint of roast beef. The editor's daughter was a tall girl with sulky lips, bold eyes, and a profusion of dark hair. This last was now screwed round her forehead in curling-pins.

The two men attacked their dinner in silence. Both of them had tucked a handkerchief round their necks, in order to preserve the Sunday waistcoat from droppings of food, a somewhat wise precaution, as both of them ate very rapidly.

"Maud," said Hamlyn at length, "can you do a bit of typing for me this afternoon?"

"No, then, I can't, Pa," she replied resentfully, "and it's like you to ask it. On the Sabbath, too! I'm going out with Gussie Davies for a walk."

"Touch the 'arp lightly, my dear," he replied, "no need to get your feathers up."

"Well, Pa," she answered, "I'm sure I'm ready to spank the beastly machine for you all the week, you know I am. But Sundays is different."

Hamlyn made no reply. Both he and his son were thinking deeply, and as yet no reference had escaped them as to the doings of the morning. Although the girl knew there was something special afoot, she was not much interested in the details, being at all times a person much occupied with her own affairs.

During the pudding, she had a short and slangy conversation with her brother, and directly the meal was over she went up-stairs to "dress."

The servant removed the plates and dishes, and Hamlyn and his son sat down at the table. The father drew a large portfolio of papers towards him. The son lighted a cheap cigarette.

Both of the Hamlyns spoke fairly correctly in public, though with the usual cockney twang. In the seclusion of Balmoral, neither of them thought it necessary to be very particular about the aspirates which they emphasised so carefully elsewhere.

"When will Mr. Herbert pay up?" said Sam.

"To-morrow. I shall see him in the committee room during the afternoon, and it's five and twenty pound earned as easy as I ever earned anything in my life. It'll come in very 'andy too. There's the rent on the linotype machine just due."

"The money's all right," answered the younger man, "and, of course, we're guaranteed against fines and anything of that sort. But do you think the game's worth the candle? How will opinion in the parish go?"

"Like a house on fire. Wait till you see my leader in Wednesday's issue. Mr. Herbert has put me up to the whole thing. We're carrying out a patriotic Henglish duty. Public sympathy will all be with us. Rome is creeping in among us!"

Sam grinned. "Well, you know best, Father, of course. And we're bound to support Mr. Herbert."

"I've been thinking a great deal," Hamlyn answered slowly. "I've always been an ambitious man and I've always meant to come out on top somehow or other. But I've never had a big chance yet. I think,—I'm not sure,—but I *think* I see that chance waiting now."

His shrewd face was lighted up with a curious excitement. The eyes glowed and the impudent merriment on the lips became more pronounced than before.

"What is it then?"

"Listen quietly to me for a few minutes. The idea came gradual to me. I got on the track six months ago. First of all, it was the ten gross of religious books I had down in the shop. They were of all sorts. Which was the one that went best? Why, it was *The Adventures of Susan Lefever, the Captive Nun*. I sold 'em all out in no time. The next best seller was *The Revelations of Pastor Coucherrousset, the Converted Catholic Priest*. Anything against Rome! Mr. Leatherbarrow, of the New Connection Methodists, preached three times on those books. He had all the congregation fair shaking with indignation against the Scarlet Woman. You see it's like this. People want a cock-shy. They don't much care about what it is, as long as they've got it—see the way they're down on the Sheenies in France. Now a religious cock-shy is the best of all. It gives people a feeling that they're in real earnest, and they can kid themselves and other people that it's more disinterested than politics, for instance. They've nothing to get by it—except the fun of doing it—and that flatters 'em because they're always on the grab in every other way. See?"

Sam nodded. He was not one of those youths who despise the words of parental wisdom. He was not himself a fool, and so he did not fall into the mistake of underrating his father's capacity and knowledge of life. The small and vulgar triumphs of Hamlyn's career were all appreciated and

noted by his son, who had a sincere respect for him.

"Very well, then," Hamlyn continued. "It's a sure draw, all over England, to raise the anti-popery cry. The wholesale trade tell me that the business done in Fox's *Book of Martyrs* is a perfect knock-out year by year, and there's a sure sale for the smaller books about the priests larking with the girls in the confessional and so forth. Anything with 'Secret History' or 'Jesuit' on the title-page 'll sell like the *Evening News* on Derby Day. Now, I've been reading all the publications of the regular Protestant societies during the last few weeks. Plenty of cuts at the Ritualists, lots of little sixpennies bound in cloth to prove as there isn't no such thing as apostolic succession, that wafers is illegal, and the Eastern position rather worse than arson. They're all very well in their way, but they're written by D.D.'s and M.A.'s and such like, who don't care to go too far. I have a list in my portfolio here of the regular Protestant writers—nearly all *class*, my boy. Listen here:

"*Transubstantiation and the Invocation of Saints.* Rev. J. Cummer, Canon Residentiary of Ironpool.

"*Popery the Work of 'the Adversary,'—the Roman Clergy under Satanic Influence.* Rev. R. S. Blanken, LL.D., incumbent of Christ Church, Oxton.

"*Ritualism in the English Church: A Word of Warning.* Rev. Joshua Cafe, D.D., prebendary of Bath and Wells.

"There's dozens of others like this. They're all very well in their way, but they don't strike the really *popular* note. They've broken the ground and sowed the seed, but they're not going to reap the harvest."

"Who is, then, Father? And what'll it be worth when it is reaped?"

"Us, my boy. As to the worth of it, go on listening to me and you'll see things gradually getting clearer. I want you to see how I've worked it all out. If we *do* strike oil, all I'm telling you now will be valuable. During my local work for the Protestant cause down here, I've been brought in touch with members of the old-established societies and I've taken the length of their foot. They're too dignified altogether. Real live methods don't appeal to them. Financially they don't do badly, but nothing like what they *might* do if they adopted the right methods. All their subscriptions come from the upper classes, and there's a whole goldmine lying at their doors which is quite untouched! *abso-lute-ly* unworked, Sam! The middle classes and the lower classes haven't *begun* to give to the Protestant cause. Why? Because it hasn't been put prominently before them in the way they'll understand. Bang the field-piece! twang the lyre! thump the tub! rattle the tambourine! That's the way. Look at the Salvation Army! The time is ripe for new methods and for a new man who isn't a canon residentiary or a D.D. I've got all the ritualistic statistics. Day by day the Ritualists are trying it on, getting nearer and nearer to Rome. Everything is ready."

"I see all that, Father. All you say is clear enough. What I *don't* see yet is what you mean to do."

"I'm coming to that. For several years now, I've been prominent in Hornham affairs. I'm known as a platform speaker in all the denominations. What do you suppose I did this for six months ago?" he touched the lapel of his coat, looking down on it as he did so.

"Oh!" he said, "I forgot I'd changed into my old jacket. I was alluding to the temperance non-smoking ribbon. It's in my frock-coat. Well, I mentioned it just to point out that I'm known as a man associated with all good causes."

"But only locally, Pa."

"Exactly. That is all I need to start with. Now, to-day I began: 'Mr. Hamlyn, a prominent resident in Hornham and a staunch supporter of the Henglish Protestant Church, has at last felt it his duty to protest against the illegal practices at St. Elwyn's in as public a manner as possible.' I've struck a new note, see? What I've done to-day has hardly ever been done before. Now, why shouldn't this inaugurate a big public movement all over the country? Why shouldn't offices be taken in the Strand and a new League started, 'Hamlyn's Protestant Crusade' or something of that sort? To begin with, subscriptions are invited for the circulation of real fighting Protestant literature, hot stuff, giving accounts of the illegal and Romish doings all over the country. I know where to get the pamphlets written for a mere song, and startlers, too. Of course, we have all the printing done at the works here in Hornham,—that'll be worth something considerable. Meanwhile, mark what happens. The 'silly season' comes on and the newspapers haven't got much to write about. Our little London concern is established and then we begin touring round to all the Ritualistic churches and protesting against their aims. If I know what I'm talking about, in a fortnight or three weeks one of the biggest booms of the century will begin! Everything we do will be in the papers, rows in the churches, police-court proceedings—everything. Whenever I write a letter of protest to the Bishop of London or the Archbishop of Canterbury it will appear in all the papers. It don't matter what they say as long as they mention the Crusade! Then'll come the moment when we really launch out and become a national Institution. We'll get half a dozen parsons and fifth-rate M.P.'s to form a committee, and some one to be a treasurer: he's easy found. Then I become secretary and you assistant-secretary: we are *salaried* officials, of course, and we start a little magazine as the Society's official organ—to be printed at the works. I've many more ideas for the extension of the plan,—brilliant ideas some of them, too. But I won't go into them now. I've only given you the roughest outline of the scheme as yet. Meanwhile, as a preliminary, I'm going to flimsy out a dozen short reports of to-day's proceedings at St. Elwyn's,

and I want you to run up to Fleet Street with them, about five this evening. All the dailies will print it."

He chuckled. "That's the chief beauty of the scheme," he continued; "you get the majority of your advertisements free, and in the best papers, too! It's about the only scheme I ever heard of that could."

He stopped at last and sank back in his chair, exhausted. He had spoken long and with great animation, with all the tricks and mannerisms of rough-and-tumble platform oratory, in which he was a master. The pantomime of his expressive gestures, the indescribable impudence of the smile as he sought to prove some depth of folly in the public, the quick inflections of the voice, gave great force to his words. They sounded convincing to the younger Hamlyn, into whose muddy pallor a deep red flush had gradually come.

"It's a big thing, Pa," he said at length, "a very big thing. I see that, and you're the one to make it go. But there's a lot to be done first. 'Ave we the ready money to start it? Even in a small way, to get it once before the public will cost four or five hundred pounds."

"That's the difficulty, Sam, I admit it. We are pretty low down at present. The business just keeps its head above water, that's all. The money from Mr. Herbert is a help, but it's all gone as soon as we get it. I was thinking that if to-day's little protest makes a stir and we can do ditto round-abouts during the next week or two, we could get Moffatt and Burgoyne to advance a hundred each, p'r'aps. As a personal loan. Mr. Herbert would be good for fifty now, but as soon as he's elected you'll see he won't bother any more. When we've made the whole thing hum, he'll come to us and offer to be our Parliamentary representative. I'm reserving him for that. He'll be useful to ask questions and help the fizz-up generally. It'll suit him because he'll have a chance of getting his name in the papers, and it's about the only chance he will have of getting prominent in the House. But, as far as the preliminary stages are concerned, my opinion is that he's N.G. The worst of it is that with a scheme of this sort one can't very well put it on the market. That's the one drawback of a religious scheme. There's lots of men who'd see the money in it, but who'd see that if they joined they couldn't touch a cent. There can't be more than one or two salaried officials. No, we must depend upon ourselves entirely. I'm not afraid. It's what Napoleon did, and I'm going to be the Protestant Napoleon! There's a lot in catchwords—speaking on a side issue—'The Luther League!' 'Smithfield Soldiers!' or Bunyan's 'Holy War' might be revived."

"No, Pa, that wouldn't do now. 'Holy' is a regular Ritualistic word."

"Well, so it is, Sam. I hadn't thought of it. I'm glad to see that you've got a good grip of the thing."

There was a silence in the mean little room. In the adjacent kitchen, the servant could be heard singing, "Ower lod geris anoice yeng men, ow dear, ow dear naow!" A big green-bellied fly sung and drummed on the window-pane in the afternoon sunlight. Hamlyn, replete with enthusiasm and beef, had taken off his alpaca coat and unloosed his collar. The air was heavy with the odour of food and the acrid smell of Sam's "ten-for-threepence" cigarettes, while a penetrating smell of new calico, proceeding from some of Maud's dressmaking operations, dominated it all.

A church bell, ringing for afternoon service, was heard not far away.

Suddenly Hamlyn struck the table a sounding blow with his fist.

"It *is* a good thing," he shouted in a wild burst of enthusiasm.

The voice was so full, and confident, that it rang out in the place like a trumpet.

It had the true accent of an enthusiast, of a leader. There was mesmerism in it. Hearing it, one would have said that this man would succeed.

He could influence others, he had energy, resource, and temperamental force. It was true. The man was gifted. He had power, and to whatever end that might be directed it would not lose its efficacy. The conviction of success, its trumpet note, was to become familiar in vast hysterical assemblies. It was to be mistaken for a deep and earnest wish to purify the Church, to scatter the wolves from the environs of the fold. Greed can be sonorous. Tartuffe can always find his Orgon, and to hawk a battle-cry among the ignorant and dull has ever been a profitable game.

"I've a word to say, Pa," the son echoed; "I've an idea where the first cash is to come from."

"Good, my boy. Let's have it."

"What about Miss Pritchett?"

Hamlyn looked reproachfully at his son. "What about the monument!" he answered with a sneer. "She's got the cash, she's got tons of it. But she's a red-hot Ritualist and Romaniser. Ask me another, Sam."

Samuel smiled slyly. "Wait a mo, Pa," he said. "I know a good deal more about Miss Pritchett than you do. I've been walkin' out with Augusta Davis lately. She's a friend of Maud's."

"The companion, you mean? Miss Pritchett's companion? Oh, you've been smelling round in that quarter, have you?"

"And I've learnt a bit. I know all that goes on. Gussie tells me and Maud everything. Miss Pritchett's getting tired of St. Elwyn's. She can't boss the new vicar like she used the old one. As

for the Roman business, she doesn't really care for it. She's nothing to amuse herself with except that and her ailments. It's the old cat's vanity, that's all. She likes to be a patroness."

"That's the sort of woman we want," answered Mr. Hamlyn, obviously struck by the the word. "There are a lot of rich, single old judies only fit to be patronesses. They're cut out for it. Do you really think anything could be done."

"I do most certainly, Pa. I 'appen to know that Miss Pritchett is getting on very bad terms with Blantyre. He won't stand her meddling. I've one or two ideas in my head to help it along. Gussie'll do anything I tell her."

"Well, Sam, you do all you can. We won't talk about the matter any more now. I've got a lot of strings to pull, and I've got a lot of matters in my mind. We shall get a summons for brawling to-morrow, I expect. I'm done up now, and I'm going to have a nap. Wake me up in an hour if I'm asleep, and I'll get out the flimsies for to-morrow's papers."

Hamlyn possessed that faculty of sleeping at any moment, and of waking when it suited him, that so often goes with any marked executive capacity.

He stretched himself upon the little horsehair sofa and covered his face with his handkerchief.

Samuel picked up one of the "Heartsease" novelettes and tried to read in it. But his brain was alight with the splendour of the new project, and he could not concentrate his thought upon *Joyce Heathcote's Lover*.

It was thus that the seeds of the new movement were sown, in the back parlour at Balmoral, Beatrice Villas, Alexandra Road. Historians tell us that even greater and more epoch-making movements than Mr. Hamlyn's was destined to be, have originated in even less pretentious dwellings.

Many of us have seen the little house in the Brede Kirk Street of the old Dutch town, on which is written, *Haec est parva domus natus qua magnus Erasmus*.

Mr. Hamlyn, Junior, had never heard of Erasmus, but he saw visions of greatness on that afternoon.

CHAPTER III

LORD HUDDERSFIELD AND THE GUESTS AT SCARNING COURT

From April until the beginning of August, Lord Huddersfield generally lived at his house at Scarning, the famous old Tudor mansion on the river, below Pangbourne.

Peers who are something more than merely "in society" are generally known to the public at large by reason of some cause which they benefit, defend, or are associated with. When it is not a cause, it is a business that gives such an one his label for the man in the street.

Lord *So-and-so* is, of course, the great banker or brewer; Lord *This* is the famous picture collector, who has all the Holbeins; Lord *That* is known to be the best amateur actor, billiard player, or breeder of bloodhounds in England. In an age when all celebrities are easily distinguished thus, Lord Huddersfield, was perfectly familiar to everyone as the great organising churchman. The ordinary person would say, "Lord Huddersfield? Oh, yes, the great Ritualistic Johnny," imagining that he had summed up his man with completeness. Yet, saving only to churchmen and their antagonists—a very small proportion of the public to-day—Lord Huddersfield was personally quite unknown. He was hardly ever caricatured in the comic papers or pictured in the more serious illustrated journals. His face was wholly unfamiliar; the details of his private life formed no portion of the gossip papers. To the vast army of English folk, who are utterly indifferent to religious questions, he was nothing more than a name.

He had only once excited a really general flicker of interest. On the occasion of a visit to Italy, like many other distinguished visitors to the capital, he had been received in audience by the Bishop of Rome. As usual, the evening papers had published "rumours."

"Lord Huddersfield and the Pope.
Will he become a Catholic?"

had appeared as a scare head-line in one enterprising sheet, and the peer's telegram, stating that he had been one for many years had been hastily printed as a startling revelation—until some charitable person had stepped round to the office and explained the joke to a bewildered Scotch editor, and the paragraph was excised from later editions.

This much for the figure he cut to the outside world. In the English Church, he was looked upon as one of the leading laymen, if not the chief of all of them. He was the proprietor of the great weekly paper known as the *Church Standard*. He was the chairman of many church societies, the friend and patron of all Anglican movements and institutions, and a man whose word carried enormous weight and power.

In private life, his two children and his intimate friends found him true, devout, diligent, winning all hearts by opening his own, where one found a singular freshness and simplicity. He went as little into general society as he could, for all his thoughts and aims were occupied in one endeavour.

On the Monday after the events in Hornham, Agatha Poyntz and her brother James were in the lovely private backwater of Scarning. Their punt was moored to the side of a tiny island, set like a gem in the clear brown water, the red silk cushions of the boat making a vivid splash of colour on the bank. With these two was Miss Poyntz's great friend and confidante, Lucy Blantyre, the only sister of the vicar of St. Elwyn's.

Lucy was a girl of medium height, not at all the willowy modern heroine of pictures and romance. Her hair was of a deep, dead black, coiled on a small Greek head. Her complexion was dark, like that of her brother, the priest, but quite without a certain sallowness that was noticeable in him. It had the dusky paleness, the pearl-like *morbidezza* of some southern types, and, despite the lack of colour, showed a perfect and happy health. The mouth was rather large. Mockery lurked there, and in the dark eyes a lambent and somewhat scornful humour was wont to play.

Agatha Poyntz was a tall and merry girl—"a nut-brown maid" her father called her. Her round, plump face showed a sheer light-heartedness and joy in life that was always refreshing to people who found this life rather a drab and ordinary affair. The care-worn priests and churchmen who were her father's friends, men who were always too painfully aware of the great stream of human tears which is for ever falling through the shadows of the world, were all fond of her freshness and sparkle. And, so the wisest of them thought that since she took nothing seriously, and was quite untouched by the vexing problems in which they were submerged, it was perhaps a good thing that so gay and bright a creature should come into their lives for a space, realising that, after all, God made the butterflies which hovered so daintily over the Scarning water-flowers upon their painted fans.

James Poyntz, Lord Huddersfield's only son, was a very different type. He resembled his dead mother, a daughter of the Duke of St. Just. He was tall, slender, and muscular. His face was clean-shaved, lean, and with a heavy jaw, not the heaviness that signals sensuality and dulness, but purpose and resolution. His eyes were grey, and glittered when he became animated, and his clear, cold voice grew emphatic.

Not long before, he had come down from Oxford, where he had distinguished himself in the history schools, and also by availing himself of the little-used permission to absent himself from chapel and the examination known as "Divinity Moderations," granted to men who have come of age, and who sign a declaration of their absolute and sincere disbelief in the supernatural. It had been a piquant spectacle to the sceptic undergraduates and younger dons, to see the son and heir of Lord Huddersfield openly scornful and protesting against all that his father held so dear, and quietly taking the much severer tests that the University statutes impose upon those who would dispense with the puerile divinity examination.

James Poyntz was on rather bad terms with his father. There was no confidence between them, and perhaps but little love—though that had never been tested. The young man had a sufficient fortune from his mother, and his father was prepared to supplement his income in any way he might wish, being far too sensible and just a man to endeavour to make his son suffer financially for his opinions. But James Poyntz refused money which, as he said, would have been purely superfluous to him, and was occupied in carving a career for himself at the common-law bar, where he was already a not inconspicuous figure among the junior men.

His knowledge of ecclesiastical law was good, and in the wrangles between diocesan chancellors and recalcitrant clergy which were becoming more and more frequent, he was frequently retained. He was a very familiar figure in Dr. Tristram's Consistory Court, and his familiarity with ecclesiastical litigation only increased a contempt for those who professed and called themselves Christians, which was as profound as it was sincere, and as fundamentally the result of ignorance as it was both.

For, brilliant as he was, the young man had not the slightest acquaintance with modern religious thought. He saw everything through the spectacles of temperamental distaste, and still believed that Professor Huxley had dealt the final blow to Christianity in 1876! Lord Huddersfield had often pressed his son to read the question as it at present stood, to see what Gore and the philosophic apologists were saying, or even to note the cautious but inevitable conclusions that prominent scientists like Lord Kelvin and Sir Oliver Lodge were arriving at. But the young man always refused. The ancient indictment of the Gadarene swine represented the last word in the controversy for him, and a brain keen and finely furnished with facts on all other questions, on this was not only content to be forty years behind the conclusions of theological science, but imagined that it was in the van of contemporary thought.

Of late, Lord Huddersfield had given up the attempt to influence his son's opinions. "It is impossible," he had said, "to explain that the sky is blue to a man who has blindfolded himself all his life, and one cannot build a basis in a vacuum." So, while both men respected each other's attainments on all subjects but religious ones, on these James thought his father a fool, and Lord Huddersfield knew that his son was.

Despite all this difference, the younger man was a frequent and welcome visitor at his father's various houses, and between him and his sister Agatha there was a real and deep affection.

Agatha was conventionally indifferent to religious things, James was profoundly antagonistic to them, and thus, if they did not meet quite on common ground, they were never likely to disagree.

And Lucy Blantyre, the third member of that gay young trio on the summer morning, was a combination of both of them. She was very well off in the affairs of this world, as indeed was her brother, Bernard Blantyre of St. Elwyn's. But, while he had early devoted his life and money to the service of God, Lucy had refused to identify herself with his interests. She lived with her aunt, Lady Linquest, a gay old dame of Mayfair, and it was only at rare intervals that she paid a duty visit to her brother. Yet, though she was, from a surface point of view, purely a society girl, popular, and happy in a bright and vivid life, there were temperamental depths in her, unsounded as yet, which showed her sometimes—to her own wonder and discomfort—that she was a true blood-sister to the priest in north-east London. At times, a wave of scorn for the Church possessed her. She saw the worst side of religious externals and poured bitter fun upon their anomalies. This is, of course, a very easy thing to do. Any one can ridicule the unseen and its ministers: it requires no special talent to be rude to God! At other times, the girl saw this very clearly and was ashamed. She had a good brain and despised all that was cheap and vulgar at the bottom; and when her moods of wilfulness had passed, she stood upon the brink of devotion and belief.

Nothing serious animated any of the three. The day was wonderful. In a sky like a hard, hollow sapphire the sun burned like a white-hot disc of platinum. The island was deliciously cool; the murmur of a near river mingled with the bourdon of the bees. The smooth turf on which they lay was starred with chaste and simple flowers.

"Isn't it *perfect* to-day!" Agatha said. "Bee, go away from my face! 'Pleasant it is when the woods are green and the winds are soft and low, to lie amid some sylvan scene'—Lucy, dear, what are you thinking about?"

"I was wondering if we were really reclining in what the poets of last century called 'bosky shade.' Is this bosky, Mr. Poyntz?"

"Decidedly bosky, I should say. But surely both of you can put the island to a better use than merely to illustrate quotations from the poets? It's far too fine for that."

"Oh, do let me have 'bosky'," Lucy replied. "It's such a dear, comic word. I've always loved it. It always seems a fat word to me. I'm sure it's fat and it waddles—in the word world!"

"Then what does Agatha's 'sylvan' do?"

"Oh, sylvan?—well, I should think it was a slim, graceful, and very young-ladyish kind of word. It wears a neat grey tailor-made coat and skirt, and says, 'Papa is of opinion that,' or, 'Mamma has frequently told me.'"

They all laughed, pleased with themselves, the hour, and the charm that perfectly absurd talk has for young and happy people.

"Oh, don't talk of words, Miss Blantyre," Poyntz said, "I'm tired of them. The long vacation draws near, when I want to forget all about them. My words, the words I live by, or for, are beasts."

"Quote, dearest," Agatha said.

"Well, this is the sort of thing I see more often than anything else at present," he replied: "'The humble petition of the vicar and churchwardens of St. Somebody sheweth that, it being considered desirable to make certain alterations and improvements in the church of the said Parish, a meeting in Vestry duly convened for considering the same, was held on the first of June, at which it was resolved that the alterations shown in the plan annexed hereto and there produced, should be carried out, a copy of which resolution is also hereto annexed.'"

Both the girls cried out to him to stop.

"What musty words, dry and rusty words!" Lucy said. "And, please, what are they all about, and what do they mean?"

"They mean this—some worthy parson has badgered his congregation for money. It is the desire of his soul to have a rood-screen in his chancel, with a gilt and splendid crucifix upon the top. So, armed with a mouthful of words like that, he gets him to a sort of cellar near St. Paul's, where a dear old gentleman, named the Right Worshipful T. H. Tristram, K. C., D.C.L., sits, in a big wig and a red robe. The parson eloquently explains his wishes, and the Right Worshipful tells him to go and be hanged—or polite words to that effect. Then I and other young legal 'gents' get up and talk and argue, and the Right Worshipful listens until he's tired, and then says no again. The parson goes back to his roodless temple and preaches against Erastianism, and I and the other young legal 'gents' pouch a few guineas, and go and play pool at the Oxford and Cambridge Club."

"And then," Agatha went on,—"then father makes a speech and writes a letter to the *Times* and gets fearfully excited and worried for about a week, neglects his meals, passes sleepless nights, and behaves in a perfectly foolish manner generally. Then he goes down to the parish and has a convivial meat tea with the poor parson, and before he goes gives him a cheque for fifty pounds to go and have a holiday with after all the strain!"

"Exactly," said Lucy, "I will take up the parable. I have seen our friend, the parson, in the

unutterable north London slum, where my poor dear brother Bernard spends all his time and money. He goes, as you say, for a holiday, to recover from the scene in the cellar near St. Paul's. He goes to Dieppe or Boulogne, where he attends the cathedral three times a day, and tries to fraternise with the priests, who regard him as a layman masquerading in borrowed plumes. In revenge, he goes and makes things uncomfortable for the local English chaplain, who, in most continental towns, is an undersized person with a red nose and an enormous red moustache and a strong flavour of Chadband at home. So 'all's well that ends well.' But, really, what fearful nonsense it all is! Isn't it wonderful that people should waste their energies so!"

"If it amuses them it doesn't matter in the least," Agatha said. "Look how happy it makes poor dear father. And I daresay he does good in his way, don't you know. It's far better than racing or anything like that. Poor dear Hermione Blackbourne was staying here not long ago, and she was telling me what a wretched time they have at home. Lord Saltire hardly ever pays the girls' allowances unless he's won a race, and the poor dears have to study the sporting papers to know if they'll be able to afford new frocks for Goodwood. Father's fads are at least harmless, or, at any rate, no one has to suffer for what he gives away."

"The old type of clergyman seems to have quite died out," Lucy said. "When I was a little girl, the rector at home was a dear old man, who dressed just like an ordinary person, and went otter-hunting three days a week. Yet I'm sure he was just as earnest as any of these new faddy people. We had a delightful old pew, with a fireplace and chairs, and poor dear father used to get his nap. And as for altar lights and copes and incense, I don't suppose dear old Mr. Jenkyns had ever heard of such things. The amount of money that Bernard spends on his church in that way is ridiculous."

"The only good I can see in it," James Poyntz said, "is that it brings a certain colour element into drab and dull lives. The people in your brother's parish, who never see any thing artistic, must gain in that way, I suppose. After all, Miss Blantyre, 'it's an ill wind that blows nobody any good.' All this Church nonsense gives pleasure, however much we may laugh at it. Take myself, for example. I'm intensely amused at all the squabbles that go on between Christians. More evil passions are stirred up and let loose over half a yard of green silk or the precise manner in which half an ounce of flour and water is baked than the politics of a century excite! It's perfectly true. There's a spirit of bitter hatred in it all that is intensely interesting to the student of character. There are hundreds of thousands of people in England who would burn my poor father in front of St. Paul's to-morrow if they could—good, respectable, honest British folk!"

"Well," Lucy said, with affected gloom, "all this only reminds me of my coming penance. In a day or so now, I must dive into Hornham for my yearly stay with Bernard. I shall emerge quite thin and crushed. I always do. The 'clergy-house,' as they call the vicarage, is a lugubrious place that suggests a rather superior workhouse. When I go, the drawing-room is solemnly opened by the housekeeper. Bernard gives a couple of dinner parties and a garden party to a set of the most extraordinary people you ever saw in your life. I have to be hostess and chatter to weird people, with whom I haven't a single idea in common. Lady Linquest drove down from Park Lane to the garden party last year. I shall never forget it. She gave Bernard such a talking to, told him to 'dress like a gentleman,' and exchange to a nice country parish with some county people close by, and marry. I wish he would, too! He's wasting his life, his money, and his health in that awful place. I don't wonder at aunt's being angry. Why can't he do as she says? He could have high jinks in a nice little country church in one of the home counties just as well as where he is now."

"Beastly life, I should think," James Poyntz said. "Does he live all alone?"

"Oh, the two curates live with him, Father Stephens and Father King—they're all 'fathers,' it seems. These are two intense youths, who dress in cassocks and tippets all day long, and wear their berrettas everywhere. I think it's positively indecent to sit down to a meal dressed like that. But the worst of it is, that there's always some fast day or other, and I feel an awful pig to be having chicken and claret while the other three have oatmeal and apples. But I insisted on proper meals last year, much to the disgust of a gaunt old cat of a housekeeper, whom Bernard thinks the whole world of."

She stopped, laughing at her own volubility, and lay back upon the cushions, staring up at the green-leaf canopy above her head. All these questions seemed very trivial and unreal at that moment, in that pleasant place of sunshine, soft breezes, and the murmur of falling water. She thought of the long, mean, suburban streets of Hornham with humorous dismay. Thank goodness that she was only going to spend a fortnight there, and then would be away in a gay continental watering-place with Lady Linquest. But the few days were imperative. She was fond of her brother and knew how bitterly disappointed he would be if she were to withdraw from her promise to stay at St. Elwyn's. It was a duty which must be done, and it was an unkind fate indeed that had placed her brother in surroundings which were so uncongenial to her, and endowed him with opinions so alien to her own.

James Poyntz had lighted a cigarette. The smoke curled upwards in delicate grey spirals, and he could see his sister's friend through them, surrounded by a shifting frame which cut off the striking and clever face from its immediate surroundings, giving it a vivid and independent individuality. He could survey it more completely so. There was something in Lucy Blantyre that had begun to appeal to the young man with great and greater strength as the days went on. She was close upon beauty, and she had all the charm of a high-spirited and well-bred girl in perfect health, and knowing no trouble in life. But in the life to which he had been born, girls like her were not uncommon. Despite the fiction-mongers who fulminate against the vices of "society,"

and would have their readers believe that the flower of English girlhood is to be found in the middle class alone, Poyntz knew many gracious girls who were worthy to stand by any man's side throughout life. But in Lucy Blantyre he was beginning to discern something deeper and stronger. He thought that he saw in her a wonderful capacity for companionship, a real talent for wifehood. He could imagine that she would be more to her husband than an ordinary wife, identified with his hopes and career with all her soul's power, one for whom Milton's epithalamium itself would not be unworthy, with its splendid "Hail, wedded love!"

But, though such thoughts had been in and out of his mind for some time, he was hardly in love with her as yet. His temperament was honest and sincere, but cool and judicial also. He was the last man to take any definite step without a full weighing of the chances and results.

But the two had become great friends. Agatha Poyntz had her own thoughts about the matter, and they were very pleasant ones. Nothing would have pleased her more than the marriage of her brother and her friend, and she had made *tête-à-têtes* for them in the adroit, unobtrusive manner that girls know.

In all his conversations with Lucy, Poyntz had found a keen, resilient brain that answered to his thoughts in precisely the way he wished. The tinge of cynicism in her corresponded to the flavour of it in him, and there was sometimes real wit and understanding in her mockery.

She "suited" him—that is how he would have put it—and he was now beginning to ask and examine himself if love were not being born, a love which might make their union a perfect and lasting thing upon his way through life. Of her sentiments towards him he knew no more than that she sincerely liked him and that they were friends.

The regular throbbing pant of a steam launch on the silver Thames outside was heard, and Lucy turned suddenly in Poyntz's direction. She saw that he was looking at her gravely and steadily. A very faint flush came into her cheeks, almost imperceptible indeed, and then she smiled frankly at him.

He smiled also, pleased with himself and her, and with a sense that a new intimacy was suddenly established between them, an odd sense of which he was quite certain.

Agatha looked at the little watch in a leather bracelet on her wrist. "It's nearly lunch time!" she said; "I don't know how you people feel, but the word has a very welcome sound to me. Jim, get up and punt us home. You'll be able to argue with Father Saltus; I've asked him to lunch with us to-day. I didn't know you were coming down."

She spoke of Lord Huddersfield's domestic chaplain, a wise and courtly elderly man, whom they all liked, without in the least realising the part he played in Church affairs, regarding him, indeed, as a harmless student and a pleasant companion, but no more.

In fact, as the light and careless conversation of all of them showed, not one of the three young people had the remotest idea of what they were discussing. And though each one of them had a sense of humour, they were not able to see the humorous side of their airy patronage of the Catholic Church! This Mr. Saltus was known as one of the most profound metaphysicians of the day. The greatest modern brains were influenced by his writings in Christian apologetics; bishops, statesmen, great scientists knew of him as one to whom it was given to show how all thought and all philosophy were daily proving the truth of the Incarnation. His work in the life of the Church was this, and he was Lord Huddersfield's chaplain because that position gave him leisure and freedom for his work, and kept him in touch with the very centre of things.

James Poyntz had arrived from London by an early train, and had joined the girls at once.

In a moment or two, the young man was propelling the long mahogany punt with easy strokes towards the artificial cutting which led to the Seaming boathouse. Then, laughing and talking together, the three strolled over the wonderful lawns, pneumatic to the tread, brilliant as emerald to the eye, towards the old house with its encircling oaks and elms.

The tall red chimneys rose up between the leaves, that triumph of the Tudor style, which alone of all architectural systems has shown how chimneys may aid and complete the beauty of a building. The house rested upon the lawns as if it might float away at any moment, as they passed round an ancient grey dove-cot and some formal box-trees, and came in sight of the beautiful place. James Poyntz gave a quick breath of pleasure as he saw it, the old riverside palace of his ancestors. There were other houses which would one day be his—a great, grim Yorkshire fortress, the gay villa at Nice by the old citadel of Mont-Albano, where the Paglion sings its song of the mountain torrent, the decorous London mansion in Berkeley Square. But of all, he loved the old Tudor house by the river best.

How well Lucy walked! her carriage was a pleasure to watch. Yes! she harmonised with her background, she was in correspondence with her environment, she would be a fit mistress of Scarning in some dim future day.

They sat down to lunch in an ancient, mellow room, panelled in oak, with Tudor roses everywhere. It was beautifully cool and fresh after the glare outside. Father Saltus was a tall and very portly elderly man. His head was large, formed on a grand scale, and his mouth powerful but good-humoured. His eyebrows were very bushy and extremely white, and they overhung eyes which were of a dark grey, deep but not sombre, with much that was latent there.

The meal was progressing merrily when the butler entered and spoke to the footman who had been waiting on them. Then he went up to Agatha. "His Lordship has returned, Miss," he said, "and will be down to lunch in a moment."

Lord Huddersfield had been away for several days. The family house in London was let, as the Baron did not entertain largely since his wife's death. Agatha's season was spent under the wing of the St. Justs, her mother's people. But Lord Huddersfield had chambers in Piccadilly, and no one ever quite knew whether or not he would be at Scarning at any given time.

He entered in a moment, a slim, spectacled man, with a short beard, very quietly dressed, a man who did not, at first glance, in any way suggest the power he wielded or the strenuous personality he was.

He kissed his daughter, shook hands with his son, Lucy, and the chaplain, and sat down. They noticed that he was pale and worried.

"Have any of you seen the papers?" he said in a strong, resonant voice, which came oddly from a man so ordinary and undistinguished in appearance.

"I saw the *Times* this morning, Father," Poyntz said, "but that is all." The girls confessed that they had not touched the pile of journals in the library, and Mr. Saltus said he had been writing letters all the morning and so had not yet been able to see the news.

"I am sorry," said Lord Huddersfield sadly. "I had hoped that you would have seen the thing that has happened. I had hoped that I should not have had to tell you, Miss Blantyre."

His voice was so charged with meaning that Lucy shivered. Her eyes became full of apprehension. "Why me, Lord Huddersfield?" she said, "what has happened?"

Agatha, who was thoroughly frightened, laid a sympathetic hand upon her friend's arm. James, who was gazing anxiously at the girl, suddenly turned to his father.

"I think you had better tell your news right out," he said quietly. "Don't keep Miss Blantyre in suspense, Father; it is mistaken kindness. I am sure that she will be brave."

Every one looked at Lord Huddersfield; the air was tense with expectation. "Your good brother, Miss Blantyre," the peer began—Lucy gave a quick gasp and the colour faded from her lips —"your good brother, yesterday in church, was saying Mass when suddenly some local residents rose in their places and made an open protest, shouting and brawling at the very moment of the Prayer of Consecration!"

Lucy gazed steadfastly at him, waiting. He said nothing more. "Go on, please," she managed to whisper at last.

"They were at once ejected, of course," Lord Huddersfield said.

"And Bernard?"

"Although his state of mind must have been terrible, despite his pain, I learn from a private telegram that he continued the service to the end."

The three young people stared incredulously; only Father Saltus suddenly looked very grave.

"But—why—is that all, Lord Huddersfield?" Lucy said with a gasp of half-relief. "I thought you meant that something dreadful had happened to Bernard."

"Yes," he said, very surprised, "I have told you."

James picked up his knife and fork, and continued his lunch without a word. He was very angry with his father.

Agatha shrugged her shoulders slightly.

"Oh, that wasn't quite fair, Lord Huddersfield," Lucy said tremulously. "You really made me think some awful thing had happened. Only a brawl in church?"

"I am very sorry, my dear," he answered quickly; "I fear I have shown a great want of tact. I did not know. I forgot, that is, that you don't quite see these things as we do. You don't realise what it means."

"Shall I give you some chicken, Father?" Agatha said, looking at a dish of mayonnaise before her. She thought that there had been quite a fuss made about nothing.

Lord Huddersfield sighed. He felt that he was in a thoroughly uncongenial atmosphere, though he was sorry for the alarm he had caused. Once his eye fell in mild wonder upon his guest. How unlike her brother she was, he thought.

There was an awkward silence, which James broke at length.

"I always thought," he said, "that there would be trouble soon. The days for locking clergymen up have passed by, but Protestant feeling is bound to have its outlet."

His quick brain had seized upon the main point at once.

"Well, there will be more work for the lawyers," he continued.

Lord Huddersfield frowned a little. "Of course, I can't expect you to see the thing as I do, James," he said. "To me such a public insult to our Lord is terrible. It almost frightens one. What poor Blantyre must have felt, what every Catholic there must have felt, is most painful to imagine."

"I'm sure Mr. Poyntz has sympathy with any body of people whose most sacred moment has been roughly disturbed," the chaplain said. "Whatever a man's convictions may be, he must feel that. But the thing is over and nothing can put it right. What I fear is, that this is only the beginning of a series of sacrilegious acts which may do the Church incalculable harm."

"The newspaper report, which appeared everywhere but in the *Times*," Lord Huddersfield replied, "stated that it was only the beginning of a campaign. All the reports were identical and apparently supplied to the papers by the same person, probably the brawlers themselves—who appear to be people of no consequence whatever."

"There will be a service of reparation?" asked the chaplain.

"Yes, to-morrow," answered Lord Huddersfield. "I am going down to Hornham and shall be present. We must discuss everything with Blantyre and settle exactly what lines the *Church Standard* will take up."

"Of course, Mr. Blantyre will prosecute?" James said.

"Oh, yes. My telegram told me that the summons had already been issued. The law is quite clear, I suppose, on the point, James?"

"Quite. Brawling in church is a grave offence. But these people will, of course, pose as martyrs. Public opinion will be with them, a nominal fine will be inflicted, and they'll find themselves heroes. I'm afraid the Ritualists are going to have a bad time. In '68, the Martin *v.* Mackonochie judgment was very plain, and in '71 the judicial committee of the Privy Council was plainer still in the case of Herbert *v.* Punchas. Then, after the Public Worship Regulation Act, the Risdale judgment clinched the whole thing. That was at the beginning of it all. Now, though prosecutions have been almost discontinued, the few cases that have been heard before the ecclesiastical courts are all the same. So far as I can see, if this pleasant little habit of getting up and brawling protests in church becomes popular, a big fire will be lighted and the advanced men will have to draw in their horns."

Lord Huddersfield smiled. He attempted no argument or explanation. He had thrashed out these questions with his son long ago. Father Saltus spoke instead.

"If this really spreads into a movement, as it may," he said, "ignorant public opinion will be with the protestors for a month or two. But that is all. The man in the street will say that every one has a right to hold whatever religious opinions he pleases, and to convert others to his views—if he can—by the ordinary methods of propagandism. But he will also say that no one has a right to air his opinions by disturbing the devotions of those who don't happen to agree with him. And what is more, no religious cause was ever advanced by these means. I have no doubt that these people will boast and brag that they are vindicating the cause of law in the Church of England. But if they knew anything of the history of that Protestantism they champion—which, of course, they *don't*, for they know nothing whatever—they would know that the law is the most impotent of all weapons to crush a religious movement."

James nodded. "It is a truism of history," he agreed.

"Exactly. To call in the aid of the law to counteract the spread of any religious doctrine or ceremonial is to adopt the precise means that sent the Oxford martyrs to the stake and lighted the Smithfield fires. From the days when the High Priests called in the law's aid to nip Christianity in the bud, the appeal to the law has never been anything but an appeal to the spirit of intolerance and persecution against the freedom of religious belief and worship."

Agatha rose from the table. "Come along, Lucy dear," she said; "'all's well that ends well,' and your brother's not going to have a bomb thrown at him just yet. You will be in the thick of the disturbance in a few days; meanwhile, make the most of the river and the sunshine! Jim, come and punt us to the Eyot."

She kissed her father and fluttered away singing happily a snatch of an old song, *Green Grow the Rushes O!*

The others followed her. The two elder men were left alone, and for a minute or two neither spoke.

Then Saltus said: "They are all young, they have made no contact with real life yet. God does not always call in early life. To some people, the cross that is set so high over the world is like a great star,—it is not seen until the surrounding sky is darkened and the sun grows dim."

"I am going into the chapel," Lord Huddersfield said, "to be alone for an hour. There must be many prayers going up to-day to God for the wrong these poor ignorant men have done."

"Pray that they may be forgiven. And then, my dear Lord," he continued, "suppose we have a talk over the situation that has been created—if any situation beyond the purely local one *has* been created." A fighting look came into his face. "We shall be wise to be prepared, to have our guns loaded."

"Yes, Father," Lord Huddersfield said rather grimly, "we are not without power and influence, I am happy to think."

CHAPTER IV

LUCY BLANTYRE AT THE CLERGY-HOUSE

Lucy Blantyre left Scarning Court on Thursday morning. James Poyntz travelled up to town with her. She was to go home to Park Lane for an hour or two, make one of the guests at a lunch party with Lady Linquest, and then, in the afternoon, drive down to Hornham.

She was alone in a first-class carriage with James during the whole of the journey to London. The last three days had marked a stage in their intercourse. Both of them were perfectly aware of that. Intimacy between a young man and a girl is very rarely a stationary thing. It progresses in one direction or another. James began to talk much of his ambitions. He told her how he meant to carve his way in the world, the place he meant to take. The Poyntz family was a long-lived one; Lord Huddersfield himself was only middle-aged, and might live another thirty years. James hoped that it would be so.

"I want to win my own way by myself," he said. "I hope the title will not come for many years. It would mean extinction if it came now. You sympathise with that, don't you?"

She was very kind to him. Her answers showed a real interest in his confidences, but more than that. There was acumen and shrewdness in them.

"You know," he said, "I do hate and detest the way the ordinary young man in my position lives. It is so futile and silly. I recognised it even at Oxford. Because of one's father, one was expected to be a silly fool and do no work. Of course, there were some decent fellows,—Dover, the Duke of Dover, was quiet and thought about things. But all my friends were drawn from the social class which people suppose to be just below our own, the upper middle class. It's the backbone of England. Men in it take life seriously."

He stopped after a time, and gazed out of the window at the flying landscape. Suddenly he turned to her. "I'm so glad you are my sister's great friend, Lucy," he said.

It was the first time that he had spoken her first name to her. His tone was charged with meaning.

She looked up quickly, and saw that his eyes were fixed upon her.

"You are all very kind to me," she said.

"Every one would be kind to you. I have been very happy since you have let me be your friend. Do you know that my work and my hopes seem dearer than ever to me now that I have told you so much of them. We have got to know each other very well, haven't we?"

"Very well."

"We shall know each other better. It is my hope. I wonder if I might write to you now and then, and tell you some of my thoughts and how things are with me? Would such letters bore you?"

"I should value them, and think them a privilege. A woman is always gratified when a man confides his thoughts to her. So many men never allow a woman friend to see below the surface, and so many men—at any rate, men that I am in the way of meeting—have no thoughts to tell one even if they would."

The train began to go more slowly as it rumbled through the dingy environs, and shook over the myriad points of Waterloo Station. Neither of them spoke again. There was no doubt in the mind of either as to the meaning of the situation.

The girl had gathered all his thoughts from his tone. It was very pleasant to be with him, this sane and brilliant young man with a great name and such powers. It made her happy to know how he regarded her—that out of all the girls he knew he had chosen her for a friend. He would some day ask her to be something more; that also she knew, and knew that he was conveying it to her. She did not love him, love was a word not very real to her as yet. Her mental eyes had never visualised it, it was an abstraction. But she liked and admired him more than any other man of her set: he was a *man*. Well, there was time enough yet to think of all that. Meanwhile his deference was sweet; her heart warmed to him as his, she knew, was warm to her at that moment.

He saw her to the door of the waiting victoria, and stood chatting for a moment in the hurry of the station, making the footman mount his box again.

Then he gave the signal to start, and stood upon the platform by his hansom as she was driven rapidly away. Once she turned and waved a hand to him.

Lucy lay back in the carriage, pleased with herself and all the world. She had come on to Victoria, instead of getting out at Vauxhall, specially to enjoy the longer drive. It was a brilliant day, and as

the carriage came upon Waterloo Bridge, the wonderful panorama of riverside London was uplifting. Away to her right, the purple dome of St. Paul's shone white-grey in the sun. The great river glittered in the morning air, and busy craft moved up and down the tide. The mammoth buildings of the embankment, Somerset House with its noble façade, the Savoy, the monster Cecil, the tiled roofs of Scotland Yard all came to the eye in one majestic sweep of form and colour. And far away to the left, dim in a haze of light, the towers of Westminster rose like a fairy palace, tipped with flame as the sun caught the gold upon the vanes and spires.

London! yes! it was, after all, the most beautiful city in the world, seen thus, at this hour, from this place. How the heart quickened and warmed to it.

Suddenly the thought of Hornham came to her. She made a little involuntary movement of disgust. For a whole fortnight she would be there. It would be intolerable. Why could not Bernard come to Park Lane for a fortnight? How much more sensible that would be.

Well, it was no good thinking of it. The thing must be done. Yet, from one point of view how curious it was. How strange that a drive of two hours would plunge her into a world entirely foreign and alien in every way to her world.

She was driving up Grosvenor Place now, by the long walls of the King's Palace Garden, over which the trees showed fresh and green. The stately street, with the Park gates at the end of its vista, only accentuated the contrast. She utterly failed to understand how any one could do what her brother did. There was not the slightest reason for the endurance of these horrors. His personal income was large, his family connections were influential. He could obtain a fashionable West End living without any trouble. She was still scornfully wondering as the carriage stopped at Lady Linquest's house in Park Lane.

Lucy found her aunt in a little room of china-blue and canary-yellow which looked out over the Park.

She was a tall woman, of full figure. The face was bright and animated, though somewhat sensual, inasmuch as it showed that its owner appreciated the good material things that life has to offer. At sixty-two, when dames of the middle classes have silver hair and are beginning to assume the gentle manners of age, Lady Linquest wore the high curled fringe of the fashion, a mass of dark red hair that had started life upon the head of a Bréton peasant girl. Art had been at work upon her face and she was pleasant to look on, an artificial product indeed, but with all the charm that a perfect work of art has.

She made no secret of it to her intimate friends, and no one thought any the worse of her in a society where nearly every one who has need of aids to good looks buys them in Bond Street. Indeed, she was quite unable to understand what she called "the middle class horror of paint." "Why on earth," she would say, "any one can possibly object to an old woman making herself look as pleasant as possible for the last few years of her life, I can't make out. It's a duty one owes to one's friends. It sweetens life. At any rate, *I* don't intend to go about like old Mother Hubbard or the witch in whatshername."

"Lucy, my dear," said this vivacious dame as her niece entered, "you're looking your best this morning. And when you look your best my experience generally tells me that you've been up to some wickedness or other! How's Agatha, and has James Poyntz been at Scarning, and how's that poor dear man, Huddersfield, who always reminds me of a churchwarden? He is the king of all the churchwardens in England, I think."

Lucy sat down and endeavoured to answer the flood of questions as satisfactorily as might be, while Lady Linquest took her mid-morning pick-me-up of Liebig and cognac.

The good lady gave her niece a rapid *précis* of the news of their set during the few days she had been away. "So that you'll know," she said, "what to talk about at General Pompe's lunch—your last decent meal, by the way, for a fortnight! I shall give orders to the cook to put a hamper in the carriage for you to take with you to Bernard's. All those poor young men starve themselves."

She rattled away thus while Lucy went to her own room to dress. For some reason or other, why she could not exactly divine, she was dissatisfied and ill at ease. The exhilaration of the railway journey, of the wonderful drive through sunlit London, had gone. Her aunt, kind creature as she was, jarred upon her this morning. How terribly shallow the good lady seemed, after all! She was like some gaudy fly dancing over a sunlit brook—or even circling round malodorous farmyard stuff—brilliant, useless, and with nothing inside but the mere muscles of its activity. James Poyntz's words recurred to her, his deep scorn of a purely frivolous, pleasure-loving life was present in her brain.

Lucy was genuinely fond of Lady Linquest, but somehow on this bright morning to hear a woman with one foot in the grave talking nothing but scandal and empty catchwords of Vanity Fair, struck with a certain chill to her heart.

To see her sitting there, curled, painted, scented, sipping her tonic drink, ready for a smart party of people as empty and useless as herself, was to see a thing that hurt, after the experiences of the morning.

Lucy had not taken her maid to Scarning. She had wanted to live as simply as possible there, to live the outdoors riverside life. And she was not going to take Angelique to Hornham either—where the girl would be miserable and a nuisance to the grave little community there. She felt

very glad, as the chattering little French woman helped her to dress, that she was not coming with her. The maid's voluble boulevard French got on her nerves; the powder on her face, which showed violet in the sunlight, the strong scent of verbena she wore, the expression of being abnormally "aware"—all these were foreign to Lucy's mood, and she noticed them with an almost physical sense of disapproval that she had never before felt so strongly.

The drive to the smart hotel near Piccadilly only took five or six minutes, and the two ladies were soon shaking hands with old General Pompe, their host. General the Hon. Reginald Pompe was an old creature who was only kept from senile decay by his stays. He was unmarried, extremely wealthy, and the fashion. In his younger days, his life had been abominable; now, his age allowed him to do nothing but lick the chops of vicious memories and prick his ears for scandals in which he could not share. People said, "Old General Pompe is really *too* bad, but where one sees the Duke of —— and the Prince of —— we may be sure that people like ourselves cannot be far wrong."

The other guests comprised Lord Rollington, of whom there was nothing to be said save that he was twenty-four and a fool; Gerald Duveen, who was a fat man of good family, and more or less of a success upon the stage; and his beautiful, bold-looking wife, a judge's daughter, who played under the name of Miss Mary Horne, and of whom much scandal was whispered.

After a moment or two in the palm room, waiting for the Duveens, who were a minute or two late, the six people went in to lunch. The special table General Pompe always used was reserved for them, decorated with a triumphant scheme of orchids and violets. Lumps of ice were hidden among the masses of flowers, diffusing an admirable coolness round the table.

The host drew attention to the menu, which he had composed. He mumbled over it, and as he bent his head Lucy saw that his ears were quite pointed, and that the skin upon his neck lay in pachydermatous folds, dry and yellowish.

"Baked red snapper, red wine sauce," said Mr. Duveen, with the purring and very distinct voice of high comedy. "Hm—turtle steaks *miroton*—sweetbreads—*Tadema*, quite the best way to do sweetbreads."

Mrs. Duveen was talking in a low, rapid voice to Lady Linquest. Her eyes were very bright, and malice lurked in the curves of a lovely mouth as she retailed some story of iniquity in high places, one of these private and intimate scandals in which the half-life of the stage is so rich—actors and actresses more than most people being able to see humanity with the mask off. How greedy the three men looked, Lucy thought, as they devoured the lunch in prospect. "Pigs!" she said to herself with a little inward shudder.

Why was this? She had been at dozens of these functions before now and had thought none of these thoughts. To-day a veil seemed removed from her eyes: she saw things as they really were. And as they really were, these people were abominable.

Any of them would

> "Buy a minute's mirth to wail a week,
> And sell eternity to gain a toy."

They had the manners of organ-grinders and the morals of monkeys. She caught some words of what Mrs. Duveen was saying now and again. Lord Rollington began to tell her, with affected disgust, how he had been at a burlesque theatre the night before, and the musical-comedy heroine of the hour had been so intoxicated that she could hardly sing her song.

"Too bad, you know, Miss Blantyre. I spotted it at once. It's always disgustin' to see a girl take too much to drink, but when she's caperin' about the stage like that one really has a right to complain. Don't you think so? Now, if it had been a poor little chorus girl, she'd have been fired out of the theatre in a second. For my part, I—" and so on for an interminable five minutes.

General Pompe began to flirt with Lucy in that elderly "you-are-only-a-little-girl" sort of manner, that is so difficult to repel and which is so offensive. She saw his horny eyes roving over her person with appreciation.

A great many of Lady Linquest's particular set were like this. Not all of them, thank goodness, but so very many! And the worst of it was that society mingled and overlapped so strangely. The sheep and the goats were not separated in any way. People like the Huddersfields stood almost alone, and even Agatha, when she was with the St. Justs—her mother's family—constantly met this sort of people. But, then, Agatha didn't seem to care, she didn't realise. She laughed at everything and thought it "awfully good fun." In fact, Lucy realised Agatha was exactly the same as she herself had always been—with the very slightest intervals—until this moment. It was startling to think that the words of Lord Huddersfield's son had worked this revolution in her point of view. For she was quite persuaded that they were the reason of it. She could find no other reason.

She did not realise then, as she was to realise with humble thankfulness and awe in the future, the august influence that was at work within her.

She was not gay at lunch. Usually she was a most welcome member of any such gathering as this. Her sayings were pointed, she entered fully into the spirit of the hour, her wit adorned the charm of her personality, and she was universally popular and voted "good fun" in the comprehensive

epitome of her associates. This was the highest praise they knew, and they gave it her without stint.

To-day the party fell flat—there was no doubt about it. The radiance of the early morning had given place to a heat which became terribly oppressive, and the sky was overclouded. Thunder was in the air, and London awaited a storm.

The electric lights began to glow in the restaurant.

Lady Linquest did her best to rouse her niece to gaiety, but her efforts were futile. The old man who was entertaining them grew sulky, and Lord Rollington drank glass after glass of champagne. The beautiful actress was frankly bored, and became more cynical and bitter with every scandalous story she told.

Only Mr. Duveen preserved his equanimity. He ate and drank and purred with secure complaisance. It was his rôle in life. Ever since he had been a little lick-trencher fag at Eton he had been thus. It was said by his friends in society—after his back was turned—that on one occasion, having discovered the Earl of —— kissing his wife, he had murmured an apology, saying that he had come to find his cigarette case, and hurriedly retired from the room. This, no doubt, was scandal and untrue, but it showed the estimation in which he was generally held.

Lucy knew this unpleasant story—Lady Linquest had told her. She thought of it as she watched the man pouring *mandarin* into his coffee. Once more she felt the shrinking and repulsion that had come over her more than three hours ago.

She knew, or once had known, her Dante. She had had but little time for anything but frothy reading during the last year or two, but once she had kept up her Italian. A passage from the *Inferno* came into her brain now,—a long-forgotten passage:

> "Quest i non hanno speranza di morte,
> E la lor cicca vita è tanto bassa
> Che invidiosi son d'ogni altra sorte."

She saw the people of whom the Florentine spoke before her now, the people for whom the bitterest fate of all had been reserved,—these who "have no hope of death, and whose blind life so meanly drags that they are envious of every other fate."

Before she left Park Lane, it had been arranged that the small brougham should call for her at the restaurant, and take her on to Hornham. Her luggage was small. This smart society girl was going to take her plunge into the great London *Hinterland* with a single trunk, like any little governess driving to her new situation, where she would learn how bitter the bread of another may taste, and how steep are the stairs in the house of a stranger.

The carriage arrived just as lunch was over, and she left all of them with immeasurable relief.

Driving up Shaftesbury Avenue to find her northward route was like driving into a black curtain. It was terribly hot and dark, the horses were uneasy, and the people moving on the pavements seemed like phantoms in some city of dreadful night.

London began to grip and hold her then as it had never done before. Seen under this pall, its immensity and the dignity it gained by that was revealed in a new aspect. *Her* London, her corner of the town, the mere pleasure-city, became of no consequence, its luxury, its parks and palaces, shrank and dwindled to nothing in her consciousness.

She was attuned to thoughts more solemn than were wont to have their way with her. Her eyes and ears were opened to the reality of life.

She had lost her dislike for the visit she was going to pay. Below her frequent irritation at her brother's way of life there had always been a strong affection for him. And more than that, she had always respected him, though often enough she would not admit it even to herself. As the brougham turned into the surging arcana at Islington her curiosity about the next few days was quickened: the thought of personal discomfort—discomfort of a physical kind—had quite gone. She felt that she was about to have experience of something new, her pulses quickened to it.

The vicarage of St. Elwyn's was one of those stately old red-brick houses, enclosed in a walled garden of not inconsiderable extent, that are still to be found here and there in north London. They date from the florid Georgian times, when that part was a spacious countryside where wealthy merchants withdrew from commerce in the evening of their days and lived a decorous life among the fields and trees. Here and there, in the vast overgrown and congested districts, one or another of these old freeholds has been preserved inviolate—as may be seen in the ride from Hackney to Edmonton—and becomes an alien in a wilderness of mean little houses and vulgar streets.

Father Blantyre had bought one of these few remaining mansions in Hornham, at a high price, and had presented it to the parish of St. Elwyn's as its vicarage. Here he lived with his two curates and a staff of four servants,—a housekeeper, two maids, and a man-of-all-work. The personal wants of the three clergymen were very simple, but the servants were useful in many parochial affairs. In times when work was scarce, the vicarage staff boiled soup, like any cheap restaurant-keeper. The house was open at all times of the day or night to people who wanted to be quiet and alone for a time; social clubs and guilds had their headquarters there.

Indeed, the place was the centre of a diversified and complex life—how complex, neither Lucy, nor any outsider, had the least conception.

The carriage stopped at the heavy square porch with its flight of steps, and the footman ran up them and rang the bell.

Lucy noticed with amusement that the man's face expressed a mild wonder at the neighbourhood in which he found himself, and that he winked solemnly at the coachman on his box.

Lucy stood on the steps for a moment. The sky was quite dark, and the little side street in which she was, showed in a dim and sulphurous half-light—like the light round the House of Usher. A piano-organ close by was beating out its vibrant mechanical music with an incongruous and almost vulgar disregard of the menace of the heavens.

The housekeeper opened the front door, and Lucy entered a big panelled hall, now in a gloom that was almost profound, and with a tiled floor that clicked and echoed as the high heels of her shoes struck upon it.

"The vicar is in his study, Miss," the housekeeper said. She was a tall, gaunt, elderly woman, with a face that always reminded Lucy of a horse, and her voice was dry and hesitating.

Lucy crossed the hall, opened a door of oak and another of green baize, and entered her brother's room.

It was a large, lofty place. The walls were covered with books in sober bindings,—there must have been several thousands there. A soft carpet covered the floor, in the centre of which stood an enormous writing-table crowded with books and papers.

Hardly any light came into the place through the long window, and two candles in massive silver holders stood upon the writing-table, throwing a soft radiance around.

The light fell upon a tall crucifix of silver that stood upon the table, a beautiful specimen of English Pre-Reformation work. A small couch had been drawn up close to the table, and on it the priest lay asleep. The face was lined and drawn with worry and with work, and all its secrets were told as the man slept. One hand lay hanging from the side of the sofa—a lean, strong hand, with a coil of muscle upon the back. Seen thus in an abandonment of repose, Lucy's brother showed as a man worn and weary with battle, scarred and battered, bruised, but how irrevocably rich!

A rush of tenderness came over the girl as she looked at him. Here was the man who had not winced or cried aloud, whose spirit was unbowed beneath the bludgeonings of life.

A high serenity lay over the pain upon the face. It was a face vowed, a saint's face, and even as he slept the great soul which shone like a monstrance within him, irradiated the mask that hid it.

Lucy saw all this, received some such impressions as those in two or three moments. Some attraction drew her eyes from the sleeper to the shining symbol of God's pain upon the table. Then they went back to Bernard Blantyre. To her excited fancy there seemed some subtle sympathy between them, an invisible shuttle that was flying to and fro.

Then Blantyre awoke and saw her. He did not come from the kingdom of sleep gradually, as most people do, loath to leave those silent halls. He sprang suddenly into full consciousness, as soldiers upon fields of battle, as old veterans used to sudden drums and tramplings are known to do.

His eyes lighted up with merriment and triumph, his mobile face was one great smile. He caught her by the arms and kissed her repeatedly. "It's splendid to have you again, me darling," he said, with a slight Irish accent that came to both of them when they were excited. "Ye little wretch, staying away so long! Why, ye're prettier than ever! Ye'll have all the Hornham boys waiting for ye outside the church door after Mass, for we don't see your sort down our humble way—the rale West End product!"

Laughing and chattering, putting on the most exaggerated brogue, the brother and sister moved out into the hall. Father Blantyre called loudly, "King! Stephens! where are ye? she's come!—I don't know where my boys are at all, mavourneen—We'll dress um down for not being in to welcome the new clergywoman. Now, come up to your room, sweetheart, and Bob'll bring your box up. Bob! bring me sister's trunk up-stairs."

The little man ran up the wide stairway, an odd, active figure in his black cassock, laughing and shouting in an ecstasy of pleasure and excitement. No schoolboy could have been more merry, more full of simple joy.

Lucy followed him, half laughing, half inclined to sob at this happy welcome. She was carried off her feet by it all, by this strange arrival under lurid skies at the dingy old house which suddenly seemed so home-like.

Reproach filled her heart at her long neglect as she heard her brother's joy. Simplicity!—yes, that was it. He was utterly simple. The thought of the people she had left so short a time ago was more odious than ever.

She found herself alone in her bedroom, a big, gloomy place with solid mahogany furniture in the old style. There was nothing modern there save a little *prie-dieu* of oak by the bedside. But the

sober colours and outmoded massiveness of it all no longer troubled her. She did not give a single thought to her own luxurious nest in Park Lane—as she had done so often during her first visit to St. Elwyn's a year ago.

When she went down-stairs once more, both the assistant priests had come in and were waiting with the vicar in the study, where some tea was presently brought.

Stephens was a tall, youthful-looking man, rather slangy perhaps, with a good deal of the undergraduate about him still, but obviously in earnest. King was square-faced; the clean-shaved jaw showed powerful and had a flavour of the prize-fighter about it, while his general expression was grim and somewhat forbidding. He was much the elder of the two. His expression, the outward shell, was no index to the man within. A tenderer heart never beat in a man; a person more temperamentally kind never lived. But he had more capacity for anger, righteous anger, than either the vicar or Stephens. There were moments when he could be terrible, and some savage strain in him leaped to the surface and was only curbed by a will which had long been sanctified to good.

The two men seemed glad to see Lucy again. She had seen little of them on her first visit; neither of them had made any impression on her. Now they interested her at once.

"Now, then, Bernard," Lucy said as she began to pour out the tea, "what is all this I hear about a scene in church? Lord Huddersfield was full of it. He was most distressed."

"He has been awfully good about it," Blantyre said. "He was down here on Tuesday morning going into the matter. A man named Hamlyn, the editor of a little local paper, threw the church into a miserable state of confusion during Mass last Sunday, just after I had said the Prayer of Consecration. He read a document protesting against the Blessed Sacrament. We had him ejected, and yesterday he was fined ten shillings in the local police court. The magistrate, who is a pronounced Protestant in his sympathies, said that though the defendant had doubtless acted with the best intentions, one must not combat one illegality with another, and that the law provided methods for the regulation of worship other than protests during its process!"

"Pompous old ass!" said Stephens.

"Well, I'm glad they fined him," Lucy said.

"'All's well that ends well!' You won't have the services disturbed again."

"On the contrary, dear, we are all very much afraid that this is the first spark of a big fire. We hear rumours of an organised movement which may be widely taken up by the enemies of the Church. All through the ranks there's a feeling of uneasiness. Lord Huddersfield is working night and day to warn the clergy and prepare them. We cannot say how it will end."

He spoke with gravity and seriousness. Lucy, who privately thought the whole thing a ridiculous storm in a teacup, and was utterly ignorant of the points at issue, looked sympathetic, but said nothing. She was not in a flippant mood; she realised she was quite an outsider in the matter, which seemed so momentous to the three intelligent men she was with, and, unwilling to betray her lack of comprehension or to say anything that would jar, she kept a discreet silence.

"We all get shouted after already, when we go into the worst parts of the parish," said Stephens cheerfully. "They've been rousing the hooligan element. It's an old trick. Lazy bounders, who don't know a Christian from a Jew and have never been in a church in their lives, shout 'papist' after us as we go into the houses. Just before I came in, I was walking up the street when a small and very filthy urchin put his head round the corner of a house and squeaked out, 'Oo kissed ve Pope's toe?' Then he turned and ran for dear life. As yet, I haven't been assaulted, but King has! Haven't you, King?"

Mr. King looked rather like a bashful bulldog, and endeavoured to change the subject.

"Do you mean any one actually struck you, Mr. King?" Lucy said, absolutely bewildered. "How awful! But why should any one want to do that?"

The vicar broke in with a broad grin that made his likeness to a comedian more apparent than ever.

"Oh, King was splendid!" he said with a chuckle. "That ended very well. A big navvy chap was coming out of a public-house just as King was passing. He looked round at his friends and called out something to the effect that here was another monkey in petticoats—we wear our cassocks in the streets—and see how he'd do for um! So he gave poor King a clout on the side of the head."

"Oh, I *am* sorry," Lucy said, looking with interest upon the priest, and realising dimly that to be a clergyman in Hornham apparently ranked as one of the dangerous trades. "What did you do, Mr. King?"

King flushed a little and looked singularly foolish. He was a bashful man with ladies,—they did not come much into his pastoral way.

Lucy thought that the poor fellow had probably run away and wished that she had not asked such an awkward question.

"Oh, he won't tell ye, my dear!" Blantyre said, "but I will. When the gentleman smacked um on the cheek, he turned the other to him and kept's hands behind's back. Then the hero smacked

that cheek too. 'Hurroo!' says King, or words to that effect, 'now I've fulfilled me duty to me religion and kept to the words of Scripture. And now, me friend, I'm going to do me duty to me neighbour and thrash ye till ye can't see out of your eyes.' With that he stepped up to um and knocked um down, and when he got up, he knocked um down again!"

Mr. King fidgeted uneasily in his seat. "I thought it was the wisest thing to do," he said, apologetically. "You see, it would stop anything of the sort for the future!"

"And the fun of the whole thing, Miss Blantyre," Stephens broke in, "was that I came along soon after and found the poor wretch senseless—King's got a fist like a hammer. So we got him up and refused to charge him to the policeman who turned up after it was all over, and we brought him here. We sponged him and mended him and fed him, and he turned out no end of a good sort when the drink was out of him. Poor chap gets work when he can, hasn't a friend in the world; hadn't any clothes or possessions but what he stood up in, and was utterly a waster and uncared for. We asked him if he knew what a papist was, and found he hadn't an idea, only he thought that they made love to workingmen's wives when their husbands were at work! He'd been listening to our friend, Mr. Hamlyn, who called a mass-meeting after the police-court proceedings and lectured on the three men of sin at the vicarage!"

A flood of strange and startling ideas poured into the girl's brain. A new side of life, a fourth dimension, was beginning to be revealed to her. She looked wonderingly at the three men in their long cassocks; she felt she was in the presence of power. She had felt that when James Poyntz was talking to her in the train, in the fresh, sunlit morning, which seemed a thing of the remotest past now. Yet this afternoon she felt it more poignantly than before. Things were going on down here, in this odd corner of London, that were startling in their newness.

"And what happened to the poor man?" she said at length.

"Oh," answered the vicar, "very fortunately we are without a man of all work just now, so we took him on. He carried your trunk up-stairs. He's wearing Stephen's trousers, which are much too tight for um! and an old flannel tennis coat of King's—till we can get his new clothes made. He was in rags!"

"But surely that's rather risky," Lucy said in some alarm. "And what about the other servants? I shouldn't think Miss Cass liked it much!"

Miss Cass was the housekeeper, the woman with the face like a horse. She always repelled Lucy, who, for no reason than the old, stupid "Dr. Fell" reason, disliked her heartily.

To her great surprise, she saw three faces turned towards her suddenly. On each was an expression of blank surprise, exactly the same expression. Lucy wanted to laugh; the three men were as alike as children are when a conjuror has just made the pudding in the hat or triumphantly demonstrated the disappearing egg.

The taciturn King spoke first. "I forgot," he said; "of course you don't know anything about Miss Cass. How should you, indeed! Miss Cass is a saint."

He said it quite simply, with a little pride, possibly, that the vicarage which housed him housed a saint, too, but that was all.

"Yes," the vicar said, his brogue dropping away from him, as it always did when he was serious, "Miss Cass is a saint. I'll tell you her story some time while you're here, dear. It is a noble story. But don't you be alarmed about our new importation. Bob will be all right. We know what we are doing here."

"It's wonderful, Miss Blantyre," Stephens broke out, his boyish face all lighted up with enthusiasm. "You know, Bob'd actually never been in church before yesterday morning, when he came to Mass."

He stopped for a moment, out of breath in his eagerness. Lucy saw that he—indeed, all of them—took it quite for granted that these things they spoke of had supreme interest for her as for them. There was such absolute *conviction* that these things were the only important things, that no excuse or apology was necessary in speaking of them. She found she liked that, she liked it already. There was a magnetism in these men that drew her within their circle. She saw that, whatever else they were, they were absolutely consistent. They did not have one eye on convention and the world, like the West End clergymen she knew,—some of them at least. These men lived for one aim, one end, with tremendous force and purpose. They simply disregarded everything else. Nothing else occurred! Yes, this was a fourth dimension indeed. She bent herself to listen to the boy's story, marking, with a pleasure that had something maternal in it, the vividness and reality of his interest and hopes.

"Before he went," the young man said, "I explained the Church's teaching exactly to him. Don't forget that the poor chap hadn't the slightest idea of anything of the sort. He was astounded. A mystery that I could not explain to him, a mystery for which there were no *material* evidences at all, came home to him at once. *I saw faith born.* And they say this is not an age of miracles! Think of the tremendous revolution in the man's mind. He talked to me after the service. It was all wonderfully real to him. He was absolutely convinced of the coming of our Lord. There isn't a rationalist in London that could shake the man's belief. I asked him why he was so sure—was it merely because I had told him, because I believed in it? His answer was singularly touching. 'Nah,' he said, scratching his head,—they all do when they try to think,—'It wasn't wot you said,

guvnor, it was wot I *felt*. I *knowed* as 'E wos there. Why, I ses to myself, *It's true!*'"

"It is very wonderful," Lucy said. "It's more wonderful by far than a man at a Salvation Army meeting or a revival. One can understand that the sudden shouts and the trumpets and banners and things would influence any one. But that a service which is inexplicable even to the people who conduct it should influence this poor uneducated man is strange."

"Now, I don't think it strange, Lucy, dear," the vicar said; "it's far more natural to me than the other. The wonderful power of the Church lies in this, *that her mysteries appeal to quite simple people whose minds are a blank on religious questions. They appeal to the simple instantly and triumphantly.* They feel the power of the Blessed Sacrament. And *only* Catholicism can do this in full and satisfying measure. We find that over and over again. The jam-and-glory teas, the kiss-in-the-ring revivals, have a momentary and hysterical influence with the irreligious. But it doesn't last, there is no system or discipline, and above all, *there is no dignity*. Only priests realise thoroughly how the poorer and less-educated classes crave for the proper dignity and beauty of worship. It has always been so. It is the secret of the power that the Roman Church has over the minds of men."

"Then why are there so many Salvationists and Dissenters?" Lucy asked.

"For a multitude of reasons. A dislike to discipline chiefly. People don't go to church because the novelties of thirty or forty years ago have filtered down into the omnibuses and people who are naturally irreligious prefer to make a comfortable little code for themselves. The Church says you *must not* do this or that; its rules are thoroughly well defined. Folk are afraid to come as near to God as the Church brings them. Their cry is always that the Church comes between them and God. Often that is a malevolent cry, and more often still it's pure ignorance. The silly people haven't an idea what they're talking about. It would be just as reasonable for me to say, 'I hate and abominate Nicaragua, which is a pernicious and soul-destroying place,' when I've never been nearer to Nicaragua than Penzance."

"There is one thing that we do see," King continued in his slow, powerful way. "Whenever we have open-minded men or women come to church to pray and find help, they find it. Dozens and dozens of people have come to me after they have become members of the Church and said that they could not understand the anti-Church nonsense they themselves had joined in before. '*We never knew*,' that is the cry always."

"The thunder's beginning!" Father Blantyre said suddenly, realising apparently that the talk was straying into channels somewhat alien to a young society lady presiding at afternoon tea.

"Lucy, me dear, it's tired you'll be of sitting with three blathering old priests talking shop in a thunderstorm—there's a flash for ye!"

A sheet of brilliant steel-blue had flashed into the room as he spoke, showing every detail of it clear and distinct as in some lurid day of the underworld. The books, the writing table, the faces of the three clergymen, and the tall silver crucifix between the candles, which had momentarily faded to a dull and muddy yellow, all made a sudden tableau which burned itself upon the retina. Then came darkness once more and the giant stammer of the thunder far overhead.

The thunder ceased and they waited, expectant of the next explosion, when the penetrating and regular beating of an adjacent bell was heard.

"There's the bell for evensong!" Blantyre said; "I did not know it was so late." He put on his berretta and left the room, the other men following him. Lucy rose also. She felt that she would make one of them, and going up-stairs to get a hat, she presently found herself in the long, covered passage that connected the vicarage with the church.

The idea of a house which was but an appanage of the church was new to her. The passage had been built since her last visit. And as she entered the huge, dim building, she saw clearly how powerful in the minds of her brother and his friends its nearness must be. All their life, their whole life, centred in this church. Its services were as frequent and natural as their daily food. How strangely different it all was to the life of the outside world! She herself had not been to church for six weeks or more. Even people who "called themselves Christians" only entered a pew and enjoyed a hebdomadal siesta in church. But these men could not get on without it. Every thought and action was in communion with the Unseen. And she was forced to acknowledge it to herself,—if one actually did believe in a future life, in eternity, then this was the only logical way in which to prepare for it. If life was really like a sojourn of one night in an inn, then the traveller who made no preparation for the journey, and spent the night in careless disregard of the day, was an utter fool. But no one called worldly people fools!—it was all very puzzling and worrying, and common-sense did not seem like common-sense in Hornham.

And was James Poyntz a fool?

It was the last question she asked herself as she turned into the side chapel where evensong was to be said. Some twenty kneeling figures were there. The place was dimly lighted save for the tall gas standards by the priests' seats in front of the altar.

High up before the painted reredos hung a single lamp that burned with a dull red glow. There were many sick folk in the parish of St. Elwyn's: at all hours of the day and night, the clergy were sent for to help a departing soul upon its way hence, and the Blessed Sacrament was reserved upon this altar in the side chapel.

The simple and stately service was nearly over. The girl had listened to the sonorous words as if she heard them now for the first time. As she knelt, her heart seemed empty of the hopes, fears, and interests of daily life. It seemed as a vessel into which something was steadily flowing. And the fancy came to her that all she experienced was flowing to her from the dim tabernacle upon the altar. It was almost a *physical* sense, it was full of awe and sweetness. She trembled exceedingly as the service ended and her brother prayed for the fellowship of the Holy Ghost.

For a time after the echoing footsteps of the clergy had died away, she remained upon her knees. She was praying, but without words; all her thoughts were caught up into one voiceless, wordless, passionate ejaculation.

When at length she bowed low,—it was the first time she had ever done such a thing,—before the altar, and left the church, it was by the west door.

She had a fancy for the street, and she found that the thunder had all passed away and that a painted summer's evening sky hung over the garish town.

As she finally turned into the vicarage, she cast one look back at the church. It rose among the houses high into the air. The sunset fired the wet tiles of the roof and gilded the cross upon the lantern. She thought of That which was within.

CHAPTER V

WEALTHY MISS PRITCHETT AND POOR GUSSIE DAVIES ENTER THE VICARAGE GARDEN

"Todgers," Mr. Stephens remarked to Lucy, as they went down into the garden after lunch on Saturday, "could do it when it chose."

The last preparations for the garden party were being made. The big marquee was erected, the tennis lawns were newly marked, there was a small stand for the string band.

Waiters, looking oddly out of their element in the brilliant sunshine, which showed dress-coats, serviceable enough at night, tinged with a metallic green like a magpie's wing, were moving about with baskets of strawberries and zinc boxes of ice.

The old-fashioned garden, an oasis in the wilderness of brick all around, was brilliant with sunflowers, stocks, and geraniums; the lawns were fresh and green. The curate was in tennis flannels and an Oxford blazer, and Lucy meditated upon the influence of clothes, as her betters had done before her. Stephens seemed to have put off his priesthood with his tippet and cassock, and the jaunty cap covered a head which seemed as if it had never worn a berretta. Lucy found, to her own surprise, that she liked the man less so. It was a total inversion of her ordinary ideas. She began to think that a priest should be robed always.

Miss Cass, the housekeeper, in a new cap, came up to them. Lucy had talked to the woman for more than an hour on Friday afternoon, and the prejudice caused by her appearance was removed.

"I hope everything is satisfactory, Miss," she said. "It all seems to be going on well. The men from Whiteley's know their business."

"It all seems splendid, Miss Cass," Lucy said. "I'm sure it couldn't be better. Have the band people come?"

"Yes, Miss, and the piano-entertainer too. They're having some refreshment in the library. His Reverence is telling them funny stories, Miss."

She hurried away to superintend further arrangements.

"The vicar is always so fine," the young man said, with a delighted enthusiasm in his chief that was always pleasant for Lucy to hear. "He gets on with men so well; such a lot of parsons don't. There's nothing effeminate about the vicar. He's a man's man. I'll bet every one of those fellows in there will go away feeling they've made a friend, and that parsons aren't such scalawags after all."

A burst of laughter came from the door leading into the garden, as if to confirm his words, and Father Blantyre descended the steps with a little knot of men dressed in something between livery and uniform, carrying oddly shaped cases of black waterproof in their hands.

Laughing and joking, the men made their way towards the music stands.

The vicar came up to Lucy. "How will it do?" he said. "It seems all right. Just walk round with me, my dear, and I'll give ye a few tips how to play hostess in Hornham."

They strolled away together. "Now, ye'll be careful, won't ye, mavourneen?" he said rather anxiously. "The folk coming this afternoon require more management and tact than any I've ever

met. They'll all have what they think is the high society manner—and ye mustn't laugh at um, poor dears. I love 'em all, and I won't have you making fun of them. I like them better in church than in society, I'm quite free to admit to you, and their souls are more interesting than their bodies! Perhaps half a dozen people here this afternoon will be what you'd call gentlefolk—the doctor, Dr. Hibbert, and a few others. The rest of them will be fearfully genteel. The young gentlemen will be back early from the city, and they'll come in flannels and wear public-school ribbons round their hats, roses in their button-holes and crimson silk cummerbunds!"

"Good heavens!" Lucy said.

"Yes, and they'll all want to flirt with ye, in a very superfine, polite sort of way, and mind ye let um! They'll ask if they might 'assist you to a little claret cup,' and say all sorts of strange things. But they're good enough at heart, only they will be so polite!"

"And the women?"

Father Blantyre shrugged his shoulders. "You'll find them rather difficult," he said. "You bet they see your name in the papers—they all read the 'Fashionable Intelligence'—confound um!—and the attitude will be a little hostile. But be civil for my sake, dear. I hate all this just as much as you do. I can get in touch with them spiritually, but socially I find it hard. But I think it's the right thing to do, to entertain them all once or twice a year, and they do enjoy themselves! And I owe them a deep, deep debt of gratitude for their loyalty during this trying week. I have had dozens and dozens of letters and calls. Every one has rallied to the church in a wonderful and touching way since the Sunday affair. God bless them all!"

Lucy squeezed his arm with sympathy. In an hour, the guests began to arrive.

Lucy and her brother met them by the garden door of the house. It was a gay scene enough. A brilliant flood of afternoon sunshine irradiated everything; the women were well and fashionably dressed, the band played, and every one seemed happy.

Lucy found it much easier than she expected. The guests were suburban, of course, and not of the "classic suburbs" at that. But, she reflected, there was hardly a man there who had not better manners than Lord Rollington or General Pompe. And if they wore Carthusian or Zingari ribbons, that meant no more than that they were blessed with a colour-sense; while a slight admixture of "i" in the pronunciation of the first vowel was certainly preferable to the admixture of looseness and innuendo that she was sometimes forced to hear in much more exalted circles. So she received tea and strawberries at the hands of gallant and debonair young gentlemen engaged in the minor walks of commerce; she chatted merrily with fluffy young ladies who, when they had gotten over their first distrust of a girl who went to the drawing-room and stayed with lords, finding that she wasn't the "nasty, stuck-up thing" they expected, were somewhat effusively affectionate. She talked gravely about the "dear vicar and those dreadful men" to ample matrons who for a moment had forgotten the cares of a small suburban villa and a smaller income, in the luxury of fashion, the latest waltz tunes, the champagne cup, and a real social event. Indeed, everything went "with a snap," as one young gentleman remarked to Lucy. She became popular almost at once, and was surrounded by assiduous young bloods of the city "meccas."

Father Blantyre, as he went about from group to group, was in a state of extreme happiness, despite his somewhat gloomy anticipations. It was an hour of triumph for him. His people, for whom he prayed and laboured and gave his life and fortune, were one and all engaged to show him how they would stand by him in the anticipated trouble. Everywhere he was greeted with real warmth and affection, and before long the quick Celtic temperament was bringing a mist before the merry grey eyes and a riot and tumult of thankfulness within.

On all sides, he heard praises of his sister. "The pretty dear," one good lady, the wife of a cashier in a small Mincing Lane firm, said to him. "I had quite a long talk with her, Father Blantyre. And a sweet girl she is. We're not in the way of meeting with society folk, though we read of all the gay goings-on in the *Mail*; but I said to Pa, 'Pa,' I said, 'if all the society girls are like that, then there's nothing much the matter with the aristocracy, and *Modern Society* is a catchpenny rag.' And Pa quite agreed. He was as much struck by her as I was."

And so on. Every one seemed pleased with Lucy. The guests began to arrive less and less frequently, until at length the gardens were crowded and no one else appeared to be coming. All the various games and entertainments were in full swing, and Lucy was about to accept the invitation of a tall boy in a frock coat and a silk hat to sit down and watch a set of tennis with him, when there was a slight stir and commotion at the garden door of the house.

Miss Cass came hurriedly down the steps, as a sort of advance guard for two ladies who were ushered into the garden by a waiter. The housekeeper dived into the crowd and found the vicar, who turned and went with her at once to meet the late-comers.

"There's Miss Pritchett and Gussie Davies," said the young man to Lucy in rather an awed voice, and then, as if to banish some unwelcome impression, relieved his feelings by the enigmatic remark of "Pip, pip," which made Lucy stare at him, wondering what on earth he meant.

She noticed that nearly every one at this end of the garden was watching, more or less openly, the meeting between the vicar and his guests. She did not quite understand why, but guessed that some local magnate had arrived, and looked with the rest.

The elder of the two women was expensively dressed in mauve silk, and wore a small bonnet with

a white aigrette over a coffee-coloured fringe of hair that suggested art. Her face was plump and pompous, a parrot-like nose curved over pursy lips that wore an expression of arrogant ill-temper, and the small eyes glanced rapidly hither and thither. In one white-gloved hand, the lady held a long-handled lorgnette of tortoise-shell and gold. Every now and then she raised these glasses and surveyed the scene before her, in exactly the manner in which countesses and duchesses do upon the stage.

Her companion was young, a large, blonde girl, not ill-looking, but without character or decision in her face or walk. She was dressed very simply.

Lucy turned to her companion. "Do you know them, then?" she said.

"Rather," he replied. "I should think I did. That's Miss Pritchett, old Joseph Pritchett's daughter, old Joseph, the brewer. He left her all his money, she's tons of stuff—awfully wealthy, I mean, Miss Blantyre."

"Does she live here, then?"

"Oh, yes. In spite of all her money she's always been an unappropriated blessing. She's part of Hornham, drives a pair in a landau. The girl is Gussie Davies, her companion. She's not half a bad sort. All the Hornham boys know Gussie. Nothing the matter with Gussie Davis! The old cat sits on her fearfully, though. She can't call her soul her own. It's bally awful, sometimes, Gussie says."

Lucy gasped. These revelations were startling indeed. She was moving in the queerest possible set of people. She hadn't realised that such folk existed. It took her breath away, like the first plunge into a bath of cold water.

The artless youth prattled on, and Lucy gathered that the lady with the false front was a sort of female *arbiter elegantarium* to Hornham, indubitably the richest person there, a leading light. She saw her brother talking to the woman in an eager way. He seemed afraid of her,—as, indeed, the poor man was, under the present circumstances,—and Lucy resented it. With a quick feminine eye, she saw that Miss Pritchett was assuming an air of tolerance, of patronage even, to the vicar.

At last, Bernard caught sight of her. His face became relieved at once and he led the spinster to the place where she was sitting.

Every instinct of the girl rose up in dislike and rebellion as the woman drew near. She had felt nothing of the sort with the other people. In this case, it was quite different. She prepared to repel cavalry, to use the language of the military text-books.

On the surface, the incident was simple and commonplace enough. A well-bred girl felt a repulsion for an obviously unpleasant and patronising woman of inferior social rank. That was all. It is a trite and well-worn aphorism that no event is trivial, yet it is extraordinarily true. Who could have said that this casual meeting was to be fraught with storm and danger for the Church in England; that out of a hostile handshake between two women a mighty scandal and tumult was to rise?

Miss Pritchett came up to Lucy, and Father Blantyre introduced her. Then, with an apologetic murmur, he hurried away to another part of the garden.

"Won't you sit down?" Lucy said, looking at the chair that had been left vacant by her late companion.

"Thank you, Miss Blantyre, but I've been sitting in my carriage. I should prefer to stand, if it's the same to you," said Miss Pritchett.

Lucy rose. "Perhaps you would like to walk round the grounds?" she asked.

"Probably I know the grounds better than you," the elder woman answered with a patronage which was bordering on the purely ludicrous. "This residence was one of my dear father's houses, as were many of the Hornham houses. When the vicar acquired the property, the brewery trustees sold it to him, though I think it far from suitable for a parish clergyman."

"Well, yes," Lucy answered. "It certainly is a dingy, gloomy old place, but what else can you expect down here?"

Miss Pritchett flushed and tossed her head till the aigrette in her smart little bonnet shook like a leaf.

"One is liable to be misunderstood," she said. "Your brother's small private means enable him to live in a house which the next vicar or any ordinary clergyman could hardly hope for."

"It *is* very good of Bernard to come down here and spend his life in such an impossible place," Lucy said. She was thoroughly angry now and quite determined to give the woman a lesson. Her impertinence was insufferable. To hear this creature speak of Bernard's income of three thousand a year—every penny of which he gave away or spent for good—in this way was unendurable.

Miss Pritchett grew redder than ever. She was utterly incapable of bearing rebuff or contradiction. Her local eminence was unquestioned. She had never moved from Hornham, where her wealth and large interests secured for her that slavish subserviency that a vain and

petty spirit loves. For months past, she had been gradually gathering up cause for quarrel and bitterness with the clergy of St. Elwyn's. She had found that once within the portals of the church she was just as anyone else. She could not lord it over the priests as she wished to do. For once, she was beginning to find that her money was powerless, there was no "high seat in the synagogue" that it could buy.

"The place has been good enough for *me*," she said angrily, never doubting that this was final.

"Ah, yes," Lucy answered. "That, Miss Pritchett, I can quite understand." The Hornham celebrity was a stupid woman. Her brain was as empty as a hen's, and she was not adroit enough to seize upon the real meaning of this remark. She had an uneasy suspicion that it was offensive, and that was all.

"What you may mean by 'impossible' I am not aware," she continued. "I speak plain English myself. But those that don't know of a place didn't ought to speak unfavourable of it. As for your brother, I've always said that he was a worthy person and acted as well as he might, until late months, when I've felt it my duty to say a word or two in season as to some of the church matters."

"I hope he profited, Miss Pritchett."

"I fear that he did not receive my words as he should, coming from a lady of standing in the place—and him only here three years. I'm beginning to think that there's something in the popular agitation. Upon my word! Priests do take a good deal on themselves nowadays. It wouldn't have been allowed when I was a girl."

"Things have altered very much for the better during the last fifty years," Lucy said pointedly.

This the lady did immediately apprehend. She lifted the lorgnette and stared at her companion in speechless anger. The movement was meant to be crushing. It was thus, Miss Pritchett knew from her reading, that women of the aristocracy crushed inferiors.

It was too much for Lucy. She endeavoured to control her feelings, but they were irresistible. She had not seen anything so funny as this vulgar and pompous old thing for years. A smile broadened out upon her face, and then, without further ado, she burst out into peal after peal of laughter.

The flush on Miss Pritchett's face died away. It grew perfectly white with passion.

She turned round. Her companion had been walking some three yards behind them in a listless and dejected fashion, looking with greedy eyes at the allurements on every side, and answering the furtive greetings of various male friends with a pantomime, expressive of contempt, irritation, and hopeless bondage in equal parts.

Miss Pritchett stepped up to her, and caught hold of her arm. Her fingers went so deep into the flesh that the girl gasped and gave a half-smothered cry.

"Take me to the carriage," Miss Pritchett said. "Let me leave this place of Popery and light women!"

The obedient Gussie Davies turned and, in a moment or two, both women had disappeared.

Lucy sought her brother. She found him eating a large pink ice in company with a florid, good-humoured matron in maroon, with an avalanche of lace falling from the edges of her parasol. "Hallo, dear!" he said. "Let me introduce you to Mrs. Stiffe, Dr. Hibbert's sister. And where's Miss Pritchett?"

"She's gone," Lucy answered. "And, I'm very much afraid, in a towering rage. But really she was so insolent that I could *not* stand it. I would do most things for you, Ber, but, really, that woman!"

"Well, it can't be helped, I suppose," the vicar said with humorous resignation. "It was bound to come sooner or later, and I'm selfish enough to be glad it's you've given me lady the *congé* and not me. Mrs. Stiffe here knows her, don't you, Mrs. Stiffe?"

"I do, Mr. Blantyre," the stout lady said. "I've met the woman several times when I've been staying down here with my brother. A fearful old cat *I* call her! I wonder that you put up with her so long!"

"Policy, Mrs. Stiffe—ye know we're all Jesuits here, the local paper says so in yesterday's issue—policy! You see, when I first came here Miss Pritchett came to church. She's a leading person here and I made no doubt others would follow her. Indeed, they did, too! and when they saw what the Catholic Church really was they stayed with us. And then, again, Miss Pritchett was always ready to give us a cheque for any good work, and we want all the money we can get! Oh, there's a lot of good in Miss Pritchett!"

"I fail to see it on a short acquaintance," Lucy remarked; "if she gave generously, it was only to flatter her vanity. I'm sure of that."

"It's a great mistake to attribute unworthy motives to worthy deeds," the vicar said. "We've no right to do it, and it's only giving ourselves away when we do, after all!"

"Oh, it's all very well, Vicar," said good Mrs. Stiffe; "we know you never say anything against any

one. But if Miss Pritchett is such an angel, what's the reason of her behaviour now? My brother told me that things were getting very strained."

"Ah, that's a different matter entirely," Blantyre said. "She began to interfere in important things. And, of course, we couldn't have that. I'd have let her manage the soup-kitchens and boss the ladies' guilds till the sky fell. But she wanted to do more than that. Poor dear King offended her in some way—he's not what ye'd call a ladies' man—and she wrote to me to send him away at once! And there were other incidents. I've been doing my best to meet her views and to keep in with her, but it's been very difficult and I felt the storm would burst soon. I wanted to keep her in the Faith for her own silly sake! She's not a very strong-minded person beneath her manner, and she's just the sort of woman some spiritualistic quack or Christian Science gentleman would get hold of and ruin her health and happiness. I did hope she'd find peace in the Church. Well, it can't be helped," he ended with a rather sad smile, for his heart was tender for all his flock and he saw far down into the human soul and loved it. Then he changed suddenly. "What am I doing!" he cried, "talking parochial politics at a garden party! Shame on me! Come on, Mrs. Stiffe, come on, Lucy, Mr. Chaff, the piano-entertainer, is going to give his happy half-hour at Earl's Court."

They went merrily away with him. As they approached the rows of chairs in front of the piano, he turned suddenly to his sister.

"Why didn't ye knock her down?" he said suddenly, with an exaggerated brogue and real comic force. Both ladies burst out laughing.

"You ought to have been on the music-hall stage, Vicar," Mrs. Stiffe said, "you're wasted in Hornham."

"So I've been told," he said. "I shall think seriously of it. It's a pity to waste a talent."

CHAPTER VI

BOADICEA, JOAN OF ARC, CHARLOTTE CORDAY, JAEL, AND MISS PRITCHETT OF HORNHAM

People of taste are never without wonder at the extraordinary lack of it that many well-to-do folk display. It was but rarely that a person of taste entered Malakoff Lodge, where Miss Pritchett dwelt, but when such an event did happen, the impression was simply that of enormous surprise. The drawing-room into which visitors were shown was an immense place and full of furniture. In each of the corners stood a life-sized piece of statuary painted in "natural colours." Here one saw an immense negro, some six feet high, with coffee-coloured skin, gleaming red lips, and a gaudy robe of blue and yellow. This monster supported a large earthenware basket on his back, painted, of course, in correct straw-colour, from which sprang a tall palm that reached to the ceiling. In other corners of the room were an Egyptian dancing-girl, a Turk, and an Indian fakir, all of which supported ferns, which it was part of Miss Gussie Davies' duty to water every morning.

The many tables, chiefly of circular or octagonal form, which stood about the room, bore a multitude of costly and hideous articles which should have been relegated to a museum, to illustrate the deplorable taste of the middle classes during the early and mid-Victorian era. Here, for example, was a model of the leaning tower of Pisa done in white alabaster, some two feet in height, and shielded from harm by a thick glass case. There, the eye fell upon a bunch of very purple grapes and a nectarine or two, made of wax, with a waxen bee settling upon them, all covered with glass also. Literary tastes were not forgotten. Immense volumes of Moore's poems, the works of Southey or Robert Montgomery lay about on the tables. These were bound in heavy leather boards, elaborately tooled in gold representations of Greek lyres and golden laurel crowns. The shining gilt edges were preserved from the profanation of a casual opening by two or three immense brass clasps which imprisoned the poet's thoughts within.

The time in which these things were made was a sentimental age, and it was well reflected in its *bijouterie*. Innumerable nymphs and shepherdesses stood about offering each other hearts, madrigals, and other dainties. But they had none of the piquant grace that Watteau would have given them, or the charm the white-hot fires of Dresden might have burnt into them. They were solid, very British nymphs, whose drapery was most decorously arranged that one thick ankle might be visible, but no more;—nymphs and shepherdesses who, one might imagine, sat happily by the bank of some canal, singing the pious ditties of Dr. Watts as the sun went down,—nymphs, in short, with a moral purpose. The hangings of Miss Pritchett's room, the heavy window curtains that descended from baldachinos of gleaming gold, were all of a rich crimson, an extraordinary colour that is not made now, and the wall-paper was a heavy pattern in dark ultramarine and gold. Indeed, there was enough gold in this mausoleum to have satisfied Miss Killmansegg herself.

One merit the place had in summer, it was cool, and when the barouche that was the envy of Hornham drove up at Malakoff gates, Miss Pritchett rushed into the drawing-room, and, sinking into an arm-chair of purple plush, fanned a red and angry face with her handkerchief.

The companion followed her meekly.

"Wait there, Miss Davies," said the spinster sharply; "stand there for a moment, please, till I can get my breath."

Miss Davies remained standing before her patroness in meek obedience. After a minute or two, Miss Pritchett motioned with her hand towards an adjacent chair. Gussie Davies sat down.

It was part of the spinster's life to subject her companion to a kind of drill in this way. The unfortunate girl's movements were regulated mathematically, and in her more genial and expansive moments Miss Pritchett would explain that her "nerves" required that this should be so —that she should have absolute control over the movements of any one who was in the room with her.

There had been spirited contests between Miss Pritchett and a long succession of girls who had refused to play the part of automaton, but in Gussie Davies, the lady had found a willing slave. She paid her well, and in return was served with diligence and thorough obsequiousness. Gussie was adroit, more adroit than her somewhat lymphatic appearance would have led the casual observer to suppose. Properly trained, she might almost have made a psychologist, but her opportunities had been limited. However, for several years, she had directed a sharp brain to the study of one person, and she knew Miss Pritchett as Mr. Sponge knew his Mogg. Her influence with that lady was enormous, the more so in that it was not at all suspected by the object, who imagined that the girl was hers, body and soul. But, nevertheless, Miss Davies, who hailed from Wales and had a large share of the true Cymric cunning, could play upon her mistress with sure fingers, and, while submitting to every form of petty tyranny, and occasionally open insult, she ruled the foolish woman she was with.

Gussie sat down. Miss Pritchett did not speak at once, and the girl judged, correctly enough, that she was meant to open the ball.

"O Miss Pritchett!" she said with a little shudder, "what a relief it must be to you to be back in your own mansion!"

Nothing pleased the spinster more than the word mansion as applied to her house. Gussie used the term with discretion, employing it only on special occasions, unwilling to be prodigal of so sure a card.

"You may well say that, child," Miss Pritchett answered faintly.

"Now you must let me ring for a glass of port for you," the young lady continued. "You need it, indeed you do. I'll take the responsibility on myself."

She rose and rang the bell. "Two glasses," said Miss Pritchett when the answering maid had received her order. "You shall have a glass, Gussie, for I feel I am to blame in taking you to such a place. I have seen the world, and I have met women of that class before, I am sorry to say. But hitherto I have managed to shield you from such contamination."

Gussie sighed the sigh of innocence, a sigh which the young men with whom she larked about in Alexandra Gardens never heard.

"I wish I had your knowledge of the world," she said. "But, of course, I've never mixed in society, not like you."

The port arrived and in a minute or two the experienced damsel saw that her patroness was settling down for a long and confidential chat. The moment promised a golden opportunity, of which she meant to take advantage if she possibly could. She had a big scheme in hand; she was primed with it by minds more subtle than her own. The image of Sam Hamlyn was before her and she burned to deserve that gentleman's commendation.

"Yes," said Miss Pritchett, "as a girl, when I used to go to the Lord Mayor's balls at the Mansion House with papa and mamma, I saw what society really was. And it's worse now! That abandoned hussy at the vicarage is an example of what I mean. I must not go into details before you, child, but I know what I know!"

"How *awful*, Miss Pritchett! I saw her making eyes at all the gentlemen before you went up to her."

"All's fish that comes to the net of such," replied Miss Pritchett. "An earl's toy, the giddy bubble floating on the open sewer of a London season, or the sly allurer of an honest young city gentleman. Anything in trousers, child, is like herrings to a cat!"

"How *awful*! Miss Pritchett," repeated Gussie, wondering what it would be like to be an earl's toy, and rather thinking she would enjoy it. "I suppose you'll go to the vicarage just as usual, though, —on parish business, I mean."

This, as the girl expected, provoked a storm, which she patiently endured, certain that she was in a way to gain her ends. At length, the flow of voluble and angry words grew less. Miss Pritchett was enjoying herself too much to risk the girl's non-compliance with her mood.

"There, there," she said eventually, "it's only your ignorance I know, Gussie, but you do aggravate me. You don't understand society. Never shall I set foot in that man's house again!"

Gussie gasped. Her face expressed fervent admiration at such a daring resolve, but slight incredulity as well.

The bait took again. "Never, as I'm a living lady!" said Miss Pritchett, "and I don't know as I shall ever drive up to the church doors in my carriage on a Sunday morning more! Opinions may change. I *may* have been—I don't say I *have* been, yet, mind you—I *may* have been led away by the false glitter of Roman doctrine and goings on."

The idea seemed to please the lady. She saw herself picturesque in such a situation.

Gussie started suddenly.

"What's the matter, child?" she was asked tartly; "do you think no one's got any nerves? Keep still, do!"

"I'm very sorry, Miss Pritchett, but when you said that, I remembered something I was reading last night in the *Hornham Observer*."

"I was keeping it for Sunday afternoon," said Miss Pritchett. "I did mean to go to morning service and then read Mr. Hamlyn's side of last Sunday's proceedings at home, comfortable like. But what's in the paper?"

"A great deal that will interest you, dear Miss Pritchett, though I do not know if you will be pleased."

"Pleased? What do you mean?"

"Your name is mentioned several times."

"Is it, indeed! We'll soon see about that! Fetch the paper at once and read what it says. If Mr. Hamlyn's been foolish enough to talk about his betters, I'll very soon have him turned neck and crop out of the place. He's a man I've never spoken to more than twice, and he must be taught his place in Hornham."

Gussie went out to fetch the paper. She smiled triumphantly as she came into the hall. All was going well and, moreover, her quick ear had caught the slight trace of wavering and alarm in the concluding words of her mistress. Miss Pritchett, like many other people, was never able to rid herself of a superstitious reverence for print. She devoutly believed the cheap romances that formed her literary food, and even a small local newspaper was not without a strong influence on one whose whole sympathies and interests were local.

Gussie came back with the paper. "There's two whole pages about the St. Elwyn's business," she said, "column after column, with great big letters at the top. Shall I begin at the beginning?"

"No, no; read the bits about me, of course. Read what it was that made you jump like a cat in an oven just now."

"That particular bit did not mention your name, Miss Pritchett, but it chimed in so with what you said just now. I wonder if I can find it?—ah, here it is—

"'And so I think I have accounted for the reason of the popularity of such services as go on at St. Elwyn's among the poorer classes. A wealthy clergyman can buy attendance at any idolatry, and who would blame a starving brother, desperate for food, perhaps, for attendance at a mummery which is nothing to him but the price of a much-needed meal? Not I. Tolerance has ever been the watch-word of the *Observer*, and, however much I may regret that even the poorest man may be forced to witness the blasphemous and hideous mockery of Truth that takes place at St. Elwyn's, I blame not the man, but the cunning of a priesthood that buys his attendance and then points to him as a convert to thinly veiled Romanism.'"

Gussie stopped for a moment to take breath. Miss Pritchett's face was composed to pleasure. This was hot and strong indeed! She wondered how Father Blantyre liked this!

Worthy Mr. Hamlyn, indeed, had heard of the little incident of the navvy and Father King, and knew that the erstwhile antagonist was now housed in the vicarage. Hence the preceding paragraph. Gussie went on:

"'But what shall we say when we find rank and fashion, acute intelligence and honoured names bowing down in the House of Rimmon? How shall we in Hornham regard such a strange and—so it seems to us—unnatural state of affairs?

"'The Scarlet Woman is powerful indeed! It would be idle to attempt to deny it. The drowsy magic of Rome has permeated with its subtle influence homes where we should have hoped it would never enter. And why is this? I think we can understand the reason in some measure. Let us take an imaginary case. Let us suppose that there is among us a woman of high station, of intellect, wealth, and charm. She sees a struggling priesthood establish itself in a Protestant neighbourhood. The sympathy that woman will ever have for the weak is enlisted; she visits a church, not realising what its sham and ceremony leads to, under what Malign Influence it is carried on. And then a gracious nature is attracted by the cunning amenities of worship. The music, the lights, the flowers, the gorgeous robes, appeal to a high and delicate nature. For a time, it passes under the sway of an arrogant priesthood, and, with that sweet submission which is one of the most alluring of feminine charms, bows before a Baal which it does not realise, a golden calf that it would abhor and repudiate were it not blinded by its own charity and unsuspicious trust! Have I drawn a picture that is too strong? I think not. It is only by analogy that we can best present the Truth.

"'Nevertheless we do not hesitate to assert, and assert with absolute conviction, that, if such a clouding of a fine nature were temporarily possible, it would be but transient. Truth will prevail. In the end, we shall see all those who are now the puppets and subjects of a Romanising attempt come back to the clear sunlight of Protestantism, away from the stink-pots and candles, the toys of ritual, the poison of a painted lie.'"

Gussie read the paragraphs with unction. She read them rather well. As she made an end, her guilty conscience gave her a fear that the unusual emphasis might have awakened some suspicion in Miss Pritchett's mind. But with great relief she saw that it was not so. That lady was manifestly excited. Her eyes were bright and there was a high flush on the cheek-bones. Truth to tell, Miss Pritchett had always suspected that there were depths of hidden gold in her nature. But they had never been so vividly revealed to her before.

"Give me the paper," she said in a tremulous voice; "let me read it for myself!"

Her unguarded words showed Miss Davies how completely the fortress was undermined. The spinster read the words through her glasses and then handed the paper back to her companion.

"The man that wrote that," she said, "is a good and sincere man. He knows how the kind heart can be imposed upon and deceived! I shall take an early opportunity of meeting Mr. Hamlyn. He will be a great man some day, if I am any judge."

"He must have had his eye on the Malakoff," Gussie said. "Why, dear Miss Pritchett, he has described you to a T. There is no one else in Hornham to whom it could apply."

"Hush, child! It may be as you say. This worthy man may have been casting his eye over the parish and thought that he saw in me something of which he writes. It is not for me to deny it. I can only say that in his zeal he has much exaggerated the humble merits of one who, whatever her faults, has merely tried to do her duty in the station to which she has been called. And if Providence has placed that station high, it is Providence's will, and we must not complain!"

"How beautifully you put it, Miss Pritchett!"

The chatelaine of Malakoff wiped a tear from her eye. The excitement of the afternoon, the glass of port, the periods of Mr. Hamlyn's prose, had all acted upon nerves pampered by indulgence and tightened with self-irritation.

"I believe you care for me, child," said Miss Pritchett with a sob.

"How it rejoices me to hear you say so, Miss Pritchett," Gussie replied, seeing that her opportunity had now come. "But your generous nature gives way too easily. You are unstrung by the wanton insults of that woman! Let me read you the concluding portion of Mr. Hamlyn's article. It may soothe you."

"Read it," murmured the spinster, now lost in an ecstasy of luxurious grief, though she would have been puzzled to give a reason for it.

Gussie took up the paper once more. Now that her battle was so nearly won, she allowed herself more freedom in the reading. The Celtic love of drama stirred within her and she gave the pompous balderdash *ore rotundo*.

"'And in conclusion, what is our crying need in England to-day? It is this: It is the establishment of a great crusade for the crushing of the disguised Popery in our midst. One protest has been made in Hornham, protests should be made all over England. A mighty organisation should be called into existence which should make every "priest" tremble in his cope and cassock, tremble for the avalanche of public reprobation which will descend upon him and his.

"'I may be a visionary and no such idea as I have in my mind may be possible. But I think not. Who can say that our borough of Hornham may not become famous in history as the spot in which the second Reformation was born!

"'Much needs to be done before such a glorious movement can be inaugurated; that it will be inaugurated a band of earnest and determined men and women live in the liveliest hope.

"'I am confident that a movement having its seed in the borough, if widely published and made known to patriotic English people, would be supported with swift and overwhelming generosity by the country at large. The public response would appal the Ritualists and even astonish loyal sons of the Church of England. But, in order to start this crusade, help is required. Some noble soul must come forward to start the machine, to raise the Protestant Flag.

"'Where shall we find him or her? Is there no one in our midst willing to become the patron of Truth and to earn the praise of thousands and a place in history?

"'Once Joan of Arc led the forces of her country to victory. A Charlotte Corday slew the monster Marat, a Boadicea hurled herself against the legions of Rome! Who will be our Boadicea to-day, who will come forward to crush the tyranny of Rome in our own England? For such a noble lady, who will revive in her own person the undying deeds of antiquity, I can promise a fame worth more than all the laurels of the old British queen, the heartfelt thanks and love of her countrymen, and above all of her country-women—over whose more kindly and unsuspicious natures the deadly Upas-tree of Romanism has cast its poisonous shade. Where is the Jael who will destroy this Sisera?'"

Miss Davies ceased. Her voice sank. No sound was heard but the snuffle that came from the plush arm-chair opposite, where Miss Pritchett was audibly weeping. Mr. Hamlyn's purple prose had been skilfully introduced at the psychological moment. The woman's ill-balanced temperament was awry and smarting. Her egregious vanity was wounded as it had rarely been wounded before. She had been treated as of no account, and she was burning with spite and the longing for revenge.

Gussie said nothing more. She let the words of the newspaper do their work without assistance.

Presently Miss Pritchett looked up. She wiped her eyes and a grim expression of determination came out upon her face.

"I see it all!" she said suddenly. "My trusting nature has been terribly deceived; I have been led into error by evil counsellors; the power of the Jesuits has been secretly brought to bear upon one who, whatever her failings, has scorned suspicion!"

"Oh, Miss Pritchett, how *awful*!" said Gussie.

"Yes," continued the lady with a delighted shudder, "the net has been thrown over me and I was nigh to perish. But Providence intervenes! I see how I am to be the 'umble instrument of crushing error in the Church. I shall step into the breach!"

"Oh, Miss Pritchett, how *noble*!"

"Miss Davies, you will kindly put on your jacket and walk round to Mr. Hamlyn's house. See Mr. Hamlyn and tell him that Miss Pritchett is too agitated by recent events to write personally, but she begs he will favour her with his company at supper to discuss matters of great public importance. Tell Jones to send up some sweetbreads at once, and inform cook as a gentleman will be here to supper, and to serve the cold salmon."

Gussie rose quickly. "Oh, Miss Pritchett," she cried, "what a great day for England this will be!"

CHAPTER VII

THE OFFICES OF THE "LUTHER LEAGUE"—AN INTERIOR

On the first floor of a building in the Strand, wedged in between a little theatre and a famous restaurant, the offices of the "Luther League" were established, and by late autumn were in the full swing of their activity.

Visitors to this stronghold of Protestantism mounted a short flight of stairs and arrived in a wide passage. Four or five doors opening into it all bore the name of the association in large letters of white enamel. The first door bore the legend:

"PUBLISHING AND GENERAL OFFICE INQUIRIES"

This room, the one by which the general public were admitted to the inner sanctuaries, was a large place fitted up with desks and glass compartments in much the same way as the ordinary clerks' office of a business house. A long counter divided the room, and upon it were stacked piles of the newly published pamphlet literature of the League. Here could be seen that stirring narrative, *Cowed by the Confessional; or, The Story of an English Girl in the Power of the "Priests."* This publication, probably the cheapest piece of pornography in print at the moment, was published, with an illustration, at three pence. Upon the cover a priest—for some unexplained reason in full eucharistic vestments—was pointing sternly to the armour-plated door of a grim confessional, while a trembling lady in a large picture hat shrunk within.

This little book was flanked by what appeared to be a semi-jocular work called *Who Said Reredos?* and bore upon its cover the already distinguished name of Samuel Hamlyn, Jr. The eye fell upon that popular pamphlet in a wrapper of vivid scarlet—now in its sixtieth thousand—known as *Bow to the "Altar" and Light Bloody Mary's Torture Fires Again*.

As Soon Pay the Devil as the Priest lay by the side of a more elaborately bound volume on which was the portrait of a lady. Beneath the picture appeared the words of the title, *My Escape; or, How I Became a Protestant*, by Jane Pritchett.

Two clerks wrote in the ledgers on the desks, attended to visitors, and looked after what was known in the office as the "counter trade"—to distinguish it from the sale of Protestant literature in bulk, which was managed direct from the "Luther League Printing Works, Hornham, N."

A second room opening into the general office was tenanted by the assistant secretary of the League, Mr. Samuel Hamlyn, Junior. Here the walls were decorated with scourges, horribly knotted and thonged; "Disciplines," which were belts and armlets of sharp iron prickles, designed to wear the skin of the toughest Ritualist into an open sore after three days' wear. There were also two hair shirts, apparently the worse for wear, and a locked bookcase of Ritualistic literature with a little *index expurgatorius* in the neat, clerkly writing of Sam Hamlyn, and compiled by that gentleman himself.

In this chamber of horrors, the assistant secretary delighted to move and have his being, and three or four times a day it was his pleasing duty to show friends of the League and its yearly subscribers, the penitential machinery by which the priest-ridden public was secretly invited to hoist itself to heaven.

The innermost room of all was where Mr. Hamlyn, Senior, himself transacted the multifarious and growing business of his organisation. The secretary sat at a large roll-top desk, and a substantial safe stood at his right hand. An air of brisk business pervaded this sanctum. The directories, almanacs, and account-books all contributed to it, and the end of a speaking-tube, which led to the outer office, was clipped to the arm of the revolving chair.

Three portraits adorned the wall. From a massive gold frame the features of that fiery Protestant virgin, Miss Pritchett, stared blandly down into the room. Opposite it was a large photograph of Mr. Hamlyn himself, with upraised hand and parted lips—in the very act and attitude of making one of his now familiar protests. The third in this trio of Protestant champions was a drawing of Martin Luther himself, "representing the Reformer," as Mr. Hamlyn was wont to say, "singing for joy at the waning power of Rome." The artist of this picture, however, being a young gentleman of convivial tastes, had portrayed the "Nightingale of Wittemberg" in a merry mood, remembering, perhaps, Carlyle's remark, "there is laughter in this Luther," or perhaps—as is indeed most probable—remembering little of the great man but his authorship of the ditty that concludes:

> Who loves not women, wine, and song
> Will be a fool his whole life long.

Fortunately, Mr. Hamlyn, whose historical studies had been extremely restricted, did not know of this effort—just as he did not know that to the end of his life the student of Erfurt steadily proclaimed his belief in the Real Presence in the Eucharist.

About ten o'clock on a grey, cold November morning, the two Hamlyns arrived at the offices of the Luther League together, walked briskly up the stairs, and, with a curt "good morning" to the clerks, entered the innermost room together.

People who had known the father and son six months ago, seeing them now, would have found a marked, though subtle, difference in both of them.

They were much better dressed, for one thing. The frock-coats were not made in Hornham, the silk hats were glossy and with the curly brims of the fashion. Both still suggested a more than nodding acquaintance with religious affairs in their costume, some forms of Christianity always preferring to evince themselves by the style of a cravat or the texture of a cloth.

Confidence had never been lacking in either of the two, but now the sense of power and success had increased it, and had also imposed a certain quietness and gravity which impressed people. Here, at any rate, were two men of affairs, men whose names were beginning to be known throughout the land, and Mr. Hamlyn's manner of preoccupation and thought was only natural after all in one who (as his son would remark to Protestant visitors) "practically held the fortunes of the Church in his hands, and was destroying the Catholic wolves with the sword of Protestant Truth."

The two men took off their overcoats and hung them up. Then Mr. Hamlyn, from mere force of old habit, pulled at his cuffs—in order to lay them aside during business hours. Finding that he could not withdraw them, for increasing position and emolument had seemed to necessitate the wearing of a white shirt, he sat down with a half sigh for the freedom and comfort of an earlier day and began to open the large pile of correspondence on the table before him.

"We'll take the cash first, Sam," he said, pulling a small paper-knife from a drawer.

Sam opened a note-book in which the first rough draughts of matter relating to this most important subject were entered, preparatory to being copied out into one of the ledgers in the outer office.

Hamlyn began to slit up the letters with a practised hand. Those that contained the sinews of war he read with a running comment, others were placed in a basket for further consideration.

"'Well-wisher,' five shillings; 'Well-wisher,' £2 0 0, by cheque, Sam. 'Ethel and her sisters,' ten and six—small family that, I should think! 'Protestant,' five pounds—a note, Sam, take the number. It's curious that 'Protestant' always gives most. Yesterday seven 'Protestants' totalled up to fourteen, twelve, six, while five 'Well-wishers' worked out at slightly under three shillings a head. What's this? Ah! cheque for a guinea and a letter on crested paper! Enter up the address and make a note to send half a dozen *Bloody Marys*, one Miss Pritchett's *Escape*, and a few *Pay the Devils*. During the last week or two, the upper classes have been rallying to the flag. They're the people. I'll send this woman the ten-guinea subscription form and ask her to be one of the vice-presidents. Listen here:

> MARGRAVINE HOUSE,
> LEICESTER
>
> Lady Johnson begs to enclose a cheque for one guinea to aid Mr. Hamlyn in his splendid Crusade against the Ritualists. She would be glad to hear full details of the "Luther

League" and its objects. She wonders why Mr. Hamlyn has confined his protests against *Romanism* in the guise of *English Churchmanship* to the London district, and would point out that in her own neighbourhood there is a hot-bed of Ritualism which should be exposed."

Sam went to the book shelf and took down a Peerage. "She's the wife of a knight," he said, "one of the city knights."

"Probably very well off," said Mr. Hamlyn. "We'll nail her for the Cause! See that the books go off at once, and I'll write her a personal letter during the day."

He rubbed his hands together with a movement of inexpressible satisfaction. His keen face was lighted up with the pleasures of power and success.

"She's got her own axe to grind," remarked Sam. "Had a flare-up with the local parson, I expect."

"Shouldn't wonder," replied his father indifferently. "Here's two p.o.'s, one for seven bob and one for three. From a Wesleyan minister at Camborne in Cornwall. I'll put him down to be written to under the local helpers' scheme. His prayers'll be with us, he says!" Mr. Sam sniffed impatiently as he wrote down the sum in his book.

In a few more minutes, the contributions were all booked up and the Church of England—as represented by these two eminent laymen—was bulwarked against the enemies to the extent of some seventeen pounds.

"Now," said Mr. Hamlyn, "let's take the press-cuttings next." He opened a large envelope.

A day or two before Mr. Hamlyn had varied his pleasant little habit of turning up during the most solemn moments of a church service and brawling until he was ejected with more or less force, being brought up at a police-court a day or two afterwards and paying the fine imposed upon him with a cheque from Miss Pritchett. During the blessing of a new peal of bells in a provincial cathedral, he had risen and read a paper of protest. He had read the paper in a low, hurried voice, and the disturbance had been purely local and attracted but little attention in the huge building. In a moment, almost, the secretary of the Luther League had been conducted to the door of the building by vigilant vergers.

But the commotion in the press next morning had been enormous. Lurid reports of this great protest appeared in leaded type, comment of every kind filled the papers, and their editors were inundated with letters on the subject. As an editor himself, Mr. Hamlyn well understood the interior machinery of a newspaper office, and was perfectly well acquainted with the various methods by which things get into print. He began to examine the cuttings from the weekly papers that Durrant's had sent him.

"All goes on well," he said at length. "It really is astonishing the space they give us! Who'd have thought it six months ago! Don't they go for the League in some of them! Just listen to this, it's the finish of a column in *Vigilance*:

"'... and I shall therefore await the publication of the promised balance-sheet of this precious "League" with more than usual interest. Such an indecent and futile campaign as this deserves to be thoroughly scrutinised.'"

"That's nasty, Pa," said Sam.

"It don't matter in the least. Our League is perfectly honest and above-board, thank goodness! We shall publish the balance-sheet, of course. We are doing a great and glorious work for Hengland, and the labourer is worthy of his hire. We are perfectly justified in taking our salaries. What does a parson do? And, besides no one reads *Vigilance* that's likely to give Protestant campaigns a penny. It's a society paper. Religious people don't see it."

"Quite so. And all the Protestant papers are with us; that's the great thing."

"Exactly, even the old established evangelical papers like the *Church Recorder* daren't say anything against us. You see our advertisements are worth such a lot to 'em! Half the Low Church papers can't pay their way, the big advertisers won't look at them. All the money goes to the *Church Standard* and the other Ritualistic rags. The *Standard's* one of the best paying properties in London. So the Low Church papers *can't* do without us. Wait a year, Sam, and we'll have our own paper, put in some Fleet Street hack as editor, publish at a separate office, and charge the account what we like for our own articles."

"Our position is practically unassailable, as far as I can see."

"It's just that, my boy—as long as people send in the money. But gradually we shall find London getting dry. It's all right now that the boom's on, but the novelty of the thing will wear off after a bit. And what we want is to get ourselves so strong that the League will go on *for ever*! Now, I look on it in this way: Much as I 'ate the Ritualists and love true Henglish Protestantism"—Mr. Hamlyn's face grew full of fervour as he said this—"much as I 'ate Romanising tricks and such, I'm jolly well certain that neither we nor any one else is going to make much difference to them! They're too strong, Sam. You'll find a red-hot Ritualist would give up his arms and legs for his carryings-on. Ritualism's getting stronger and stronger. *They've got the best men for parsons*, and you see those chaps aren't in it for their own game, as a rule. They live like paupers and give all they've got away. Well, that gives 'em grip."

"Silly fools," said Sam contemptuously.

"Poor deluded tools of Rome," said Mr. Hamlyn, who, now that his great mission was an accomplished fact, was really beginning to believe in it himself. "Well, my point is this: Ritualism will never stop. It's too well organised, and the clergy are too well educated. And most of 'em are 'class' too. It all tells."

"Well, then, if our efforts aren't going to do any good, in a year or so the public will notice that, and the public will stop subscribing."

"Not a bit of it, Sam, you don't see as deep as I do. As long as we keep the question prominent, it will be all right. First of all, we shall always get the Nonconformist contribution. In every town, the Nonconformist minister can be trusted to stir up people against a Ritualistic 'priest,' especially if he's vowed to celibacy. Married ones get on better. But what I'm coming to is this: All over Hengland there are parishes where the vicar is more or less of a Romaniser. But he's personally liked, perhaps, or no one makes the protest. But in every parish, experience shows there's two or three prominent folk who hate the vicar. Now, where there's a spark a flame can be got. It's all very well to go and protest in a parish where there's a strong feeling against Ritualism—like St. Elwyn's, for example. But think of the hundreds of parishes where people jog along quite content, not knowing the darkness in which they're groping! Now, we'll stir these places up, we'll raise the flag of the League in places which have been going along quiet and peaceable for years. There won't be a church from which we can't get some people away. The Luther League shall become a household word from John o' Groat's to Land's End."

"Good scheme, Father, if you can do it. But think of the work, and think of the risks of letting any one else into the League. We might find ourselves in the second place some day."

"Not at all, Sam. Not as I've worked it out. You ought to know that I never start anything without going careful into the details."

"Sorry, Father. Let's have the plan."

"I'm going to start a band of 'Luther Lecturers' to carry Protestant Truth into the 'idden places. I'm beginning with six young fellows I've got. They'll travel all over the country, holding open-air meetings of agitation, with a collection for the League—making public protests in such churches as I give the order to be gone for, and lecturing on what Ritualism really is. Now, these chaps will have two lectures. I've had 'em written already. One's on the Mass, another's on the confessional, —hot Protestant stuff. They'll go like wild fire. The young men'll learn these lectures off by heart and deliver 'em with local allusions to the vicars of the parishes as they come to. I've got a supply of the illegal wafers as the Ritualists use for the Lord's Supper. Each lecture'll have one or two to show in the meetings. He'll pull it out and show the poor deluded people the god of flour and water their priests tell 'em to worship. There's lots of real humour in the lectures. They'll fire the popular imagination. Every crowd likes to hear a parson abused. I got the idea of humour and fun in the lectures from the Salvation Army. You see, we want to reach the class of folk as don't mind standing round a street-corner meeting and listening. The Army makes it pay wonderfully! But they only attack sin. They don't bother what a man does as long as he's good. We're attacking Rome in the Henglish Church, and it's remarkable what a lot of ridiculous things and points I've got into these lectures. There's one thing, for instance, that'll keep all a crowd on the grin—I mean the directions to a 'priest' if an insect gets into the 'consecrated' wine. It has to be burnt. Can't you see the lecturer with his 'Now, my friends, I ask you what a poor little spider's done to be used like that?' It's all an unworked mine! And you see there's no answer to it! A Ritualist 'priest' who comes to argue—of course, discussion will be invited—is bound to get left. He'll be so solemn and that, that the ordinary man in the street won't understand a word he's driving at. My men'll win every time. You'll see."

"As usual, Pa," said Sam, "you've hit on a good thing. It'll extend the League wonderful. But what about your men—where'll you get 'em? and what guarantee will you have that they won't rob the League?"

"Oh, that's all thought out. I shall have quite young chaps and pay them about eighteen shillings a week and travelling expenses. Each two or three days they'll have to send in reports as to the work, and each week forward the collection. I shall try, eventually, to get real earnest young men who believe in our glorious Henglish Protestant 'eritage. *They* won't rob us. I shall get smart young chaps with plenty of bounce and go, but not much education. It's not *wanted* for popular street-corner work. You get a Ritualist parson coming to try and answer one of my chaps—take the crucifix question, now. My man will talk about Popish idols and that—it's all in the lecture—and all the parson will say is that a crucifix is legal in the Church of Hengland—I believe, as a strict matter of fact, it *is*. Then my man turns round and tells the crowd that a crucifix is nothing but a dolly on a stick—he gets the laugh, see? The 'priest' can't explain all his humbugging reverence and that in an open-air meeting, with one of my chaps ready with a joke every time he speaks. I've got four out of my six men already, and if the thing hums as I expect, I'll put twenty or thirty in the field at once. They're easy found! There's lots of young chaps connected with chapels that would far rather tour the country attracting attention wherever they go, and do nothing but agitate, than work hard! There's young Moffatt, Peter Moffatt's son. He's a plumber, but he 'ates work. He's got cheek for twenty, and he'll do no end of good. As for the cost, why, the men will pay for themselves over and over again. They'll be well supplied from the central office —extracts from the papers and so on—they'll take local halls and advertise in local papers. I shall expect that each man, if he's any good *at all*, will pay all his own expenses each week and

forward a clear two pounds to me! A man that can't do that, at least, with such backing as we can give him and such a splendid war-cry—well, I wouldn't give twopence for him."

"I see it all clear now," answered Sam, a flush of excitement coming into his face. "And besides the money and extension of the League there will be splendid opportunities for you and me to run down now and then to support our men and get an 'oliday—take Brighton, for instance! It's full of Ritualists. A couple of men could spend a month there."

"And take from two to three hundred pounds, I should think," said the secretary, thoughtfully, "besides dealing an 'orrid blow to the wolves in the fold of the Protestant Henglish Church. We'll have some good protests in Brighton! Then, when our lecturers are fined for brawling, we'll instruct them *not to pay the fine*, but to go to prison for a fortnight instead! Of course, it'll be considered 'andsomely in their salaries. Then we'll send them round the country with a magic lantern and a rousing lecture. 'Imprisoned by the Romanisers,' 'In Gaol for the Protestant Faith!' or something like that."

"That's *fine*," said Sam, in an ecstasy of enjoyment. "Why, Father, the whole thing grows like a snowball! It *must* grow."

"Didn't I tell you, six months ago?" said Mr. Hamlyn. "Look at us then and now! What were we then? Nothing, 'ardly. What are we now? Directors of a big concern, becoming known all over Hengland, drawing good salaries, and with all the pleasure of bossing a big show. Look at the printing account the works have against the League, look at our expenses when we've got thirty or more Luther lecturers all over the country! And yet there's nothing risky in it. Nothing at all. No bogus-company promoting, no snide article to sell. We've no limited-liability company act to fear, no treasury investigations. We stand upon solid rock and nobody can't touch us! And why? Because we are championing the freedom of the people's religion, we are fighting for glorious Protestantism!"

"Fancy no one thinking of it before!" said Sam.

Mr. Hamlyn's shrewd, able face beamed with merriment. "Providence," he said, "chooses its own instruments. Now, then, send me in the shorthand clerk; I shall be at work all day. To-night I address a public meeting in the 'Olborn Town Hall, and before ten I'm due to sup with Miss Pritchett. She wants something definite done in St. Elwyn's, and I must think out a slap in the face for Blantyre."

"I'll run round to the bank," said Sam, "and pay this morning's little lot into the general fund, and post the statement to the treasurer."

"Right, my son. What was it?"

"Seventeen pounds odd, Pa."

"Protestants are waking up," said Mr. Hamlyn, "our work for the Cause has a blessing upon it."

CHAPTER VIII

A PRIVATE CONFERENCE AT MIDNIGHT A YEAR LATER

It was late at night in Father Blantyre's study at Hornham. King and Stephens had gone to bed, but the vicar sat with Dr. Hibbert, his churchwarden.

Both men were smoking. By the side of the doctor stood a modest peg of whiskey; the priest contented himself with a glass of soda-water. The candles by which the room was lighted showed that Mr. Blantyre's face was very worn and weary. He seemed a man who was passing through a time of stress and storm. The bronzed countenance of the doctor wore its usual aspect of serenity and strength. Both men had been talking together earnestly for a great part of the night. A true and intimate friendship obtained between them, and it was a plan that fortnightly they should meet thus and make confidences to each other about that which they held so dear.

"It is just a year," Blantyre said, "since Hamlyn committed his first sacrilege in our own church."

"The time goes very fast," Hibbert answered, "yet look at the changes! The man has become almost a power in the land, or at least he seems to be. It is his talent for organisation. It's supreme. Look how this wretched 'League' has grown. It has its spies and agents everywhere, its committee has names of importance among its members, the amount of money that rolls into Hamlyn's coffers must be very large."

"I'm afraid so. But think of the turmoil and unrest one man can create—the misery and pain churchmen feel every day now as they see the jocose blasphemies of these people and see the holiest things held up to an utterly vulgar and soulless ridicule. It's a wrong thought, Hibbert, perhaps, but I do sometimes long to be out of it all, to start afresh on such new work as God may give one in another life!"

"Such a thought comes to all of us at times, of course. But it's physical mainly. It's merely a languor of overstrain and a weak nervous state. You know yourself how such thoughts come

chiefly at night, and how after your tub, in the morning light and air they all go."

"Materialist! But you're right, Hibbert, quite right."

"You go on taking the physic I've sent you and you'll pick up soon. But, of course, this *is* a very trying time. The parish is in a constant turmoil. These Sunday evening Protestant meetings when folk are coming out of church are a bad nuisance. That's a new move, too."

"Yes. They found that the hooligan riot-provoking business was very simply dealt with, and so they are trying this. It is that poor, silly old creature, Miss Pritchett. The Hamlyns are hand and glove with her. I suppose she is sincere, poor old lady! I hope so. She was an ardent Catholic, and I hope she does honestly believe in the new substitute for the Faith. I am very sorry for her."

"I'm less charitable, Blantyre; she's a spiteful old cat. I am not violating any professional confidence in telling *you* that she won't live long if she goes on living in the thick of this noisy Protestant agitation. I do my best for her, of course, but she won't do as she's told."

"She's a nuisance," the vicar said, "but I hope she won't go yet. I should like to make friends with her before she dies. And I should like her to die in the Faith."

"She won't do that, I'm afraid, Blantyre. She has gone too far away from the Church. But, now, what do you honestly think the effect of this Luther crusading business has been on the Church."

"Well, I think there can be no doubt of that. I was talking it over with Lord Huddersfield last week and we both agreed. The *Church* has gained enormously. People who were simply attracted by ceremonial and what was novel to them have gone out, in a restless endeavour to find some new thing. But that is all. Our congregations here, our communicants, have grown very much. There is a deeper spiritual fervour among us, I am sure of it. No churchman has taken Hamlyn seriously for a moment. He has failed in every attempt he has made to interfere with our teaching or our ceremonial, failed absolutely. All his legal cases have fallen through, or proved abortive, or are dragging on towards extinction. The days of ritual prosecutions are utterly dead. All the harm Hamlyn has done the Church itself is to weary our ears and hearts with a great noise and tumult, with floods of empty talk. He has stung our nerves, he hasn't penetrated to any vital part."

"Yes, that is so. It needs more than the bellowings of such a man, more than the hostility of people who are not members of the Church, to hurt her in any serious degree. The man and his friends have a large rabble behind them, but they can only parade through the streets of England beating their drums and rattling their collecting boxes. The Church is safe."

"It is. And yet in another way, all this business is doing fearful harm to the *morale* of the country, limited though it may be. The mass of non-Christian people who might be gathered into the Church are looking down upon these unseemly contests with a sneer. They feel that there can be little good or truth in a system of philosophy which seems to them to be nothing but an arena of brawling fools. Therein comes the harm. Hamlyn isn't injuring church people, he is giving contraband of war to infidelity. And just at this particular moment in the world's history this is extremely dangerous. In thirty years, the danger will have passed away; to-day, it is great."

"And why particularly at this moment?"

"Why, because the world is utterly changing with extraordinary rapidity. That world which once adjusted itself so sweetly to our faith is vanishing, is gone. The new world which is arriving is unassimilated, unsorted, unexplained. The light hasn't entered it yet, it doesn't know how to correspond. The trouble lies in that. The new politics, science, philosophy, art, are only social habits. And these will not talk our language yet, or confess Christ. And this squabble and turmoil will retard the new adjustment for years, because outsiders won't even trouble to examine our claims or make experience of our system. *And people are glad of any excuse to ignore or at least avoid Christianity.* You see, a new religion has sprung up."

"Yes—go on."

"It is the religion of pleasure, excitement, nervous thrill bought at any cost. Renan, who had eyes and used them, saw that. He has given us the hint in his *Abbess of Jouarre*. 'Were the human race quite certain,' he says, 'that in two or three days the world would come to an end, the instinct of pleasure'—*l'amour* is his word—'would break out into a sort of frenzy; in the presence of death, sure and sudden, nature alone would speak, and very strange scenes would follow. The social order is preserved by restraint; but restraint depends upon a belief in a hereafter.' And already, 'If a man dies, shall he live again?' is the burden of a new soliloquy on the lips of a new Hamlet. Faith is becoming more and more an act, a habit, of heroism. So you see the harm Hamlyn and his gang are indirectly doing. But do you know where it seems to me the great counteracting influence to his work lies at the moment?"

"Where?"

"You will wonder to hear me say so, but I firmly think for the moment it lies in the ranks, and true love of our Lord, of the pious Evangelical Party in the Church! They are Catholic without knowing it. They think, and think sincerely, that the forms the Church has appointed, some of her Sacraments even, obscure the soul's direct communion with God. They are not in line with us yet. But there is a sterling and vivid Christianity among them. There is a personal adoration of Jesus which is strong and sweet, a living, wonderful thing. And, you see, all this section of the Church is exempt from the attacks of the *extreme* Protestants—who seem themselves to have hardly any

Christianity at all. Nor do the really pious Evangelicals approve of this civil war. They won't be mixed up in it. They are far too busy doing good works and preparing themselves for the next world to join in these rowdy processions of the shallow, the ill-informed, or the malevolent. They don't approve of *us*, of course, but they have no public quarrel with what they see is substantially powerful for good. Since Hamlyn's brigade has been throwing mud at us, and we, of course, have defended ourselves to the best of our ability, the minds of those who are eager to justify their adhesion to the religion of pleasure cannot, at least if they have any logic or sincerity, avoid a consideration of the quiet Evangelicals."

"It is a new idea to me," said the doctor, refilling his pipe, "but I suppose you are right. They despise the whole business of agitation, and yet don't make it a pretext as the rationalists are glad to do. The whole thing is a miserable business! What annoys *me*, Vicar, is the facility with which a rowdy, ignorant man of the lower classes has been able to make himself a force."

"It is hard. But one must remember that however sincere he is—and I know nothing against his personal character—he only appeals to the ignorant and rowdy. Have you seen his new leaflet?"

"No, I think not. What is it?"

"It came by post last night; apparently the whole district is being circularised. Really, the thing is quite a curiosity. I will read you a few paragraphs."

He opened a drawer and took a small pamphlet from it, which was headed "THE HORNHAM SCANDAL." "Listen to this:

"'At St. Elwyn's, Hornham,' writes a lady member of the Luther League, 'I recently attended the so-called "High Mass." There were three priests in vestments; there were eight candles burning at eleven o'clock on the altar; there was incense and all the appurtenances of a Roman Mass; the men bore that ignorant and unwashed appearance which is commonly to be seen at any time in an Italian church. At times they crossed themselves, but often they seemed to forget, and then suddenly to remember. I stayed as long as I could, but it was not long, for I was sick at heart at the thought of what our country is being mercilessly dragged into, and that it is for services of this description that we hear from time to time our foolish girls exclaim, "How I hate the name of Protestant."'"

"Elegant style," said the doctor dryly, "but to call our congregation 'unwashed' is not only perfectly untrue, but a little touch of feminine spite that shows the spirit in which these crusades are carried on. I wonder how many of the five thousand were unwashed when our Lord fed them!"

"That is a quotation," said the vicar, "now hear the robuster prose of the great Hamlyn himself:

"'It appears that there are literally no lengths of lawlessness, ecclesiastical insubordination, blasphemous poperies, or unscriptural profanation of places of worship to which Ritualistic innovators will not proceed. Among other Romanising acts of the vicar of St. Elwyn's, the notorious "Father" Blantyre, is a direction to some of his congregation who attend the Lord's Supper. These members have taken the bread from him—or rather the superstitious wafer which is substituted for bread—with the thumb and finger. "Oh, no," says our priest, "you must hold out your hand for it." These are the "instructions" of "Father" Blantyre to those about to attend the Lord's Supper for the first time after confirmation:

"'*As soon as the priest comes up to you, hold up your hands as high as the chin, so that he may place the Blessed Sacrament in your hand while he says the words, The Body of our Lord.*

"'But we ask our Protestant brethren how, if the minister—falsely called "priest"—places the bread in the hand of the communicant, how the latter can comply with the direction "take this"? Let England awake to this "priestly" and insidious Popish plan.'"

"Well!" said the doctor, "of all the—" Words failed him.

"Isn't it vulgar and childish!" said the vicar, "but how admirably adapted to suit the ignorant folk who will read it. The adroit substitution of a colloquial use of the word 'take' for its real meaning of 'receive'! And then the continual effort to degrade the Mass, to rob it of its mystery and holy character—it's clever, it's subtle. Hamlyn is a man of parts!"

"Is there any more?"

"Oh, yes, plenty. So far I have only read the mildest parts. Here is a distorted simile which I should hardly have thought even Hamlyn would have printed. It is painful to read:

"'One of our Luther Lecturers recently asked a poor, deluded young female who is in the habit of attending the pantomime at St. Elwyn's why she went there. The poor, deluded creature replied—doubtless with words put into her mouth by her "Father Confessor"—that its "spirituality" and "devotion" attracted her. Ah! Rome and Ritualism have ever known how to appear as a pure and modest virgin, even when rotting (to use the image of the Holy Spirit in the Word) with fornication. O foolish young woman! How have you been bewitched with these sorceries? A clean thing is to be got of an unclean thing!'"

The doctor ground his teeth. "I wish we'd had the man in the regiment!" he said. "Unclean! I'd have cleaned the brute!"

The vicar sighed. "Of course it doesn't really matter," he said. "This sort of stuff carries its own condemnation with it. Still it is most distressing. It does wound one deeply to hear the highest and holiest things spoken of in this way. All my people feel it. Some of them—poor things—have come to me weeping to hear such words—weeping for shame and sorrow. Here is the last paragraph. The pamphlet concludes with a fine flow of rhetoric, and an invitation to me:

"'The late Dr. Parker said: "Popery is the vilest blasphemy out of hell. It is the enemy of liberty; it is the enemy of intelligence; it is the enemy of individuality, of conscience, and responsibility; it is the supreme wickedness of the world, the master effort of the devil."

"'And so say we. Therefore, honest, English, Protestant people of Hornham, look to it that these doings in your midst are put down with a stern hand. A great meeting of ratepayers will shortly be held in the Victoria Hall under the auspices of the Luther League. A lecture, with lime-light views, will be delivered on the cloaked and hooded Popery that stalks in our midst. An invitation will be extended to "Fathers" Blantyre, King, and Stephens, the "Priests" of St. Elwyn's church, who will be accommodated with seats upon the platform if they care to come. We of the Luther League invite them to public controversy, to an open debate upon the great questions at issue. Will they be present? Time will show.'"

Hibbert rose. "Well, it's time we were in bed," he said. "Good-night. I should think over that sporting offer of Hamlyn's if I were you. A public appearance might do good. I like a fight."

"I doubt it," the vicar answered; "still, it may be worth considering. One never knows. One doesn't want people to say that one is afraid."

"Good-night, Vicar."

"Good-night, Hibbert. Forget all about these surface worries and sleep well."

The vicar was left alone.

He took a letter from his pocket. It was from Lucy, who wrote from Park Lane. In the letter, she said that she purposed—if he would care to have her—to come down to Hornham at once and spend some months at the clergy-house.

"If you can put up with a girl for a time in your bachelor stronghold! I'm sick to death of this life; it has lost all its attractions for me. I want to *live*, not play, and you, my dear old boy, will show me the way. A letter is no way—for me—to tell you of my thoughts. But higher things than of old are working in me. St. Elwyn's calls me, it seems home; I so often think of the big quiet church and the ceaseless activity that centres round it. I long for the peace there! I have much to tell you, much to consult you about, and I am beginning to wonder why I have left you alone so long. Good-night, dear."

Putting down the letter, he looked at the clock. It was now far after midnight, and he stayed the hand that was about to raise the glass that stood on the table beside him.

In a few hours it would be dawn, the dawn when in the dim hour he daily went to meet the Lord in the Eucharist. How wonderful that was! What unending joy the break of day had for this good man, as he began the ancient and mysterious rite of the Church! There, there, beside the altar, there was peace! In this desert world, that was so far from Home, there was always that daily glimpse into the Unseen, that Communion in which dead friends and great angels joined, when the Paraclete came to the weary, sinful hearts of men like fire, when our Lord in his risen majesty came to the world to hearten his soldiers, to fill his toiling saints with power to continue to the end.

If only the whole world *knew* and realised this! Sometimes the priest thought with simple wonder, that if only men knew, all trouble and sorrow would be over. To him the material world was the unreal place, the dream, the fable. Daily he *knew* that the Unseen was ever near, close, close!—how blind and sorrowful the world was, that did not know or care for Jesus.

He knelt down now to say his prayers. He prayed for the Church, his congregation, for his sister, and his friends. Then he prayed that he might be worthy to receive the Blessed Sacrament at dawn.

And then, happy, comforted, and at peace, with the certainty of an unseen glory all round him, with august watchers to shield him through the night, he sought his couch and slept a deep, dreamless sleep with crossed hands.

"*From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.*"

CHAPTER IX

A UNION OF FORCES

In Hornham, the vast majority of a poor and teeming population was quite without interest in any religious matter. The chapels of the various sects were attended by the residuum, the congregations at St. Elwyn's were large—to the full holding capacity of the mother church and

the smaller mission building—and a fair proportion of people worshipped at St. Luke's, the only other church in the neighbourhood.

Mr. Carr, the vicar of St. Luke's, was a man of about thirty-five. He had taken a good degree at Cambridge, spent a few years in various curacies, and had been appointed vicar of St. Luke's, Hornham, which was in the gift of an Evangelical body known as Simon's Trustees, about four years before Mr. Hamlyn had thrown Hornham into its present state of religious war.

The vicar of St. Luke's was a man of considerable mental power. He was unmarried, had no private means, and lived a lonely, though active, life in his small and ill-built vicarage. In appearance, he was tall, somewhat thin, and he wore a pointed, close-cropped beard and moustache. His face was somewhat melancholy, but when he was moved or interested, the smile that came upon it was singularly sweet. In the ordinary business of life, he was reserved and shy. He had none of the genial Irish *bonhomie* of Blantyre, the wholesome breezy boyishness of Stephens, or the grim force of King. He had a "personality"—to the eye—but he failed to sustain the impression his appearance made in talk. He was of no use in a drawing-room and very nearly a failure in any social gathering. Those few members of his flock with whom, now and again, he had to enter into purely social relations, said of him: "Mr. Carr is a thorough gentleman, but the poor fellow is dreadfully shy. He wants a wife; perhaps she'd liven him up a bit."

Such was the man in private life. In his clerical duties, as a priest—or, as he would have put it, a pastor—his personal character was sunk and merged in his office as completely as that of Father Blantyre himself. His sermons were full of earnest exhortation, his private ministrations were fervent and helpful, and there was a power in his ministry that was felt by all with whom he came in contact.

He was distinctly and entirely what is known as an "Evangelical," using that fine word in the best and noblest sense. He belonged to a school of thought which is rapidly becoming merged in and overlapped by others, sometimes to its betterment, but more frequently to its destruction, but which standing by itself is a powerful force.

He did not realise the state of transition in which he and other men of his school must necessarily stand to-day. Their position, admirable as it often is, is but a compromise. He did not as yet realise this.

Of Blantyre and the people at St. Elwyn's he knew little or nothing. He had met the clergy there once or twice upon official occasions, but that was all. He was too busy with his own work to have much time to attend to that of other people, but he had the natural distaste of his school and bringing-up for ceremonial and teaching of which he had no experience, and merely regarded as foreign, anti-English, and on the whole dangerous.

He was not a bigot, and the leading feature in his religion was this: He assigned an absolute supremacy to Holy Scripture as the only rule of faith and practice, the only test of truth, the only judge of controversy. He did not think that there was any guide for man's soul co-equal or co-ordinate with the Bible. He did not care to accept such statements as "the Church says so," "primitive antiquity says so," or "the Councils and the Fathers also say so,"—unless it could be shown to his satisfaction that what is said is in harmony with Scripture.

Disregarding as superfluous all external and "vicarious" form in religion, he attached paramount importance to the work and office of our Lord, and the highest place to the inward work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of man. And he attached tremendous importance to the outward and visible work of the Holy Ghost in the heart of man. His supreme belief was that the true grace of God is a thing that will always make itself manifest in the behaviour, tastes, ways, and choices, of him who has it. He thought, therefore, that it was illogical to tell men that they are "children of God, and members of Christ, and heirs of the kingdom of Heaven" unless they had really overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil. But he could not be stern or menacing in his dealings with souls. The mercy of God was more in his thoughts, always and at all times, than the wrath and judgment of God.

His attitude toward the pressing questions that were agitating the Church of England, all over England, was in logical correspondence with his beliefs. There was much within the Church that he had not understood or realised as yet, but he was no Hamlyn, to break down and destroy all that has made the Church of England what it is.

He neither undervalued the Church nor thought lightly of her privileges. In sincere and loyal attachment to her, he would give place to none. His apprehension of churchmanship was limited, that was all.

Nor did he—as far as he knew—under-value the Christian ministry. He looked upon it as a high and honourable office instituted by Christ Himself, and on priests as God's ambassadors, God's messengers, God's stewards and overseers. Nevertheless he looked upon what he knew as "sacerdotalism" and "priestcraft" with unfeigned dislike and uneasiness.

He believed in baptism as the appointed means of regeneration and that it conveyed grace *ex opere operato*; a position in which he was a little in advance of some of his school. His views on the Eucharist were hardly so sound, though there was nothing in them absolutely antagonistic to the truths which he had not yet realised. He certainly did not regard Holy Communion as the chief service in the Church, its central point.

On outward things, he was sane enough. He liked handsome churches, good ecclesiastical architecture, a well-ordered ceremonial, and a well-conducted service. If any one had told Mr. Carr that he was as nearly as possible "Catholic" in his views, that if they were logically pushed forward to their proper development he would be practically one with the St. Elwyn's people, he would first have been startled somewhat unpleasantly, and then he would have laughed incredulously.

And if some one had gone to Blantyre and told him that Carr was thus, he would have smiled rather sadly to think that his informant had realised the truths taught by the Anglican Church in a very limited way.

This mutual misunderstanding between the only two schools of thought in the Church of England that have enduring value is very common. The *extreme* Protestants are not church-people at all in any right sense of the word. The "Broad" party are confused with their own shifting surmises from day to day, and make too many "discoveries" to have real and lasting influence. But the "High Church" people and the pious "Evangelicals" are extraordinarily close to one another, and neither party realises the fact, while both would repudiate it. Yet both schools of opinion are, after all, occupied with one end and aim to the exclusion of all others—the attaining of personal holiness.

It was on a bright morning that Mr. Carr came down-stairs and breakfasted, after he had read prayers with his two servants. There was no daily service in St. Luke's, though evensong was said on Wednesdays and Saturdays. He read his morning paper for a few moments, then put it down and pushed his plate away. He was unable to eat, this morning.

He got up and walked uneasily about the room. His face was troubled and sad. Then he pulled a letter from his pocket and read it with a doubtful sigh. This was the letter:

"LUTHER LODGE,
"HORNHAM, N.

"DEAR SIR:

"Your letter duly to hand. I note that you are desirous of having a private conversation with me, and shall be pleased to grant facilities for same. I shall not be leaving for the Strand till mid-day, and can therefore see you at eleven.

"Faithfully yours,
"SAMUEL HAMLYN.
"*Secretary of the Luther League,*
"*Chairman of The New Reformation Association.*"

The clergyman read and reread the letter, hardly knowing what to make of it. He had done so many times. The infinite condescension of it annoyed him; the recapitulation of the writer's position seemed a piece of impudent bravado, and reminded the vicar of St. Luke's of the unhappy state that religious life was in at Hornham.

Some days before, shocked and distressed beyond measure at the growing turmoil in Hornham, startled by the continued evidences of it that he met with in his pastoral life, he had written to Mr. Hamlyn asking for a private interview. He had shrunk from doing anything of the sort for weeks. His whole nature revolted against it. But he had dimly recognised that in some measure he might be said to be in a middle position between the two conflicting parties, and thought that his mediation might be of some avail. Repugnant as it was to him, he resolved that he must do what he thought to be his duty, and after he had made it the subject of anxious and fervent prayer he had made up his mind to see if he could not prevail with the leader of the "New Reformation" to cease his agitation, in Hornham at any rate. He imagined that Hamlyn could hardly realise the harm he was doing to the true religious life in the place. It was not his business to argue with the reformer about his work elsewhere. He knew nothing of that. But in Hornham, at any rate, he did see that the civil war provoked nothing but the evil passions of hatred and malice, had no effect upon either party, and prevented the steady preparation for heaven which he thought was the supreme business of Christians.

Hamlyn's letter certainly didn't seem at all conciliatory. It disturbed him. He had hardly ever spoken to the man in the past, but he had known of him, as he necessarily knew of every tradesman in the borough. Social considerations hardly ever entered his mind, but he had not thought of Hamlyn as a potentate in any way when he had written to him. He knew him for a plump, shrewd, vulgar man, who dropped his aspirates and said "paiper" for "paper," and, indeed, had thought none the worse of him for that. But the letter surprised him. It was almost offensive, and he was as near anger as a gentle-minded man may be.

At half-past ten o'clock, he sighed, realising that a most distasteful duty had to be done, and prepared to leave the house. Before he left his study, he knelt down and prayed for a blessing in his mission. He always prayed before any event of any importance in life. An enormous number of people still do, and it is a very great pity that some people do not believe or realise the fact. Prayer is not the anachronism many publicists would have us believe. If among all classes, Christians by open profession, and people who make no profession at all, save only contempt for Christianity, a census of prayers prayed during one day could be taken, the result would be very remarkable indeed. It would certainly startle the rationalists. Statistics show that every second a child is born and a person dies. It is during the approach of such occasions that even people who

call themselves "atheists" generally pray. Ask hospital nurses, doctors, or parish priests! There is no greater humbug than the pretence that prayer as a general necessity and practice is dead. There is more irreligion visible to-day than at any other time in English history, perhaps. But that does not mean that people do not pray. The majority live a jolly, godless life till they are frightened. Then they pray. The minority pray always.

Mr. Carr left his house with a more vigorous step after his petition. As so many folk know, the help that comes from prayer is only self-hypnotism—of course. But it is certainly odd what power some of the least gifted and most ordinary people have of this self-hypnotism. One had always thought it rather a cryptic science, the literature of India, for example, regarding it as a supreme achievement. But it must be very simple after all! And if the help that comes to the human heart after prayer *is* a result of this magnetic power, all we can say is that in the depths of a Whitechapel slum, the outcast, forgotten, and oppressed have each and all the most remarkable, delicate, and cultured temperaments, not in the least seared or spoilt by privation and want. The only point that one quite fails to understand is, why are the leading reviews and scientific publications still discussing this art, or talent, as something rare, abnormal, and as yet little understood?

Mr. Carr drew near to "Luther Lodge." "Balmoral" had been deserted for some time by the Hamlyn family, who very properly felt that it was beneath the dignity of its celebrated head, and would also be harmful to the glorious Protestant cause, if they remained among the undistinguished inhabitants of Beatrice Villas.

About the time that this decision had been arrived at, a substantial square house, unornamental but sound—like Protestantism itself—was vacated by its former inhabitant, the Mayor of Hornham, a leather-dresser in a large way, who had sold his business to a company and was retiring to the country. Mr. Hamlyn looked over the place—then known as Hide-side House—and saw that it would exactly suit him and his altered fortunes. He changed the name to "Luther Lodge," made some extensive purchases of furniture, and established himself there with his son and daughter.

Carr drew near to the iron gates before the circular sweep of gravel known to the past and present inhabitants of the house as the "drive." The gates were hung from two stone pilasters, each surmounted by a small but extremely rampant lion, fiercely Protestant of aspect and painted a dull purple. The whole aspect of the place was chilling, as the clergyman walked up to the door. The formal lace curtains in the windows, the brilliant black-leaded boot-scraper which reflected the sunlight in a dozen facets of vicious leaden fire, the great apple of shining brass which was the bell-pull—all these affected him in an unpleasant manner. He was supremely unconscious of any artistic likings or knowledge, but the seeds of them were latent in him nevertheless, and the place hurt his senses in a strange way.

A trim maid came to the door, the extreme antithesis of the filibustering "general" of a year ago, and showed him into the hall.

"I'll see if master's disengaged," she said; "are you the gentleman as has an appointment with master for eleven?"

Mr. Carr confessed to being that gentleman and the girl left him standing there. From some room in the upper part of the house, so it seemed, the tinkling notes of a piano came down to him. Some one—it was Miss Hamlyn herself—was singing fervently of "violets, violets, I will wear for thee."

After a considerable interval, the maid came back. "Master will see you now, sir," she said, and ushered the visitor into Mr. Hamlyn's study.

It was a fair-sized room with a long French window opening upon a lawn in the centre of a small, walled garden. Many book-shelves filled with grave and portly tomes lined the walls, a large writing-table stood in the middle of the carpet. Some months before, a struggling firm of "religious publishers" had failed, and their stock of theology was thrown upon a flooded market as "Remainders." Mr. Hamlyn, as being in the trade himself, was enabled to acquire a library suited to his position at remarkably cheap rates.

Mr. Hamlyn rose from his chair.

"Glad to see you," he said hastily, and with great condescension and good humour. "Fortunate I happened to have a morning free. Now, what can I do for you? No spiritual trouble, I hope? Ritualists been prowling round St. Luke's? If so, say the word, give me the facts, and I'll see you are protected!"

"It is on a question connected with the state of affairs in the district that I called to see you, Mr. Hamlyn."

"Quite so, Mr. Carr, just what I expected. Well, I've always heard good accounts of you as a loyal Protestant minister—though I can't approve of your using that pestilential book, *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, in your church—and I will do what I can for you. Providence has placed a scourge in my hand to drive the idolaters from the Temple, so tell me your trouble."

Carr had listened to this, which was delivered in a loud, confident voice, with growing amazement. He hardly knew how to take the man.

"I deplore very much," he said, making a great effort, "the state into which Hornham has been thrown. I cannot, of course, approve of much that I understand takes place at St. Elwyn's. Yet I am beginning to fear that the remedy is worse than the disease. I am sure, Mr. Hamlyn, that your great desire must be to see the people led to love the Lord Jesus and to live godly, sober lives. Well, I find that the crusade of the Luther League is unsettling the minds of weaker brethren. They are becoming excited, forgetful of duty, carried away by the flood of a popular movement. All this is hurtful to souls. Men should have peace to make themselves right with God. Strife and anger hurt the soul and wound it. Now I have no concern with any other place but this, in which my ministry is set. But in Hornham, at least, I have come to ask you to moderate your attacks upon the High Church party, to extend to them the same tolerance they extend to us."

Hamlyn stared at the speaker.

"To moderate MY methods?" he shouted in a coarse voice. "Do you know what you're asking? Do you realise who I am?"

"Perfectly, Mr. Hamlyn," the clergyman answered with considerable dignity. "I am speaking, I hope, to a brother Christian, and as such, in the name of our dear Lord, I ask you to cease this strife and discord among us. God will show his desires in his own way; prayer is a more powerful weapon than public invective. And it is idle to deny that the vicar of St. Elwyn's and his curates are doing good. I believe their teaching on fundamental truths is wrong, I deprecate the ceremonial with which they veil and cover the simple beauties of the Christian faith. But Mr. Blantyre is a good and noble-hearted man. He gives his life and his large income—it is a matter of common knowledge—to the service of the poor and needy. He is utterly unselfish, he loves Jesus. Let him work in his own way in peace."

Mr. Hamlyn's face grew very red. The man was mentally bloated by prosperity and success. Daily he was hailed by fools as the saviour of his country, his name was on many lips, and his sense of proportion was utterly gone.

"Really!" he said, "of all the mad requests as was ever made me this is the maddest! Are you in your senses, Mr. Carr—you a Protestant minister of the Word? You can't be. You come to me, me, who Providence has set at the head of Henglish Protestantism, and ask me to join a base conspiracy to silence the clarion of Truth! to leave my 'igh ground of Principle and grovel before a petticoated 'priest'! Why, you're asking me to let the Pope and the devil into Hornham. Have you ever cast your eye upon the works of the immortal John Bunyan? What about Mr. Facing-both-ways?"

Mr. Carr kept his temper. He was there upon an important issue. What did it matter if the man was rude? "But don't you think, as a Christian," he said mildly, "that it is hard enough to fight the devil, the world, and the flesh without private differences in the Christian camp?"

"Who's speaking of Christians?" Hamlyn cried; "not I. Blantyre is no Christian; he is doing the devil's work, which is the work of Rome. He gives away his money because the devil showed him that it was a good move, to win souls to Rome. As for his goodness, how do we know what goes on in the confessional? I've heard——"

Carr stood up. "Let me tell you at once, sir," he said in a hard voice and with flashing eyes, "that any scandal and slander you make before me about a man I know to be pure and good I will at once repeat to him, and you will have to take the consequences."

"Ah!" said the agitator sharply and suddenly and with his impudent smile flashing over his face, mingled with a sneer, "I see now! I ought to have seen it before. You are a wolf in sheep's clothing! While we all thought you a faithful Protestant, you have secretly joined causes with the enemy. The cloven 'oof 'as peeped out! You come as a sneaking ambassador of Rome in the garb of a Protestant. The Jesuits have been having a go at you, Mr. Carr, and they've got you! I shouldn't wonder if you've got your 'air-shirt on now! Go back to them as sent you and say that I've scourged 'em with whips in the past and I'll give 'em scorpions now. This will make a fine story at our next meeting in the public 'all!"

Carr turned on his heel without a word and left the room. He crossed the hall in a couple of strides, opened the door, and walked quickly over the gravel sweep. As his hand was on the latch of the gate, the reformer's voice hailed him. Mr. Hamlyn was looking round the corner of the door; a genial grin—a clown's grin—lay upon his face. "Mr. Carr!" he bawled with unabashed and merry impudence, "been to Mass yet?"

Then, with a final chuckle, he closed the door.

The peacemaker walked sadly away. He saw at once the sort of man he had been dealing with, and recognised how futile any protest would be in the case. He saw clearly how unassailable Hamlyn's position was, while the country was full of people who would pay him to keep them in a state of pleasurable excitement. It was better than the theatre to which Hamlyn's subscribers loudly protested that their consciences would not allow them to go! It was a sort of bull-baiting revived; the lust of the public at seeing some one hunted was satisfied.

How infinitely better the sober methods of the old-established Protestant societies were! Legitimate propaganda, a dignified and scholarly controversy, these were right and sane. But this clown's business, this noise and venom, was utterly disgusting. He had caught a glimpse into the machinery of the whole movement that sickened him.

He went home to his lonely house and made a frugal lunch. Something ought to be done, but what? He was not a man to fail in any efforts he made in a good cause. He did not propose to cease his attempts to restore Hornham to decent calm, even now. But he could not see, at the moment, what was the next move he should make.

During the afternoon he set out on a round of parochial visiting. He sat by the bedsides of the sick, the querulous, the ungrateful, and told his message of comfort. He heard much of Hamlyn's campaign. The new leaflet with its violent language was thrust into his hand. Every one wondered what would happen next. Would Mr. Blantyre face the Luther Lecturers in the public hall? One old bedridden dame Carr found all agog with excitement and spite. "It'd come to a fight," she expected, and "wot an awful thing it was to have them wicked monsters the Papists so close. She could 'ardly sleep o' nights thinking of it all." Carr found that the poor old creature had not the remotest idea of what "Papist" meant, of what anything meant, indeed; but she would hardly listen to his prayers and Bible-reading nevertheless, so eager was she to discuss the "goings on."

About four, as he left the last house he purposed to visit just then, a strange thought came to him suddenly. He was at the extreme end of his parish, not far from St. Elwyn's. Would it not be a good thing to go and visit Blantyre, to express his sympathy and to discuss whether some way out of the present trouble could not be found?

The idea strengthened and grew. He knew Blantyre was a decent fellow—every one said so. But, nevertheless, he had the sense of venturing into the lion's den! He should feel strange among these priests with their foreign ways, their cassocks and berrettas; there would be discomfort in the visit.

It is curious how, in the minds of the least prejudiced, the dislike to the definite and outward symbols that a priest wears still lingers. In another generation, it will have been swept away, but it still survives as a relic of the dark, secularising influences of the eighteenth century. And, again, the man in the street does not like to be reminded that there is a God and a class of men vowed to His service, and the complete distinction of a priest's costume is too explicit a reminder.

Carr thought the matter out for a minute or two and then made up his mind. He would go and talk over the situation with Blantyre. With a vivid sense of how his host of the morning would call his action "bowing down in the house of Rimmon," a sense that only quickened his steps and sent a contemptuous curl to his lip, he turned and walked towards the clergy-house.

He rang the bell, and a tall and rather hulking man in livery showed him into a large drawing-room. This was the navvy, Mr. King's former assailant, who had been promoted, at his own request, to a distinctive costume, which he wore with pride and diligence. His only grief was that he was not allowed to "wipe the floor with that there Hamlyn," but he lived in hope that some fresh outrage would provide him with the necessary permission.

Carr looked round the room. There was nothing ecclesiastical about it, no flavour of the monk at home. It had been newly papered; the walls were covered with pictures so fresh and new in treatment that they might have come from the Academy of that year. The vicar of St. Luke's suddenly awoke to the fact that he was in a very charming room indeed. There was a Steinway grand piano there, a beautiful instrument; he saw that the Twelfth Nocturne of Chopin stood open upon it. Everywhere he saw a multitude of photographs in frames of silver, copper, ivory, peacock leather—every imaginable sort of frame. A great many of these photographs were signed in the corner, and looking at some of them he was surprised to see that they were of very well-known people. Here was a well-known general, there a judge, again the conscious features of a society actor beamed out at him. His eye, unobservant at first, began to take in the details of the room more rapidly. There were a hundred luxurious little trifles scattered about, numerous contrivances for comfort. He was wondering to whom this room could belong, when the door opened and his doubts were resolved.

A girl came in, a girl with a beautifully modelled face, healthy and yet without crimson in it. A pair of frank, dark eyes looked at him from beneath an overshadowing mass of dead black hair.

"How do you do, Mr. Carr," she said,—he had given the man his card,—"I am Mr. Blantyre's sister; I've only just pitched my tent in Hornham. Bernard will be in for tea in half an hour."

Rather nervously, Carr explained that he had called on a matter of parochial business. He remained standing, a little at a loss. This girl was not like the young ladies of Hornham.

"Well, you must have some tea," Lucy said with decision as she rang the bell. Carr sat down. He anticipated a somewhat trying half hour until the vicar should arrive. He was a gentleman, well bred in every way, but his life, from the time of his school days, had been lonely and without much feminine companionship.

In five minutes he found, to his own great surprise, that he was talking vividly and well, that he was quite pleased to be where he was. And the girl seemed to be interested and pleased with him. It was a very new sensation, this feeling of mutual liking, to the lonely man. The conversation turned naturally to the unrest around them. Carr said nothing as yet of his morning's experience.

"Well, I must confess, frankly, Mr. Carr," Lucy said, "that until lately I never took any interest at all in these things. They seemed humbug to me. Now, of course, I know better. It's a *shame*! a

black shame, that Bernard and the others should be treated so by this disgusting man. If he only knew what their life was! how self-denying, how full of unceasing labour and worry, how devoted. Take Mr. Stephens, for instance: he's only a boy, yet he's killing himself with work and enthusiasm. He was up all last night with a man that has delirium tremens, yet he said Mass at half-past seven, came to breakfast as merry as a sand-boy, and was teaching in the national schools at nine. And he'll be on his feet to-day until nearly midnight without a word of complaint. He'll spend nearly the whole evening in the boys' club, boxing and playing billiards with them—oh, you can't think how the three of them work!"

She went on with a series of anecdotes and explanations, told with great vividness and power, in her new enthusiasm for the men among whom she had come. And throughout all her talk, the clergyman heard frequent references to the services that went on almost unceasingly in the great church hard by. He heard names, strange and yet familiar, startling to his ear, and yet which seemed quite natural and fitting in the place where he was. One thing he began to see clearly, and with interest: whatever these men were in opinion, a life of real and active holiness went on among them. And he noticed also, with wonder, how everything seemed to draw its inspiration from the church, how constantly the clergy were there, hearing confessions, saying services, praying, and preaching. The whole thing was new to him.

They were the best of friends, talking brightly together, when the door burst open and the impetuous priest rushed in. "Well, I'm glad to see you!" he said with a broad grin of welcome. "Had tea?—that's right. I see you've made friends with my clergywoman! I've been in church hearing confessions, or I'd have been in sooner."

His manner was extremely genial. He seemed genuinely glad to see his brother vicar and not in the least surprised or puzzled.

Carr looked attentively at him. So this merry Irishman, with the lined, powerful face, the grey hair, and eyes which sometimes blazed out like lamps—this was the great Ritualist, the Jesuit, the thief of English liberty!

He had a wonderful magnetic power, that was evident at once. His sympathy for everything and everybody poured from him; he was "big," big in every way.

He chatted merrily away on a variety of topics while taking his tea. Asking his sister for another cup, he suddenly turned to Carr. "That reminds me," he said, "of a good story I heard yesterday. Father Cartwright was here to lunch, he is one of the St. Clement Fathers at the Oxford monastery. Not long ago a young nobleman—rather a *bon vivant*, by the way—went down to spend a few days with the Fathers. He made his arrival, very unfortunately for him, poor fellow! on a Friday, when the fare's very frugal indeed. He had very little to eat, poor chap, and went to bed as hungry as a hunter, quite unable to sleep he was. Now, it's the custom for one of the Fathers to go round in the night with a benediction, 'The Lord be with you.' They always say it in Latin, *Dominus tecum*. The young man heard some one rapping at the door. 'Who's there?' says he. '*Dominus tecum*,' was the answer. 'Thanks, very much,' said the nobleman, 'please put it down outside'!"

While they were laughing at the story, Lucy rose and, shaking hands with Carr, went away.

The two clergymen were left alone. "You'll not mind talking in here?" Father Blantyre said. "I've got a poor chap in me study I don't want to disturb. I found um after lunch making a row in the street with a crowd round him, a poor half-clothed scarecrow, beastly drunk—never saw a man in such a state. I asked one of the crowd who he was and he said he was a stranger, a ship's fireman, who'd been about the place for a day or two, spending all his money in drinks, and he hadn't a friend in the world. A policeman came along and wanted to lock um up, but I managed to get him in here and he's sleeping it off. I shall give um egg in milk when he comes round: his poor stomach's half poisoned with bad liquor and no food. I always find egg and milk the best thing in these cases. I wish he wasn't so dirty! We shall have to give 'm a hot tub before he can go to bed."

"What will you do with him?"

"Oh, keep him here for a day or two to pull round, give um some clothes, and pack 'm off to sea again where he can't get any drink."

"Don't such men ever rob you?"

"Hardly ever. It's not your real outcast who steals much. They're generally so astonished to find a parson isn't as black as he's painted that they don't think of anything else. They go away feeling they've got a *pal*, made a friend! That's the awful want in their lives. A lot of them come back, and write to me while they're away, too, queer letters full of gratitude and bad language! But ye came to see me, my friend. I'm so glad you've found your way here. Now, what can I do for you, or are ye going to do anything for me?"

His manner had changed. His tone was indescribably sympathetic and gentle. If ever the wisdom of charity and the light of holiness shone out on a man's face, Carr thought that he saw it now.

He was entirely dominated by the man. In a burst of nervous words, he poured out his thoughts. He told of his futile visit to Hamlyn, his keen distress at the result, the misery the agitation gave him, and the harm he believed it to be doing.

Blantyre listened with few words. Now and then he made a warm and penetrating remark.

"It will pass," he said at length; "God will give us peace again. He is trying the faith of the poor and ignorant among us. Our prayers will avail. But we will concert together that we may take such measures to stop the local evil as we properly can. I have been loath to move in the matter, but now that you have come to me we will join forces and take action. There are ways and means. I hate pulling wires and using influence, but one must sometimes. I had hoped it wouldn't be necessary. But something must be done. Lord Huddersfield will take action for us. The street meetings can be stopped at once. Then we can inaugurate a real press campaign and let the leader-writers loose. Hitherto it's been our policy to say nothing much, except in the religious papers, of course. But the time has come when we must fight, too. I was talking to Sir Michael Manicho about it the other day. A word or two from him and the country will be ringing with warnings. We can rob this Luther League of its powers in a week. It will *go on*, of course, but with its fangs drawn. The people who support it will, many of them, cease their subscriptions. And there is the law also. The magistrates of London are quite ready to take a strong stand. That is settled. And a word from the Archbishop, perhaps, would be a help. Public opinion is very easily turned."

He spoke calmly, but with conviction and a quiet sense of power. Carr began to see dimly what great forces were behind this man and others of his kind. The tremendous organising machinery of the Catholic Church was laid bare for a moment.

A most confidential talk followed. Blantyre gave the other details and names. He made it plain to Carr's astonished ears that those in high places were waiting to act, waiting to see if the Church needed them. The depth and force of it all astonished him.

A bell began to ring. "There's evensong," said Blantyre, "I must be off. It's my turn to say it to-night."

"I will come, too," Carr answered.

"Do, do! and take some food with us all afterwards, and we'll have a longer talk. You can't think how happy I am that we have come together. What? You've never seen our church? Why, then, you've a treat in front of ye! Every one says it's beautiful. We all love it, we're all proud of it!"

He took him by the arm and led him away.

Not a word of the differences that separated them, no suspicion, or distrust, nothing but welcome and brotherhood!

The tall, bearded man and the quick, shaven Celt in his cassock went into the church together to pray—

"Give peace in our time, O Lord."

CHAPTER X

LOW WATER AND GREAT EXPECTATIONS

In a couple of months after the meeting between Carr and Blantyre, public opinion had spoken in no uncertain way about the "Luther League." Public opinion in these days is very easily led in this or that direction—but only for a time. There is a vast stratum of common-sense, of love of justice, of wholesome sanity, in England, and it can always be reached by a little boring. In the end, especially upon any question which is in its essence sociological, a proper balance is found and the truth of a matter firmly established.

And Hamlyn's agitation was treated as a social question rather than a religious one, at any rate by a secular press. Whether the doings of the High Church party were legal or illegal according to the prayer-book (such was the line the papers took) was a question to be decided by experts in history and the authorities of the Church; a question, in fact, that ought to be decided in a legitimate way. What was, however, quite certain, was that the proceedings of Hamlyn and his party were improper, vulgar, and indecent. It was simply misleading nonsense to cover the Ritualistic party, a body of high-minded and earnest men, with the noisy and venomous vituperation of the streets. Freedom of thought was the heritage of every Englishman, and Hamlyn had simply elected himself a grand inquisitor of matters that did not concern him and which he was unable to understand. No dishonesty on the man's part was alleged. But his history was unearthed by one or two enterprising journalists, following the popular lead. It was shown that while nothing had ever been said against his personal character—and nothing was said now—he had risen from the position of a struggling local newspaper man to comparative affluence and the control of a large and costly organisation. The cash accounts of the League were scrutinised, and unkind remarks were made upon the constant advertisements of the League, with their cry for increased income and fresh subscribers. It was pointed out that people who supported a crusade made without authority by a self-constituted Peter the Hermit, over whom no proper control could be exercised and whose methods of prosecuting it were a mixture of buffoonery, uncharitable malice, and untruth, were incurring a serious responsibility.

In short, public opinion was told in plain language exactly how it ought to regard the campaign. Great newspapers spoke out during one fortnight with singular unanimity. Street meetings were promptly broken up by the police, and after some of the Luther Lecturers had been to prison, finding that public interest in their "martyrdom" was languishing, they subsided into quiet, devotional meetings on the sands at popular watering-places. Whenever Mr. Hamlyn hired a hall and lectured on the iniquities of the local clergy, he was confronted by the spectacle of a sharp-faced man who took down every word of his utterances with scrupulous fidelity. It was always the same machine-like man, in Liverpool or in Plymouth, in Bath or Dundee—there he was. The agitator's eloquence was considerably checked. He was in no condition to sustain an action for slander or libel in which, he well knew, some poor clergyman would somehow be able to brief all the great hawk-faced leaders of the bar, gentlemen with whom Mr. Hamlyn wished to have as little as possible to do.

At such open-air meetings as were permitted, some unobtrusive stranger was generally to be found distributing leaflets among the crowd, which resembled nothing so much as the literature of the Luther League itself in its general "get-up" and appearance. On perusal, however, it proved to be of quite a different tenor, being nothing else than extracts from the best-known English newspapers on Mr. Hamlyn and his mission. This was very trying and disturbed the harmony of many meetings.

In the assemblies convened at halls hired for the occasion,—admission by ticket only,—it frequently happened that some well-known local resident, who could not be denied, made his appearance, and with a few weighty words entirely changed the character of the meeting. The reports from his myrmidons all over the country, which reached Mr. Hamlyn in the Strand, showed a series of counter-moves which alarmed him in their neatness and ingenuity.

It had been for months a pleasing habit of the peripatetic Protestants under the Hamlyn banner to visit churches and make notes of the ornaments therein, afterwards lecturing on them in their own inimitable and humorous manner to crowds in back streets.

Mr. Moffatt, indeed—the young gentleman who had forsaken the plumbing and gas-fitting industry to become incandescent and watery on the Protestant war-path—had more than once broken a small crucifix with an umbrella. The lecturers found, however, that, as if by some concerted action, church doors were locked wherever they might go. The poor fellows' hunger for the sight of candlesticks and sanctuary lamps was hardly ever gratified now, and they were compelled to the somewhat ignominious expedient of nailing the bulls of Mr. Hamlyn to the doors of sacred buildings and going gloomily away.

On one occasion, Mr. Moffatt, who was a young fellow of considerable hardihood, arrived at a well-known sink of ritual during the week, where the incense used in church cost, it was reported, as much as *eight shillings a pound*! Failing in every effort to penetrate the building, one Sunday morning he mingled with a group of worshippers and made an attempt to enter the church. Being a somewhat tubby youth of no great height, he followed closely on the footsteps of a ponderous gentleman quite six feet high, and congratulated himself he was escaping observation, just as one has seen a small dog slink nearer and nearer to the tempting joint upon the dinner-table. His hopes were doomed to failure. He was almost inside the porch when two stalwart church wardens barred the way and read him a paper, which stated that, as he was a known brawler who had been convicted of other illegal disturbances in God's house, entry was refused him.

At the moment, in his chagrin and surprise, Mr. Moffatt could think of no better retort than an injunction to the reader of the document to "keep his hair on." Then, gathering his faculties together, he commenced a vigorous protest as to his rights as a "baptized, confirmed communicant member of the Church of England" to make one of the congregation. No answer whatever was vouchsafed him, and he was compelled to stand meekly by while the usual members of the congregation were admitted.

He bethought himself of an appeal to the majesty of the law! "Very well, then," he said, "I shall go and fetch a policeman. That's all."

One of the church wardens opened the inner door of the church and beckoned to some one. A sergeant of police, in his uniform, emerged quietly. Mr. Moffatt started, muttered something about "writing to the Bishop," and left the vicinity of the church without further ado.

And it was thus all over the country. Hamlyn and his son realised that a strong and powerful organisation was arrayed against them. Their tactics were counter-checked at every turn.

As a natural consequence of all this, the subscriptions to the League fell away at a most alarming rate. The street and public hall collections of the lecturers dwindled until they could hardly pay themselves their own modest emoluments. The general subscriptions and special donations to the head office were in a no less unsatisfactory condition.

A very great number of people, with an honest dislike and distrust of practices which seemed to them against the law of the Church of England (as they understood it), had hitherto sent Hamlyn considerable sums of money. His campaign seemed to them a real and efficacious method of dealing with the question, and his methods had not been very clear to them in their actual detail.

But when the most influential part of the press began to speak with no uncertain voice, these people began to hurriedly repudiate any connection with the Luther League and to tie their

purse-strings in a very tight knot indeed. Then, again, there was a second not inconsiderable class of people whose support was withdrawn. These were more or less of the Miss Pritchett order. They had some real or fancied grievance against the vicar of the parish in which they lived, and the machinery of Hamlyn's League was found to be at their service for the purposes of revenge. Under the cover of religious truth they were able to gratify a private spite—a method of campaign as old as history itself. The aims of these people had been achieved. That is to say, Mr. Hamlyn or his friends had made themselves more or less a thorn in the sides of the local clergy, had "banged the field-piece, twanged the lyre," and departed with as much money as they were able to collect in the cause of Protestant Truth.

And those people who had first moved in the matter saw that, after all, the *status ante quo* had not been altered in the least, that nothing had happened at all! One or two people of no importance whatever might have left the Church, but the general result was, as a rule, an increase of the attacked congregation and, inevitably, an enormous increase of personal popularity of the priest and of loyalty to him and his teachings.

So this second class of worthies also became hard-hearted to the perfervid advertisements of the League, buttoned up their pockets, and tried to behave as though the names of those twin greatnesses, Martin Luther and Samuel Hamlyn, had never crossed their lips.

In the offices in the Strand, all these causes were thoroughly appreciated and understood. The prosperity, or rather the consciousness of it, which had seemed to ooze from Mr. Hamlyn's features, was no more to be seen. The countenance of the Protestant Pope wore an anxious and harassed expression when he was alone with his son, and their talks together were frequent and of long duration.

One disastrous morning the post brought nothing in the way of fuel for the Protestant fire except a single miserable little post-office order for seven shillings and sixpence, a donation from "A Baptist Friend."

Protestant Truth was in a bad way. Both the Hamlyns thought so as they sat down gloomily for a private conference in the inner room.

"There's a good balance in the bank, of course," Hamlyn said. "We've got staying power for some time yet, and the salaries are safe. But it's the future we've got to look to. The righteous cause can't go on nothing."

"Don't you worry, Father," said Sam, "that Exeter Hall speaking has pulled you down a bit. You're not your real self. I haven't a doubt that you'll think of something to wake things up in a day or two."

"Hope so, I'm sure, though I can't think of anything at present. But seven and six! It's the first day Protestantism's dropped below a matter of two pound odd."

"There's plenty of other posts during the day, Pa."

"That's true. One day or three days don't matter. But it shows how things are going. The Romans have been too cunning for us, Sam. The wiles of the Scarlet Woman are prevailing; honest, straightforward Protestants are being undermined."

"But think of the letters of sympathy we've 'ad since the great Ritualistic conspiracy has come up. The real hearty Protestants are as faithful as they ever were."

"Yes, they are," said Mr. Hamlyn reflectively; "we can always fall back on them, and we've got some thousands of names and addresses on the books. The League'll *go on* safe enough, there'll always be labourers in the vineyard and them as will pay the overseer his just dues. But it's 'ard, after the splendid success we've had, to sink down into a small commonplace affair with just a bare living. The real red-hot Protestants, who are really *afraid* of Rome and that, are so few! These disgusting newspapers been showing up everything and the lukewarm people have been falling away. All the real money is flowing back into Roman channels. If there were more really earnest Protestants we might keep on as good as ever. But there's not. We haven't sold a gross of *Bloody Marys* during the month. It's a pity we had to suppress the *Confessional*; that was a real seller—and did a lot of good," Mr. Hamlyn added as an afterthought.

"We couldn't well do no other after the 'int we got from the *Vigilance* people," said Sam.

"I suppose not. But it was a great pity."

"You're due at Malakoff House to-night, aren't you, Pa?"

"Yes, at seven. I'm very uneasy in my mind about Miss P., Sam."

"Gussie says she's worse than she knows herself. She hasn't been out of bed for a fortnight now."

"She's not long for this world, I'm afraid," Hamlyn answered. "While she's alive we are fairly safe. But when she's in Glory where shall we be?"

"That's the question, Father. Gussie knows nothing and can't find out anything, neither. A really handsome legacy invested in some good stock would put us right again whatever might happen."

"It would. But just at present the old lady's awful to deal with. You see, I'm in an awkward position, Sam. I'm not such a fool as to tell her how we've been bested lately—that's to say, I can't

bring myself to wound a faithful Protestant heart by stories of persecution of them as is doing the Lord's work against Rome. Miss P. don't know anything about the checks we've received of late. Well, then, she's always bothering me to know why we aren't keeping it up in Hornham, why we aren't going for Blantyre and that lot. She hears everything that goes on in the parish, though Gussie Davies does her best to stop it. But she don't seem to trust Gussie as she did, which is a pity. Miss P. quite sees that, for some reason or other, things have gone quiet in the parish, and she's getting restive. Something must be done soon, that's quite evident. Some big thing to wake her up—and everyone else, too."

"It doesn't matter much how far we go now."

"Not a bit. The further the better, as a matter of fact. The lecturers' hands are so tied now, what with all these cunning moves of the Romanists, that *they* can't do anything. It seems we've alienated all the moderate people and we've only the extreme ones to rely on. Well, then, we must wake *them* up, that's all. The papers can't well say worse of us than they do already, so it really is the best policy to give the whole country a regular startler. I can't think of anything new at present, but I shall. I expect a bit of inspiration'll come before long. Anyway, I shall tell Miss Pritchett to-night to wait and have patience a little longer, as there's something in the wind that will do all she wants. It's her illness. She *must* have continual bits of excitement to keep her going, it's a regular disease with her now. If I can think of a good scheme to liven up things generally, in the first flush of it she'll be so pleased that we might venture a word or two upon her testamentary dispositions. I should feel so much happier about the Cause if I knew the League was down in her will for a thumping sum. Of course, anything of the sort would have to be said most careful. She'd get up and be healthy again in a week if she thought we thought she was going to peg out!"

Mr. Hamlyn concluded his remarks with a somewhat resentful sigh, and, whistling down the speaking-tube for the correspondence clerk, began to dictate his morning's letters.

It was about seven o'clock when the secretary arrived at Malakoff House, tired and dispirited. The whole day had gone unsatisfactorily. An evening paper had come out with a leaded column about the League which was far from complimentary. The various callers at the office were all more or less disagreeable, and even the volatile Samuel had been plunged into a state of furtive gloom that radiated mis-ease upon all who came near him.

Mr. Hamlyn was shown into the drawing-room and in a minute or two, Gussie Davies came to him. The girl was white and tired of feature. Dark semicircles were under her eyes, but her manner had a nervous excitement that was infectious.

Both of them spoke in that agitated whisper that some people affect in the neighbourhood of those who are seriously ill and whom they think like to die. It is a whisper in which there is a not unpleasurable note, a self-congratulation at being near to the Great Mystery, as spectators merely.

"How is she?" whispered Hamlyn.

"Bad," answered Gussie. "Dr. Hibbert's been and I had a chat with him afterwards. He daren't speak as plain as he'd like, for fear of frightening her. But he says she must *not* keep on exciting herself. It will be fatal if she does. Another two months of this St. Elwyn's excitement will kill her, Mr. Hamlyn. I'm sure of that."

"What's she been saying?"

"Oh, the same old thing: Why doesn't Mr. Hamlyn do something decisive? Why doesn't he strike these proud priests some crushing blow? You know she's heard that Miss Blantyre has come to live at the vicarage, and that makes her keener than ever."

"Well, I must think of something, that's all," said the secretary in a decisive whisper. "I'll promise her a new move almost at once. I suppose you've had no chance to get in a word about the will?"

"Not a chance. I can't find out anything either. All I know is that her solicitor hasn't been here since she joined the League. So that looks as if there isn't anything done *yet*."

"I don't suppose there is, my dear. But if I can keep her quiet *now*, and do something big in the parish in a few days, then I suppose we might broach it?"

"Certainly, Mr. Hamlyn, I should say so."

"Good. One more question, Gussie, before I go up. Do you think it wise to mention a contribution to the working fund just now? One can never be too zealous in the cause of Protestant Truth, but I want to deal wisely with her."

"Oh, I think you'll be safe enough for a hundred or two," Gussie said, "as long as you promise her a good rumpus soon! She ain't mean, I will say that for her."

Mr. Hamlyn nodded in a brisk, business-like way, rang for the maid, and was shown up to the sick-room.

Gussie remained in the drawing-room. She wondered how successful her friend and lover's father would be. She had immense faith in his abilities and already looked forward to the time when, released for ever from her duties at Malakoff House, she would, as Mrs. Hamlyn, Junior, become

a leading lady of True Protestantism. Not that the girl hated her employer. She had no affection for Miss Pritchett—and it would have been wonderful if she had—but her feeling was not stronger than that. As for the money question, the money that the rich old lady was giving to the Luther League, Gussie saw no harm in that. The money was for a good cause, so she believed, and the Hamlyns, *père et fils*, had much better have the handling of it than any one else!

Mr. Hamlyn was a considerable time. The girl wandered about the room, agog to hear his news, thinking with a certain terror of the grim old woman up-stairs. For what had been tartness and acerbity had become grimness now, in the pompous old-fashioned bed-chamber, where she lay waiting the beating of those great black wings which all, save she, knew were drawing near.

Although Gussie Davis knew all the foibles of her mistress and could play upon them with adroitness and success, she felt, nevertheless, a fear of the old woman. Miss Pritchett, with all her absurdities, her petty jealousies, her greed for flattery, was a woman with a personality. She was very rich, and she had chosen to remain among the surroundings of her youth and be great among the small. Yet even a petty supremacy awes the petty, and the sly Welsh girl was indubitably awed. She was not wholly bad, not unfeeling in her way, but she was weak. In the hands of the Hamlyns, she had been as putty from the very first. They were strong men. There was no doubt about that. With all the temperamental vulgarity and greed of both father and son, there was indubitable strength—and, in the case of the elder, considerable magnetic power.

They had been kind to her also. She was genuinely fond of Sam, and he was fond of her. The accident of her position, that she was able to help and forward their plans, made no difference as to that. Hamlyn, Senior, liked her. He would, she knew, be kind and fatherly to her when she was married to Sam. He was that now.

For, if Hamlyn had been able to employ his cleverness to good advantage in the exploitation of any other thing save of religion, he would have been counted as a shrewd business man and nothing more. Nothing worse than that at any rate. He had no personal vices. He did not in the least realise that he was living a life that was shameful. Religion meant no more to him than any other way of making money would have meant. That was all. And, oddly enough, Blantyre himself shrewdly suspected this, while Carr looked upon the agitator as infamous.

Hamlyn was perfectly aware that he was a humbug, but he thought that his humbug was perfectly legitimate in the war of life.

The priest at St. Elwyn's whom he had so bitterly attacked and wounded was a psychologist. Most priests are. Men who sit in churches and hear the true story of men's lives learn an infinite tenderness. Men come to them for comfort, to hear the comfortable words that our Lord has spoken for the sinful who are penitent, to receive from them that absolution which is nothing more than the confirmation, in a concrete and certain way, of the promise of God. It is only the people who have never confessed their sins, not to a priest, but to God through a priest, who speak against the Sacrament of Penance.

They do not know they are tilting at windmills. And the bitter shame that sometimes comes to a man as he tells another man the true story of his life is in itself the truest evidence that he means to amend it. No one would do that without penitence. There is a motive for every action; the motive would be wanting if confession were made without a resolve to lead a new life. If those who fulminate against the Church's method, and sneer at the members of the Church who follow it, as dupes and fools, could understand that it is discipline that purifies and exalts, they would sneer no longer. It is all very well to be a *franc-tireur*, no doubt. But it is better to be a member of the regular forces. It is not so jolly for a time, perhaps, but in event of capture, the former is shot at sight, the latter becomes a prisoner of war with all the rights and traditions of his lot.

Simile was one of Mr. Hamlyn's pet weapons, but in his noisy syllogisms, he left out the first two premises and confined himself to the conclusion—generally an emphatic epithet.

Mr. Hamlyn came down-stairs at last. His face was grave, but peaceful. Perspiration showed upon it. He had been having a hard time.

"I say, my dear," he whispered, "I wonder if you've got a cup of tea handy. I've had a thick time!"

It is better to take the stimulant of tea than the more usual brandy and soda. Hamlyn was a strong teetotaller, and that counted to his credit at a moment like this. For the man had obviously been through an unnerving experience. He was not his ready and impudent self.

The tea was brought. It revived him.

"Well!" he said in a low voice, "I don't want to go through many scenes like that again, Gussie! She's getting worse and worse. Her brain can't last much longer if she goes on like this! However, I managed to calm her down. She's going off to sleep now. I told her I'd wake Hornham up in a few days—and I'll *have* to do it, what's more!"

"Did you get a cheque?" said the practical Gussie.

"Yes," said Mr. Hamlyn in a slightly more relieved voice. "She gave me a couple of hundred in the end. At heart, she's devoted to the cause of Protestant Truth. But she's getting horribly restive, my dear. I'm sorry for her. She's a wreck of what she used to be—but she's a wreck that wants a lot of salvage!"

The colour came back into the plump, clean-shaven face as the tea did its work.

"I forgot, my dear," he said; "I brought you a box of chocolates. It clean went out of my 'ead," he waved an exhausted hand towards his small brown leather bag, which stood on the table between a plaster model of the leaning tower of Pisa and a massive volume entitled *Every Young Lady's Vade Mecum*.

Gussie smiled her thanks and opened the bag, while Mr. Hamlyn poured out another cup of tea.

Gussie felt in the bag. It was full of papers, but there were two parcels there. She took them out. They were of much the same size. Each was neatly tied up in white paper.

She pulled the string from one of them. A number of thin semi-transparent white wafers fell out upon the table.

"Oh, I'm sorry!" she cried, "I thought this was the box of chocolates."

Hamlyn looked up wearily. To his immeasurable surprise, he saw that the girl's face had grown very pale. She shrunk away from the table.

"What's the matter, my dear?" he said, thoroughly alarmed.

She suddenly flushed a deep scarlet.

"What are these?" she said, pointing with a shaking finger to the things on the table.

"Them?" said Mr. Hamlyn in cheerful surprise. "Mass wafers, my dear. I buy them in a shop in Covent Garden. We distribute them among the Luther Lecturers, for object lessons to the poor deluded Ritualists."

The girl had crouched to the wall of the room. Hamlyn was seriously alarmed. Her face was almost purple, her eyes started out of her head.

"They're not con—*consecrated*?" she gasped.

Hamlyn could not understand her emotion. "No," he said; "why, Gussie, what a superstitious little thing you are. And if they were, what then?" Frank amazement showed on his face.

"Oh, nothing, Mr. Hamlyn," the girl said at length, becoming more normal in her manner.

In a few minutes, Hamlyn left the house, leaving the girl in her ordinary manner, eating the chocolates that he had brought her.

His able mind was busily at work. He knew that during Miss Pritchett's adhesion to St. Elwyn's Gussie had, perforce, been one of the congregation there and had been taught and trained by the clergy.

"No wonder," he thought bitterly to himself; "no wonder that they can win along the line, when they can sow seeds like that in a girl's mind. Why, she's a thorough little Protestant at heart. To think that those things should have startled her so! It's a lingering prejudice, I suppose. They *are* a queer lot—the Romanists!"

As he communed thus with himself, a swift thought came to him. At the moment of its arrival in his brain, he almost staggered. Then, pulling himself together, he walked rapidly to his own house.

He thought he saw his way to a *coup* that would make all his previous efforts as nothing. How wonderfully simple it was! Why had he never thought of it before—*what* a fool he had been! Here was the solution of all the difficulties he was in. The answer seemed to have come to his conversation with Samuel in the morning.

He went to his study and fortunately found that Sam was already there. Miss Maud Hamlyn sat in the room also, but when she saw her father's face, she left the room at once. It wore the "business look" she knew well, and, though she but dimly understood what her brother and father were engaged in, she knew it had brought great prosperity and honour to all of them, and was loath to intrude upon any profitable confabulation.

"Have you got it, Pa?" said Samuel, eagerly.

"Yes, I *'ave*," answered the secretary, "and very fine it is too!"

"How much?" asked Sam.

"What do you mean?"

"The cheque, Miss Pritchett's latest."

"Oh, *that*," said Hamlyn. "Two hundred, what we expected. I meant something else. I've got the new scheme to wake things up! The best thing we've done yet, my boy!"

Sam rubbed his hands. "What did I say this morning? I knew you'd do it, Pa. Well, let's have it."

Mr. Hamlyn sat back in his chair, willing to dally a moment with his triumph and enjoy the full savour of it.

"Why we never thought of it before," he said, "beats me entirely! Something suggested it to me to-night, and I've been wondering at our neglecting such a move."

"What *is* it then?"

"What about one of us going to the Mass and bringing away the consecrated wafer? Then a big public meeting's called and I *show* the people what we've got! The 'flour-and-water god' of the Romanists! Not the usual plan of producing a wafer we've bought from a shop, but the *real thing*, Sam! Then they'll all be able to see that there's no difference between before and after! It'll explode the whole thing and give the League an advertisement better than anything that's gone before!"

Sam looked very grave indeed. "It's a little bit *too* much, I'm afraid, Father," he said.

"What do you mean, my son?" answered the secretary in extreme and real surprise.

"Well, I don't know," Sam said doubtfully, "but I shouldn't like to meddle with it myself."

Mr. Hamlyn leaned forward. "Sam," he said, "you're a fool. You're as bad as Gussie Davies! Leave the matter to me. Who's awakened Protestantism in Hengland? ME! Who knows how to work a popular cause? ME! Who's going to boom the Luther League up to the top again? ME!"

"Have it your own way, Father," Sam said, "you generally do come out on top."

"Ring the bell for some tea," said Mr. Hamlyn, "and let's talk out the details. We'll 'ave to get it where we aren't known by sight."

CHAPTER XI

THE NEWS THAT CARR BROUGHT

As the days wore on, and Lucy Blantyre became accustomed to her surroundings, she found that she was in thorough tune with them. During the year she had been away from St. Elwyn's, she had spent most of the time abroad, at first with Lady Linquest, afterwards with friends. The old life of fashionable people and "smart" doings palled horribly. Travelling was a diversion from that, and, in some sense, a preparation for the more useful life that she determined to live in the future.

She had quite made up her mind to that. Nothing would induce her to go back to live in Park Lane once more. Life offered far more than the West End of London could offer; so much was plain. She kept up a regular correspondence with her brother and was fully informed of all that took place in Hornham. Her thoughts turned more and more affectionately towards the dingy old house, centre of such ceaseless activities, the old house with the great church watching over it.

Down there it seemed as if provision was made for all one's needs of the mind. Stress and storm beat upon it in vain, and it combined the joys of both the cloister and the hearth.

In her limited experience, there had been nothing like it. A year or two ago, she would have smiled incredulously if any one had told her that she would like going to church twice or three times on a week-day. But during her stay at St. Elwyn's how natural and helpful it had seemed, how much a part of the proper order of things. The morning Eucharist while day in the outside world was beginning, the stately and beautiful evensong as men ceased their toil, these coloured all the day, were woven into its warp and woof. She knew that the *abnormal* life was the life of the majority, the life of those who lived in a purely secular way, who never worshipped or prayed.

When any mind, in its settling of its attitude towards the Unseen, gets as far as this; when it realises that, despite the laughter of fools and the indifference of most people, the *logical* use of life is to make it in constant touch with God, then, as a rule, the personal religious conviction will come in due time. It had not come to Lucy yet in full and satisfying measure, it had not come even when she determined to make her home with her brother for a time and help in any way she could.

During the year of travel, she was also in regular communication with James Poyntz. Insensibly his letters to her had become the letters of a lover. He told her all his thoughts and the details of his work and hopes, and, mingling with what were in fact a series of brilliant personal confessions, there began to be a high note of personal devotion to her. One does not need the simple alphabet of lover's words to write love letters. Poyntz used no terms of endearment, and as yet had made her no definite proposal of marriage. But the girl knew, quite certainly, exactly how he felt towards her. There was no disguise in his letters, and the time was drawing near when he would definitely ask her to share his life.

She had not yet definitely summed up her attitude towards him. She was at the crossing of the roads; new influences, new ideas were pouring into her brain from every side. It was necessary to readjust herself to life completely before she could settle upon any course.

She knew that to be Lady Huddersfield was to take a high seat in Vanity Fair. The Huddersfields belonged to the old order of society, to that inner circle of the great who never open their door

indiscriminately to the Jew and the mining millionaire. People laughed at them and called them pompous and dull, but there was a high serenity among them nevertheless. She might have married half a dozen times had she so chosen. Her income was large enough to make her a small heiress, at any rate to be an appreciable factor in the case, besides which her birth was unexceptionable. It was known that when Lady Linquest fluttered away to another world, the old lady's money would come to her niece. But position merely, rank rather, did not attract a girl who already went wherever she chose. And among the men in society who had offered her marriage, or were prepared to do so, she found no one capable of satisfying her brain. Poyntz did this. She found power in him, strength, purpose. She knew that, in whatever station of life he was, the man was finely tempered, high in that aristocracy of intellect which some people say is the only aristocracy there is.

She was conscious of all this, but, especially since she had been settled in the vicarage as a home, she was becoming conscious of many other influences at work upon her. Religion, the personal giving of one's self to God, was tinging all her life and actions now. Hour by hour, she found herself drawing nearer to the Cross. Her progress had become a matter of practical experience. It was impossible to live with the people she was among, to watch every detail of their lives, to find *exactly where the motive power and the sustaining power came from*, without casting in her lot with them in greater or less degree. Every day she found some hold upon the outside world was loosened, something she had imagined had great value in her eyes suddenly seemed quite worthless! Looked at in the light that was beginning to shine upon her, she was frequently surprised beyond measure to find how worthless most things were! Her brain was keen, cool, and logical. Hitherto she had refused to draw an inference—no proof, by the way, of any want of logical skill;—now she was drawing it.

She was great and intimate friends with the two assistant priests, Stephens and King. Stephens was engaged to a girl in the country, King belonged to some confraternity of celibates. Both were high-minded men, who appreciated to the full the charm of cultured feminine society and found her drawing-room a most pleasant oasis now and then. And every one at the clergy-house began to see a great deal of Mr. Carr. The lonely man found companionship and sympathy there. He found intellectual men, university men like himself, with whom he could talk. He had been intellectually starving in Hornham, and good brains rust unless they have some measure of intercourse with their kind.

He was constantly with his new friends. One Sunday Father Blantyre preached at St. Luke's. The church was crowded, to hear a man whom a great many there believed capable of almost any form of casuistry and sly dealing. But when the little Irishman got into the pulpit he gave them a simple, forcible discourse on some points of conduct, delivered with all his personal charm, his native raciness and wit; many wagging tongues were silenced in the parish. Carr's experiment was a bold one, but it succeeded. An ounce of fact is worth a pound of hearsay. Blantyre was so transparently honest, so obviously incapable of any of the things imputed to him by the Luther Leaguers, that the most prejudiced folk at St. Luke's said no more than that it was a pity such a decent fellow, who could preach such a good sermon, wasted so much of his time over unnecessary fads!

For some reason or other,—she could not quite explain it to herself,—Lucy looked on Carr with different eyes from those with which she viewed Stephens or King. He seemed less set apart from the ordinary lot of men than they were. His ordinary clerical costume may have had something to do with it, the contrast between his clothes and those of the laymen not being so marked as in the case of the High Church clergy. And his manner also was different in a subtle way. Lucy liked the manner of King and she liked the manner of Carr, but they were markedly unlike each other. The former spoke of everything from the Church's point of view, the latter more from the point of view of an ordinary layman who loves and serves our Lord.

Lucy had no fault to find with the ecclesiastical attitude. She had long before realised what were the spiritual results of rebellion and schism; they were too patent in Hornham. She was definitely Catholic. Therefore she approved of King as a priest and liked him as a man. But Carr seemed to be more upon her own level, not set apart in any way. She knew he was just as much a priest as the other, but he came into her consciousness from a purely human standpoint, while the other did not.

Viewing him thus, she had come to find she liked him very much indeed. He was a very "manly" man, she found, with a virile intellect which had had too little play of late years. She came to know of his life and found it as full of good works as her brother's. The methods differed, the Church and its services took an altogether secondary place in these ministrations; the charities of a poor man were necessarily more circumscribed than those of his rich neighbour, but the spiritual fervour was as great.

Lucy could not help wondering why a man who had such abundant means to his hand of holding and influencing his people used so few of them. Why was his church not beautiful? How did he exist spiritually without the sacramental grace so abundantly vouchsafed at St. Elwyn's?

She had a glimpse deep down into the man once. One evening at St. Elwyn's, when Carr had come to supper, the conversation turned upon a rather serious epidemic of typhoid fever that had only just been overcome in Hornham and which had caused a widespread distress among the poorer classes.

"I'm getting up a fund," Father Blantyre said, "to relieve some of the worst cases and to send as

many as possible of the convalescents off to the seaside. Now, Lucy, my dear, what will you stump up? This girl's rolling in money, Carr! She's more than she knows what to do with!"

Lucy noticed—no one else did—that Mr. Carr flushed a little and started as Blantyre finished speaking.

She turned to her brother. "I'll give you a hundred pounds, dear," she said.

"Good girl!" he shouted in high good humour.

Lucy turned to Carr. "I suppose you've a great many destitute cases in St. Luke's?" she asked.

"Very many, I'm sorry to say," he answered sadly. "I've done what I could, but I've hardly any money myself until next quarter-day, and our people are nearly all of them poor." He thought with gentle envy of these wealthy folk who were able to do so much, while he, alas! could do so little.

"I'll subscribe something to St. Luke's, too," Lucy said. "I'll give you the same, Mr. Carr. I'll write you a cheque after supper."

"That's a sportswoman!" said Father Blantyre; "good for you, Lucy!"

Carr flushed up. The destitution in his parish had been a constant grief to him during the last few weeks. He had not known where to turn to relieve it. He had prayed constantly that help might be forthcoming. He broke out into a nervous torrent of thanks which came from his very heart, becoming eloquent as he went on and revealing, unconsciously enough, much of his inward self to them. They were all touched and charmed by the man's simplicity and earnestness. He showed a great love for the poor as he talked. Sympathy for suffering and kindness towards it are not rare things in England. We are a charitable folk, take us in the mass. But this quality of personal love for the outcast and down-trodden is not so often met with. It is a talent, and Carr possessed it in a high degree.

A step in their intimacy was marked that night; all felt drawn more closely to the Evangelical vicar. He stood alone; his life seemed cheerless to them all and their sympathy was his—though he had never made the least parade of his troubles. Moreover, the three clergy of St. Elwyn's were beginning to find out, with pleased surprise, how near he was to them in the great essentials, how Catholic his views were. Already much of Carr's dislike to the ceremonial of St. Elwyn's was fading away. He had witnessed it, found that there was absolutely no harm in it, that it did *not* stand between the soul and God, but even sometimes assisted in the journey upwards. He did not endorse it as yet, he did not contemplate anything of the sort for himself or his people, but he saw the good there and found nothing to disgust or harm.

Later on that evening, Dr. Hibbert came in, and there was music. Lucy played and sang to them, and Carr, who had a fine baritone, sang an old favourite or two, college songs, *Gaudeamus Igitur*, *John Peel*, and the like.

Then, while the four other men took a hand at whist—if only Mr. Hamlyn could have seen the "devil's picture books" upon the table!—Carr had a long, quiet talk with Lucy Blantyre. He found himself telling her much of his work and hopes, of his early life in a bleak Northumberland vicarage, of Cambridge, and the joyous days when he rowed three in the King's boat and all the skies were fair.

Now and then, when he would have withdrawn into himself again, fearing that he was boring her, she encouraged him to go on. With her cheque in his pocket, he went home in a glow that night. He thought constantly of her, and when he went to bed, he looked curiously in the mirror, turning away from it with a sigh, a shake of the head, and the chilling memory that the girl was rich, allied to great families, a personage in London society, and that a poor gentleman toiling in Hornham could never be a mate for such as she was.

Three or four days after the incident of the subscription, Lucy received a letter from Agatha Poyntz, who was staying with the St. Justs in Berkeley Square. The letter begged Lucy to "come up to town" for an afternoon. A theatre party had been formed, which was to consist of Agatha herself, Lady Lelant, a young married cousin of hers, and James Poyntz. Lucy was begged to come and complete the party. They were to go to tea afterwards at the Savoy or somewhere, and Lucy could drive home in the evening. The letter was quite imperative in its demand for Lucy's presence, and the girl had a shrewd suspicion who it was that had inspired it. Her last few letters from Poyntz had been almost, so she fancied, leading up to just some such occasion as this which was now proposed.

She thought it all over during the morning of that day. Her mind wavered. A few weeks ago she knew that she would not have hesitated for a moment. Whatever her answer might eventually be to what James Poyntz had to say, she would have gone to the tryst and listened to him. To hear him pleading, to see this scion of an ancient and honourable house, this big-brained man, pleading for her, would be sweet. Every woman would feel that. But now she hesitated very much. She hardly owned it to herself, but a very different figure was coming to have a continual place in her thoughts. A graver figure, a less complex figure, and one invested with a dignity that was not of this world, a dignity that the peer's son had not.

For now, most indubitably, a new element was coming into her life, one that had not been there before.

And there was yet another cause for her hesitation. She had come to see that the supremely important thing in life was religion; she knew that it was going to be so for her. She wasn't bigoted, she realised the blameless life that many people who did not believe in our Lord appeared to live. But that was not the point. Works were good, they were a necessary concomitant of any life that was to be bound up with hers. But faith was a paramount necessity also. She had no illusions about James Poyntz. She did not think, as less keen-sighted girls have thought of atheist lovers, that she could ever bring him to the Faith. She knew quite well that it would be impossible, that he was one of those folk to whom the "talent" of faith does not seem to have been given, and who will have to begin all over again in the next world, learning the truths of Christianity like children.

While she was thinking out the question of acceptance or refusal, her eye caught a date on her tablets. It was the date of the theatre party and also of a meeting to be held during the afternoon in the public hall at Hornham, at which Father Blantyre had consented to hold public argument upon the legalities of ritual and the truth of Catholic dogma with some of the Luther Lecturers.

Hamlyn had intended that this meeting should take place in the evening, for two reasons. In the first place, during the afternoon he was himself to address a great meeting in London, to which all the "red-hot Protestants" on the lists of the League had been specially invited by ticket, and at which a great sensation was hinted at, in much the same way as music-hall managers announce the forthcoming appearance of some entirely new spectacle, trick, or performer.

Mr. Hamlyn had hoped to arrive in Hornham from the Strand flushed with a great victory, the news of which would have preceded him during the afternoon.

Moreover, in the evening an audience would assemble with which the Luther Lecturers would be thoroughly at home—Mr. Sam Hamlyn would have seen to that—and the place would be packed by rowdy non-churchgoers who would come with the intention of witnessing a row, even if they themselves had to create it. Thus a "great Protestant demonstration of North London" would be absolutely assured.

Unfortunately, Mr. Hamlyn received the plainest of plain hints from the local chief of police that he would get himself into particularly hot water if he proceeded with his little scheme, and that the words of one of his men—the ingenuous Mr. Moffatt indeed, who, locked out of every church in England, had lately returned to his parental roof for a holiday—to a certain rough section of the community, in connection with this very meeting, would be brought up against him.

The police had no objection to a meeting during the afternoon. The dangerous element would still be pushing their barrows of plums and pears through the city streets, and though the meeting would, no doubt, be skilfully packed with partisans, many women would be present and nothing more than a wordy war would be likely to result.

Lucy saw the date and considered that the question of the matinée was decided for her. She mentioned the invitation at lunch, and was very much surprised to find that her brother strongly deprecated her intention of being present at the discussion and welcomed this invitation.

"I don't want you to go, dear," he said; "I beg of you not. It will be rough and bitter. I know it. I shrink from it myself, but I must show them that we are not afraid to meet them openly. But it would do nothing but distress you. Write to Miss Poyntz this afternoon and say you'll go. Then you can hear all about the meeting in the evening when you get back." He was so obviously in earnest that Lucy could not but agree.

It seemed fate sent her to meet James. Well, it must be, that was all. Circumstances must be faced, and if she did not know her own mind now, it was possible that the event itself would decide it for her.

But she addressed the letter with marked nervous excitement, and the "Hon. Agatha Poyntz" was more tremulous than her writing was wont to be.

There were two days more to wait, a Sunday intervened, and she hardly left the church during the whole day, seeking counsel and help where only they are to be found.

On Monday, she arrived at the theatre at about two. She had refused to lunch with her friends and drove from Hornham in a hansom cab, meeting them at the door of the building.

They went at once to their box and found that there were some five minutes to wait before the rise of the curtain.

The theatre was curious after the glare of the sun outside, fantastic and unreal. Hardly anybody talked, though there was a good house, and the strange quiet of a matinée audience seemed to pervade the four people in the box also.

Lucy leaned back in her chair with the sensation of dreaming. This morning she had knelt in the side chapel at St. Elwyn's! A moment before she had been alone in the cab, among the roar and bustle of Trafalgar Square. Now she was in a dream. Agatha and Adelaide Lelant smiled at her without speaking—just like odd dream people. James Poyntz sat just behind her. She was acutely conscious of his presence. Now and then he bent forward and made some remark or other in a low voice. That also seemed to come from a distance. She seemed to have left all the real things behind in Hornham.

The scents, the dresses of the fashionable people in the stalls, the dim, apricot light, seemed alien to her life now, a reminder of experiences and days long since put away and forgotten.

The little band below had been playing a waltz of Weber's, a regret which was strangled into a sob as the curtain rose suddenly upon the first act of the play.

How acutely conscious one was at first of the artificial light! The big frame of the proscenium enclosed a rich garden scene, beautifully painted. But it was full of hot yellow light, until the eye forgot the outside day it had lately quitted. Lucy thought that for the sake of illusion it was a mistake to come to the play in the afternoon. She said so to James.

"Well," he whispered, "for my part, there is never any illusion in the stage for me. It is a way of passing an idle hour now and then. That is all. I came here not to see the play, but to see you."

She turned towards the stage again with a slight flush.

Behind the footlights the perfectly dressed men and women went through their parts. All appeared as if they had put on for the first time the clothes they wore; both men and women had the complexion of young children—peaches and cream—unless the light fell on the face at an awkward angle. Then it glistened.

And all the people on the stage talked alike, too. They did not speak quite like ladies or gentlemen, but imitated the speech of ladies and gentlemen wonderfully! The play did not interest Lucy. It was a successful play, it was played by people who were celebrated actors, but she was out of tune with the whole thing. It wasn't amusing. Between the acts, Lady Lelant chatted merrily, of such news as there was to be gleaned during a passage through town. She spoke of the movements of this or that acquaintance, whom this girl was engaged to, why Lord Dawlish had quarrelled with the Duke of Dover. Lucy had no interest in these matters any more. She realised that with astonished certainty. She didn't care a bit. After all, these smart people and their doings were not, as she had thought in the past, any more interesting than the group of church people at St. Elwyn's. Indeed they were less so. Dr. Hibbert, one or two of the nursing sisters, some of the choir men, King, Stephens, Carr—all these people had more individuality, *lived, thought, felt, prayed* more intensely than Lady Lelant's set, Lady Linquest's set, any purely fashionable set. There was not a doubt that in the mere worldly economy of things, in the state politic, every one of these Hornham people *mattered more* than those others. And, where hearts and wills are weighed, to the critical Unseen eyes, their value was greater still. Lucy was glad when the play began again, and she was relieved of the necessity for a simulated interest in things she had long since put away from her.

The last act of the mimic story dragged on. Agatha and Lady Lelant were absorbed in it. Lucy withdrew a little from the front of the box. She cared nothing for the play, nor did her companion. Both of them knew of things imminent in their twin lives greater than any mimic business could suggest to them.

He began to tell her in a low voice of his joy in seeing her again. It thrilled her to hear the lover-like tones creeping into a voice so clear, cold, and self-contained in all the ordinary affairs of life. It was an experience that disturbed and swayed all the instincts of her sex. For she knew that this was no ordinary conquest that she had made, no ordinary tribute to her mind and person. She might have received the highest compliment that he was about to pay her from many a man as highly placed and socially fortunate as he. There was no exhilaration, no subtle flattery of her pride and the consciousness of her womanhood in that. But she knew him for what he was. She had learned of the intellect and power of the man—herein lay an exquisite pleasure in his surrender. And she liked him immensely. Physically, he pleased her eye, and her sense of what was fitting in a man. Mentally he compelled her. And now and again in their intimacy, an intimacy that had grown enormously during the last year, fostered on their mutual epistolary confidences, she had found a sudden surrender, a boyish leaning on her, a waiting for her approving or helpful word, that was sweet to her.

At last the curtain fell.

"Now, then," Poyntz said, "we'll go and have tea on the terrace at the Sardinia. There will be a band, a really good band, and the embankment will look beautiful just now. Come along, young ladies; we'll walk, shall we? It won't take us five minutes." They left the theatre.

"Ah!" Lucy said with a sudden gasp of relief, "how good the air is after that dark place and the stage. My eyes feel as if they had been actually burnt."

The long lights of the summer afternoon irradiated everything. There are moments in summer when the busiest London street seems like a street in fairy-land. It was so now as they walked to the great riverside hotel; a tender haze of gold lay over all the vast buildings, the sky began to be as if it were hung with banners.

They passed from the roar of the street to the great courtyard, with its gay awnings of white and red, its palms and tree-ferns in green tubs, its little tables like the tables of a continental café. Little groups of people of all nationalities sat about there. The party heard the twanging accent of the United States, the guttural German, the purring, spitting Russian.

They entered the hotel, walked down a corridor, descended some steps, and came out upon the terrace.

Lucy had a finely developed social instinct. She knew what was going on instinctively, and it was plain to her at once that the moment had come. Agatha Poyntz and her cousin had disappeared as she sat down at a small table with James, hidden by shrubs from the rest of the terrace.

Below and beyond were gardens in which children were playing, the wide embankment, and the silver Thames itself, all glowing under the lengthening sun rays.

What did she feel at that moment? She found that she was calm, her pulses were quiet, her breathing untroubled and slow.

He leaned forward and took her hands strongly in both of his. At first, his words came haltingly to him, but then, gathering courage, he made her a passionate declaration.

Her heart cried out vaguely to some outside power for guidance; her inarticulate appeal was hardly a prayer, it was the supreme expression of perplexity and doubt.

"For months, all my work and life have been coloured by thoughts of you, have had reference to you. I can conceive, since I have been writing to you, and you to me, I have had hopes and dreams that have become part of my life! If you could accept this, this devotion, this strong feeling of love which has grown up in me, I feel that our companionship would be a beautiful thing. Lucy, I am not eloquent in love as some men are said to be, I can only tell you that I love and admire you dearly and have no greater hope than to share everything with you, my lady, my love!"

The strong, self-contained young man was deeply moved. He continued, in a monologue of singular delicacy and high feeling, to pour out the repressed feelings of the past year, to offer her a life that was more stainless—she knew it well—than that of most young men.

She was deeply touched, interested, and rather overawed. But there was no thrill of passion in her that could answer to the notes of it that were coming into his voice and shaking it from its firmness, sending tremulous waves quivering through it.

Her hand shook in his hold, but it was passive. Emotion rushed over her, but it was a cool emotion, so to say; she was touched, but her blood did not race and leap at his touch, she felt no wish to rest in his arms, to find her home there!

At last she was able to speak. There was a pause in his pleading, his eyes remained fixed upon her face in anxious scrutiny.

She withdrew her hand gently.

"You have touched me very deeply," she said. "But I can't, oh, I *can't* answer you now. This is such a great thing. There is so much to think over, so much self-examination. It might all look quite different to one to-morrow! Let me wait, give me time. I will write to you."

His ear found the lack of what he sought in her voice. Even to herself her tones sounded cold and conventional after his impassioned pleading. But she found herself mistress neither of reason nor of feeling as she spoke. She was bewildered, though not taken by surprise.

He seemed to understand something of her state of mind. If his disappointment was keen, he showed nothing of it, realising with the pertinacity of a strong, vigorous nature that nothing really worth having was won easily, thankful, perhaps, that he had won as much as he had—her consideration.

"You know how great a thing this is to me," he said. "You would never be unkind or hard to me and it would be an unkindness to prolong my suspense. When will you give me my answer?"

"Oh, soon, soon! But I must have time. I will write to you soon, in a fortnight I will write."

"That is so long a time!"

"It will pass very swiftly."

"Then I accept your decree. But I shall write to you, even if you don't answer me until I get the letter, oh, happy day! on which you tell me what my whole heart longs to hear. You will read my letters during the time of waiting? Promise me that, Lucy."

"Yes, yes, I promise," she said hastily, seeing that Agatha and Adelaide Lelant were coming towards them.

Her brain was whirling; James himself was agitated and unstrung by the vehemence of feeling, the nerve storm, that he had just passed through. And in the minds of Miss Poyntz and Lady Lelant the liveliest curiosity and interest reigned, as it naturally would reign, under such circumstances, in the minds of any normal young women, gentle or simple, with blue blood or crimson.

But the four people had learned the lessons their life-long environment had taught. Their faces were masks, their talk was trivial.

When at length Lucy rose to go, declining to drive home with Lady Lelant, they all came into the big, quiet courtyard of the hotel, "to help her choose her hansom." Every unit of the little party felt her departure would be a relief, she felt it herself. The two girls did not know what had happened and were eager to know. James wanted to be alone, to go through the interview step by

step in his brain, reconstructing it for the better surveyal of his chances, and to plan an epistolary campaign, or bombardment rather.

Lucy felt the desire, a great and pressing desire, for home and rest. She arrived at the vicarage an hour or so after. As the cab had turned into the familiar, sordid streets she had felt glad! She smiled at her own sensations, but they were very real. This place, this "unutterable North London slum," as she used to call it, was more like home than Park Lane had ever been.

How tired she felt as she went up-stairs to her room! Her face was pale, dark circles had come out under her eyes, she bore every evidence of having passed through some mental strain.

After a bath she felt better, more herself, after these experiences of the afternoon. And to change every article of clothing was in itself a restorative and a tonic. It was an old trick of hers, and she had always found it answer. When she went down-stairs again she was still pale, but had that freshness and dainty completeness that have such enormous charm, that she always had, and that her poorer sisters are so unable to achieve in the *va et vient* of a hard, work-a-day life.

She wanted to see Bernard, she hungered for her brother. With a pang of self-reproach, she remembered, as she came down-stairs, that this had been the afternoon of the public debate with Hamlyn's people. It was an important event in the parish. And from her start from the clergy-house to her arrival back at its doors, she had quite forgotten the whole thing! In the absorption with her own affairs, it had passed completely from her brain and she was sorry. Of late, she had identified herself so greatly with the affairs and hopes of the little St. Elwyn's community, that she felt selfish and ashamed as she knocked at the door of the study. She waited for a moment to hear the invitation to enter. It was never safe to go into Bernard's room without that precaution. Some tragic history might be in the very article of relation, some weary soul might be there seeking ghostly guidance in its abyss of sorrow and despair.

Some one bade her enter. She did so. The room was dark, filled with the evening shadows. For a moment or two, she could distinguish nothing.

"Are you here, Ber?" she said.

"The vicar is up-stairs, Miss Blantyre," came the answer in King's voice, as he rose from his seat. "I'm here with Stephens."

"Well, let me sit down for a little while and talk," Lucy said. "May I?—please go on smoking. I can stand Bob's pipe, so I can certainly stand *yours*. I want to hear all about the meeting in the Victoria Hall."

They found a chair for her; she refused to have lights brought, saying that she preferred this soft gloom that enveloped them.

Her question about the meeting was not immediately responded to. The men seemed collecting their thoughts. By this time, she was really upon something that resembled a true sisterly footing with these two. Both were well-bred men, incapable of any slackening of the cords of courtesy, but there was a mutual understanding between them and her which allowed deliberation in talk, which, in fact, dispensed with the necessity of conventional chatter.

King spoke at length. "Go on, young 'un," he said to Stephens, waving his pipe at him, as Lucy could see by the red glow in the bowl. "You tell her."

"No, *you* tell her, old chap."

Lucy wanted to laugh at the odd pair with whom she was in such sympathy. They were just like two boys.

King sighed. Conversation of any sort, unless it was actually in the course of his priestly ministrations, was always painful to him. He was a man who *thought*. But he could be eloquent and incisive enough when he chose.

"Well, look here, Miss Blantyre," he said, "to begin with, the whole thing has been an unqualified success for the other side! That is to say that the people in the hall—and it was crammed—have gone away in the firm conviction and belief that the Luther Lecturers have got the best of the priests, that, in short, the Protestants have won all along the line."

"Good gracious! Mr. King, do you really mean to say that one of these vulgar, half-educated men was able to beat Bernard in argument, to enlist the sympathies of the audience against *Bernard*?"

"That's exactly what has happened," King answered. "The vicar is up-stairs now, utterly dejected and worn out, trying to get some sleep."

"But I don't understand how it could be so."

"It is difficult to understand for a moment, Miss Blantyre. But it's easily explained. One good thing has happened: Every priest in the kingdom will have his warning now——"

"Of what?"

"Never to engage in public controversy with any man of the type sent out to advertise the Luther League. I'll try and explain. You'll know what I mean. The controversy upon any sacred and religious subjects, subjects that are very dear to and deeply felt by their defender, is only

possible if their attacker pursues legitimate methods. What happened to day is this:

"The audience was mostly Protestant, with a strong sprinkling of people who cared nothing one way or the other, but had come to be amused, or in the expectation of a row. And even if the meeting wasn't 'packed,'—and I've my doubts of that,—you see Catholics don't like to come much to anything of the sort. It is so terribly painful to a man or woman whose whole life is bound up in the Sacraments, who draws his or her 'grace of going on' and hope of heaven from them, to sit and hear them mocked and derided by the coarse, the vulgar, the irreligious. It's an ordeal one can hardly expect any one to go through without a burning indignation and a holy wrath, which may, in its turn, give place to action and words that our Lord has expressly forbidden. One remembers Peter, who cut off the ear of the High Priest's servant, and how he was rebuked. That's why there were not many Catholics present, and besides, the chief had asked many of the congregation to stay away. He wouldn't let Dr. Hibbert go; he knew that he'd lose his temper and that there would be a row."

Lucy listened eagerly. "And what did happen?" she cried.

"Tell Miss Blantyre, Stephens," King answered. "I'm not lazy, but Stephens has got colour in his descriptions! It's like his sermons, all poetry and fervour and no sound discipline! And besides, he's got the 'varsity slang of the day. It's nasty, but it's expressive. When I was up, we talked English—go on, young 'un."

His voice sank, his pipe glowed in the gloom. Stephens took up the parable. "Well, I can't go into all the details," he said. "But the first thing that happened was that the lecturer stood upon the platform, shut his eyes, and prayed that Hornham might be delivered from the curse of priesthood and the blasphemy of the Mass!—this while the vicar was on the platform. The man was going to begin right away, after this, when Mr. Carr stopped him and said that he wished to offer up a prayer also. The fellow frowned, but he dare not stop him. So Carr prayed for a quiet and temperate conduct of the meeting! Then the man began. It was the usual thing, mocking blasphemy delivered in the voice of a cheap-jack, with a flavour of the clown.

"The man had two sacramental wafers and he kept producing them out of a Bible, like a conjuring trick! They were of different sizes, and he said: 'Now, here you see what the Ritualists worship, a biscuit god! And you'll notice there's a little one for the people and a big one for the priest—priests always want the biggest share!' Roars of laughter from every one, of course. Then the fellow went on to speak of the fasting communion. 'For my part,' he said, with a great grin, 'I like to have my breakfast comfortable in the morning before I go to church, and I honestly pity the poor priests who have to starve themselves till mid-day. I shouldn't wonder if the Reverend Blantyre'—with a wink towards the vicar—'often has visions of a nice bit of fried bacon or an 'addock, say, about eleven o'clock in the morning.'"

Lucy gasped. "How utterly revolting," she said, "and people really take that sort of thing seriously?"

"Oh, yes, the sort of people to whom these Luther Leaguers appeal. You see it's their only weapon. They can't argue properly, because they are utterly without education, and they only supplement the parrot lectures they've been taught with their own native low comedy. Our friend this afternoon wound up his oration by inviting the vicar to ask questions—he didn't want him to speak at length, of course. 'Now,' he said, 'I call upon the Reverend Blantyre to ask me any questions he chooses. And I'll just ask him one myself—if God had meant him to wear petticoats, wouldn't He have made him a woman?' This was rather too much, and there were some hisses. The vicar was in his cassock. But the vicar laughed himself, and so every one else did. It seemed to restore the good humour of the meeting, which was just what the lecturer didn't want.

"Well, to cut a long story short, every question the vicar put was the question of a cultured man, that is to say, it assumed *some* knowledge of the point at issue. Each time he was answered with buffooneries and a blatant ignorance that gave the whole thing away at once to any one that *knew*. But there was hardly any one there that did, that was the point. The whole audience imagined that we were being scored off tremendously. They got noisy, cheered every apish witticism of the lecturer—oh! it was a disgusting scene. I'll give you an instance of what was said towards the end. The vicar was appealing to the actual words of the Gospel in one instance. 'The Greek text says,' he was beginning, when the man jumps up—'Greek!' he shouted, 'will Greek save a man's soul? *Do you suppose Jesus of Nazareth understood foreign tongues?*'

"There was a tremendous roar of applause from the people at this. They thought the lecturer had made a great point! They actually *did*! Well, of course, there was hardly any answer to that. In the face of such black depths of ignorance, what *could* any one do? It would be as easy to explain the theory of gravity to a hog as to explain the Faith to a grinning, hostile mob like that. The vicar sat down. The clown always has the last word in argument before an audience of fools or children. It must be so."

"How did it all end up?"

"Oh, the lecturer got upon his hind legs again and made a speech in which he claimed to have triumphantly refuted the sophistry of the vicar and to have shown what Ritualism really was. Then, encouraged by the general applause, he was beginning to be very personal and rude, when there was a startling interruption. Bob got up from the back of the hall—we didn't know he was there—and began to push his way towards the platform, with a loudly expressed intention of wringing the lecturer's neck there and then. I got hold of him, but he shook me off like a fly. 'Let

me be, sir!' he said, 'let me get at the varmin, I'll give him a thick ear, I will!' Then King saw what was going on and rushed up. Bob remembered what King gave him last year and he tried to dodge. By this time, the whole place was in an uproar, sticks were flying about, people were struggling, shouting, swearing, and it looked like being as nasty a little riot as one could wish to see."

"How *horrible*!" Lucy said with a shudder. "I wish Bernard had never been near the place."

"Well, then, all of a sudden," the curate continued, "a mighty voice was heard from the platform. It was Carr! I never heard a man with such a big, arresting voice. He was in a white rage, his eyes flashed, he looked most impressive. He frightened every one, he really did, and in a minute or two he got every one to leave the hall quietly and in order."

"How splendid!" Lucy said. She thought that she could see the whole scene, the squalid struggle, the strong man dominating it all. Her hands were clenched in sympathy. Her teeth were locked.

"He's a big man," the young fellow replied, "a bigger man than any one knows. He'll be round here this evening, I expect. You must get him to tell you all about it, Miss Blantyre."

A few minutes afterwards every one went to church. It was a choral evensong that night, and sung somewhat later than the usual service was. Blantyre did not appear. Lucy would not have him wakened. She knew that sleep was the best thing for over-tired nerves, that he would view the futile occurrences of the afternoon less unhappily after sleep.

It was after nine o'clock when the vicar eventually made his appearance. He was worn and sad in face, his smile had lost its merriment. Lucy had made them all come into her room for music. They wanted playing out of their depression, and in ministering to them she forgot her own quandary and perplexities. At last the light, melodious numbers of *Faust* and *Carmen* had some influence with them, and about ten the three men were visibly brighter. They were in the habit of taking a cup of tea before going to bed; to-night Lucy made them have soup instead.

It was a few minutes after the hour, when the bell rang; in a moment or two, Bob—extremely anxious to efface himself as much as possible after the event of the afternoon—showed Mr. Carr into the drawing-room.

His face was very white and set. "I am extremely sorry," he said, "to call on you so late, but have you seen the evening papers, any of you?" No one had seen them.

"I'm afraid there is something that will give you great pain, a great shock. It has grieved me deeply, it must be worse for you, my friend—thinking as you do of the Eucharist."

"What is it?" Father Blantyre said.

Carr held out an evening paper. "Briefly," he said, "while we were at the meeting down here, Hamlyn, Senior, had a special gathering of extreme Protestants in Exeter Hall. He produced a *consecrated wafer* and exhibited it, stating that he had purloined it from the Holy Communion service the day before. This was corroborated by two men who went with him and were witnesses of the act."

Every vestige of colour left the faces of the three priests of St. Elwyn's. Suddenly Blantyre gave a little moan and fainted, sinking on to a couch behind him.

They brought him round without much trouble, and King helped him up-stairs to bed, refusing to let him go into the church as he wished. Lucy saw that tears were falling silently over the grim, heavy face of King.

When the vicar was safely bestowed in his room, Stephens and King, saying nothing to each other, but acting with a common impulse, went into the church. In the side chapel, where the dim red glow of the sanctuary-lamp was the only light, they remained on their knees all night, praying before the Blessed Sacrament.

CHAPTER XII

THE REPARATION OF JANE PRITCHETT, EX-PROTESTANT

On the following morning, Blantyre went away. He was absent from Hornham for two days, and it was understood that he had gone to visit Lord Huddersfield. Hamlyn and his doings were not in any way mentioned by the two other clergy.

The days of his absence were a time of great unrest and mental debate for Lucy.

She was at a crisis in her life. She had definitely come to a moment when she must choose between one thing or another. It is a commonplace of some preachers to say that this moment of definite choice comes to every one at least once in their lives. But the truth of the assertion is at least doubtful. Many people are spared the pain of what is more or less an instantaneous decision. They merge themselves gradually, in this or that direction, the right or the wrong. And they are the more fortunate.

For Lucy, however, the tide was at the flood. She must push out upon it and hoist her sail, but whether she should go east or west, run before the wind or beat up into the heart of it—that she must now decide.

She had no illusions about her position. To marry James Poyntz meant one thing, to refuse him meant another. In the first place, she wanted to be married. Physically, socially, mentally, she was perfectly aware that she would be happier. Her nature needed the complement of a husband. She was pure, but not virginal, in temperament. She put it to herself that—as she believed—she had a talent for wifehood.

Here was a young man who satisfied all her instincts of what was fitting in a man she could marry. She did not love him, but she admired, liked, and respected him. Something of the not unhealthy cynicism—the sane cynicism—of a woman of the world had entered into her. She wasn't a sentimentalist, she didn't think that the "love" of the poet and story-teller was the only thing in the relation of a wife to a husband. She had seen many marriages, she had watched the firm, strong affection that came after marriage, and she saw that it was a good, worthy, and constant thing.

She had been much in France. Lady Linquest had friends and relatives among the stately families of the Faubourg St. Germain. Those weddings in France that were decorously arranged by papa and mamma, how did they turn out? On the whole well enough, happily enough. It was only the ignorant lower middle-class of England that thought France was a mighty *lupanar* and adultery a joke.

And in marrying Poyntz she would marry a man whom she was worthy of intellectually. He would satisfy every instinct she possessed—*every instinct but one*.

And here, she knew, here lay the root of the whole question.

The very strongest influence that can direct and urge any soul towards a holy life is the society and companionship, even the distant contemplation, of a saintly man or woman.

The force of example acts as a lens. It focuses all the impulses towards good and concentrates them. In making clear the beauty of holiness, it shows that it is not a vague beauty, but an ideal which may be realised by the observer.

Lucy had been living with saintly folk. Bernard was saintly—if ever a man was; the bulldog, King, was a saint and walked with God. Stephens was a schoolboy, full of slang and enthusiasm, blunders and love of humanity, but he was saintly too. Miss Cass, the housekeeper with the face of a horse, who called "day" "dy" and the Mass "Mess," she was a holy woman. Before the ugly, unlettered spinster, the society girl, with all her power and charm, had learned to bow in her mind.

That was Lucy's great virtue. She was frank with herself. She glossed over nothing, she pretended nothing. It is the person who postures and poses before himself who is in the chiefest danger. And Carr, well, Carr was a saintly man also. He hadn't got the more picturesque trimmings that the others had. His spiritual life was not so vividly expressed in, and witnessed to, by his clothes and daily habit of life. But he was a saintly man. As she thought of him Lucy thought of him as man *and* saint.

All these people lived for one thing, had one aim, believed one thing.

They lived to serve our Lord, to do His work, to adore Him.

Why, even Bob, the navvy, whom Father King had knocked down as a beery blackguard and set up again as a butler, even Bob was feeling a slow and ponderous way towards sainthood! He could not boast a first-rate intelligence, but, he *loved* our Lord.

Yes!—ah, that was the most beautiful thing of all. To *love* Him.

"Do I *love* Him?" Lucy asked herself during those two days.

And the answer that came to her was a very strange one. It was this. She loved our Lord, but she could not make up her mind to give up everything earthly and material for Him. She wanted a compromise.

In fact, she was near the gates of the spiritual life, but she had not entered them.

She did not disguise one fact from herself. If she married Poyntz she would immediately be withdrawn, and withdrawn for ever, from the new influences which were beginning to permeate her, to draw her towards the state of a Christian who is vowed and militant.

She knew the influence that as her husband James would have. His ideals were noble and high, his life was pure and worthy. But it was not the life that Christ had made so plain and clear. The path the Church showed was not the path James would follow, or one which as his wife she could well follow.

She believed sincerely, as her brother himself would have told her, that a man like Poyntz was only uneducated in spiritual things, not lost to them for ever.

But she was also sure that he would make no spiritual discoveries in this world.

Marriage with him meant going back. It meant turning away from the Light.

The struggle with the training of years, the earthly ideals of nearly all her life, was acute. But hour by hour, she began to draw nearer and nearer to the inevitable solution.

Now and again, she went into the silent church. Then, kneeling before the Blessed Sacrament, she saw the path quite clear.

Afterwards, back in her room again, the voices of the material world were heard. But they became weaker and more weak as the hours went on.

On the day that Bernard was to return, she received a long and passionate letter from her lover.

He had the wonderful gift of prose. He understood, as hardly any of us understand, how to treat words (on certain occasions of using them) as if they were almost notes in some musical composition. His letter was beautiful.

She read it page by page, with a heart that had begun to beat with quickened interest, until she came to a passage which jarred and hurt. James had made an end of his most impassioned and intimate passages, and was making his keen satiric comment upon general affairs—quite as he had done in his letters before his actual avowal.

"I saw my father to-day in St. James, and we went to his club and lunched together. I respect him more and more, for his consistency, every time I meet him. And I wonder more and more at his childishness at the same time. It seems he had just left your brother. As you are in the thick of all the mumbo-jumbo, perhaps you will have heard of the business that seems to be agitating my poor dear sire into a fever. It seems that, a day or two ago, an opposition hero who has consecrated his life to the Protestant cause—none other than the notorious Hamlyn himself—purloined a consecrated wafer from some church and has been exhibiting it at public meetings to show that it is just as it ever was—a pinch of flour and no more. My father has made himself utterly miserable over the proceedings of this merry-andrew. As you know, I take but little interest in the squabbles of the creeds, but the spectacle of a sane and able man caught up in the centre of these phantasies makes me pause and makes my contempt sweeten into pity."

As Lucy read the letter, she thought of the scene on the night when Carr had brought the news. She thought of her own quick pain as she heard it, of how her brother was struck down as with a sword. And especially there came to her the vision of the two priests, King and Stephens, praying all night long before the Host.

She pushed the letter away from her, nor did she read it again. It seemed alien, out of tune with her life.

She went into the church to pray.

When she came away, her resolution was nearly taken.

Bernard came home about three in the afternoon. His manner was quiet. He was sad, but he seemed relieved also.

Lucy was walking in the garden with him, soon after his return, when Stephens and Dr. Hibbert came down from the house and walked quickly up to them.

"Vicar," the doctor said, "Miss Pritchett is dying."

Blantyre started. "Oh, I didn't know it was as bad as that," he said. "Is it imminent?"

"A matter of twenty hours I should say," the doctor replied; "I bring you a message from her."

Blantyre's face lighted up. Great tenderness came over it as he heard that the woman who had injured him and sought to harm the Church had sent him a message.

"Poor woman," he said; "what is it—God bless her!"

"She has asked for you and the other clergy to come to her. She wishes me to bring you and such other members of the congregation as will come. She wishes to make a profession of Faith."

"But when, how—" the vicar asked, bewildered.

The doctor explained. "The Hamlyns are with her; she is frightened by them, but not only that, she bitterly repents what she has done. Poor soul! Blantyre, she is very penitent, she remembers the Faith. She asks—" He drew the vicar aside. Lucy could hear no more. But she saw deep sympathy come out upon her brother's face.

The three men—Stephens had remained with the doctor—came near her again.

"My motor is outside," the doctor said hurriedly.

"How long would it take?" asked the vicar.

"——if the Bishop is in—back in an hour and a half——"

The vicar took Stephens aside and spoke earnestly with him for a few moments. The young man listened gravely and then hurried away. Before the vicar and the doctor joined Lucy again—they stood in private talk a moment—she heard the "toot" of the motor-car hum on the other side of

the garden wall.

Wondering what all this might mean, she was about to cross the lawn towards the two men, when she saw Father King and Mr. Carr coming out of the house. These two joined the vicar and Dr. Hibbert. The four men stood in a ring. Blantyre seemed to be explaining something to the new-comers. Now and then the doctor broke in with a burst of rapid explanation.

Lucy began to be full of wonder. She felt ignored, she tried not to feel that. Something was afoot that she did not quite understand.

In the middle of her wonder the men came towards her.

Bernard took her arm. "Mavourneen," he said, "will you come with us to poor Miss Pritchett? She's been asking if you'll come and forgive her and part good friends. She may die to-night, the doctor says. You'll come?"

"Of course I'll come, dear."

"She has repented of her hostility to the Church, and desires to make a public statement of her faith before she dies. And she has asked for the Sacrament of Unction.... Stephens has gone to the Bishop of Stepney on the doctor's motor-car. In an hour we will go to Malakoff."

The doctor took King by the arm and led him away. They talked earnestly together.

Blantyre turned to Carr.

"Will ye come with us all to the poor soul's bedside?" he asked.

"Yes," Carr answered. "I don't know what you purpose exactly—and I don't care! I trust you as a brother now, Blantyre, I am learning every day. I'm a conservative, you know, new things are distasteful to me. But I am learning that there are medicines, *pro salute animæ*."

"New things!" Blantyre said; "ye're an old Protestant at heart still. Did they teach ye *no* history at Cambridge except that the Church of England began at the Reformation? Now, listen while I tell you what the service is. You remember St. James v. 14, 15?"

Carr nodded. He began to quote from memory, for his knowledge of the Scriptures was profound, a knowledge even more accurate and full than perhaps any of the three priests of St. Elwyn's could claim, though they were scholars and students one and all.

"Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of our Lord; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up, and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him."

"Well, I suppose that is fairly explicit?" Blantyre said. "Mr. Hamlyn would tell us that Unction is a conjuring trick invented by the Jesuits. And you have always thought it Popish and superstitious. Now, haven't you, Carr, be honest!"

"Yes."

"Well, you will see the service to-day. We follow the ancient order of the Church of England. Why did you object, Carr? I'd like to get at your mental attitude. What is there unscriptural, bad, or unseemly about Unction? Here's a poor woman who has strayed from the fold. She wishes to die at peace with every one, she wishes that the inward unction of the Holy Spirit may be poured into the wounds of her soul, she wants to be forgiven for the sake of our Lord's most meritorious Cross and Passion! If it is God's will, she may be cured."

He spoke with great fervour and earnestness.

Carr bowed his head and thought. "Yes," he said, "I have been very prejudiced and hard, sometimes. It is so easy to condemn what one does not know about, so hard to have sympathy with what one has not appreciated."

Blantyre caught him by the arm and they walked the lawn for a long time in fraternal intercourse.

Lucy sat down with the doctor, but her eyes often turned to the tall, grave figure, whose lengthening shadow sometimes reached to her feet and touched them.

At last they heard the panting of the returning motor-car. Stephens had arrived with the oil that the Bishop had blessed.

The whole party got into the car, which was a large one, and they set off rapidly through the streets towards Malakoff House.

How strange it was, Lucy thought, this swift career of moderns in the wonderful machine of their age, this rush to the bedside of a dying woman with the last consolation of the Church! It was full of awe, but full of sweetness also. It seemed to show—and how plainly—the divine continuity of the Faith, the harmonic welding of the order and traditions of our Lord's own time with the full vivid life of the nineteenth century.

They were shown into the grim house. Truly the shadow of death seemed to lie there, was exhaled from the massive funereal furniture of a bygone generation, with all its faded pomp and circumstance.

The mistress of it all was going away from it for ever, would never hold her tawdry court in that grim drawing-room any more.

Dr. Coxe, Hibbert's assistant, came down-stairs and met them.

"I have got the two Hamlyns out of the house at last," he whispered. "They were distressing the patient greatly. I insisted, however. We had a row on the stairs—fortunately, I don't think the patient could hear it. I'm sorry, doctor, but I had to use a little physical persuasion to the young one."

"Never mind, Coxe," Hibbert answered. "I'll see that nothing comes of it. They won't dare to do anything. I will see to that. Is Miss Pritchett ready? Can we go up?"

"Yes," the young man answered, looking curiously at the four priests and the grave girl who was with them in her gay summer frock. "Miss Davies is there."

He was a big, young Scotsman, with a profound contempt for religion, but skilled and tender in his work, nevertheless.

"Will you come up?" Hibbert whispered, taking him a little apart from the others.

"I'd rather be excused, old man," he answered. "Call me if I'm wanted. I can't stand this mumbo-jumbo, you know!"

Hibbert nodded curtly. He understood the lad very well. "Will you follow me, Father?" he said to Blantyre.

Blantyre put on his surplice and stole. Then they all went silently up the wide stairs, with their soft carpet and carved balusters, into the darkened chamber of death.

The dying woman was propped up by pillows. Her face was the colour of grey linen, the fringes of hair she wore in health were gone.

A faint smile came to her lips. Then, as she saw Lucy, she called to her in a clear, thin voice that seemed as if it came from very far away.

"Kiss me, my dear," she said; "forgive me."

Lucy kissed the old, wrinkled face tenderly. Her tears fell upon it in a sacrament of forgiveness and holy amity.

"I want just to say to all of you," Miss Pritchett said, "that I have been untrue to what I really believed, and I have helped the enemies of the Faith. I never forgot your teaching, Father, I knew all the time I was doing wrong. I ask all of you to forgive me as I believe Jesus has forgiven me."

A murmur of kindliness came from them all.

"Then I can go in peace," she gasped. Then with a faint and pathetic shadow of her old manner she turned to Gussie. "Hush!" she said. "Stop sniffling, Miss Davies! I am very happy. Now, Father——"

Her eyes closed and her hands remained still. They saw all earthly thoughts die out of the wrinkled old face, now turned wholly to God.

They all knelt save the vicar, who had placed the oil in an ampulla upon a table.

Then he began the 71st Psalm. "In Thee, O Lord, have I put my trust, let me never be put to confusion: but rid me, and deliver me, in Thy righteousness, incline Thine ear unto me, and save me."

There was no sound in the chamber save that of the ancient Hebrew song.

"Forsake me not, O God, in mine old age, when I am grey-headed: until I have showed Thy strength unto this generation, and Thy power to all them that are yet for to come.

"Thy righteousness, O God, is very high: and great things are they that Thou hast done; O God, who is like unto Thee?"

Then, all together, they said the antiphon: "*O Saviour of the world, who by Thy Cross and precious Blood hast redeemed us, save us and help us, we humbly beseech Thee, O Lord.*"

The central figure in the huge four-post bed lay still and waxen. But when the priest came up to it with the oil, the eyes opened and looked steadfastly into his face.

He dipped his thumb into the silver vessel and made the sign of the Cross on the eyes, the ears, the lips, the nostrils, and the hands, saying each time as he did so:

"*Through this unction, and of His most tender mercy, may the Lord pardon thee whatever sins thou hast committed.*"

The whispering words that brought renewal of lost innocence to the dying woman sank into Lucy's heart, never to leave it. In the presence of these wondrous mysteries, death, and death vanquished by Christ, sin purged and forgiven in the Sacrament, her resolution was made. She knew that she would fix her eyes upon the Cross, never to take them from it more.

She saw her brother bending over the still figure, his white surplice ghostlike in the gloom of the hangings, as he wiped the anointed parts with wool.

Then Stephens brought him a basin of clear water and he washed his hands.

Raising his arm, he said:

"*In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, may this anointing with oil be to thee for the purification of thy mind and body, and may it fortify and defend thee against the darts of evil spirits.* Amen."

Two more prayers were said and then came the Blessing.

All rose from their knees. As Lucy slipped from the room, she saw the doctor was bending over the waxen figure in the bed.

She heard her brother and his two assistant priests beginning other prayers, in a louder voice, a sort of litany, it seemed.

She found Carr was beside her descending the stairs.

"What is that?" she whispered.

"The prayers for the commendation of a departing soul; she is going. God rest her and give her peace."

"Amen," said Lucy.

They came down into the hall, where they stood for a moment quite alone. Both were greatly agitated, both felt drawn together by some great power.

"How beautiful it is!" Carr said at length. "Our Lord is with her. May we all die so."

"Poor, dear woman!"

"In a few moments she will be in the supreme and ineffable glory of Paradise. I want to see trees and flowers, to think happily of the wonderful mercy and goodness of God among the things He has made. I should like to walk in the park for an hour, to hear the birds and see the children play. Will you come with me?"

"Yes, I will come."

He took her hand and bowed low over it.

"I have a great thing to ask of you," he said.

They walked soberly together until they came to the railed-in open space. To each the air seemed thick with unspoken thoughts.

The park was a poor place enough. But flowers grew there, the grass was green, it was not quite Hornham. They sat upon a bench and for a minute or two both were silent. Lucy knew a serenity at this moment such as she had hardly ever known. She was as some mariner who, at the close of a long and tempestuous voyage, comes at even-tide towards harbour over a still sea. The coastwise lights begin to glimmer, the haven is near.

In her mind and heart, at that moment, she was reconciled to and in tune with all that is beautiful in human and Divine.

She sat there, this well-known society girl, who, all her life, had lived with the great and wealthy of the world, in great content. In the "park" of Hornham, with the poor clergyman, she knew supreme content.

In a low voice that shook with the intensity of his feeling and yet was resolute and informed with strength, Carr asked Lucy to be his wife.

She gave him her hand very simply and happily. A river that had long been weary had at last wound safe to sea. That she should be the wife of this man was, she knew, one of the gladdest and most merciful ordinances of God.

CHAPTER XIII

THE ARCHBISHOP AND THE HAMLYNS

"Gussie Davies says that she's sure that Miss Pritchett hasn't added a codicil," said Mr. Sam Hamlyn, coming into the inner room at the offices of the Luther League.

Mr. Hamlyn, Senior, had been at work for some hours, but his son had only just arrived in the Strand. It was the day after Miss Pritchett's death, and Sam had remained in North London to make a few inquiries.

"What a blessing of Providence," said the secretary. "There's something to be said for a ritualistic

way of dying, after all! If it 'adn't been for her messing about with the oil and that, she'd have sent for her solicitor and cut the League out of her will! The priests have been 'oist with their own petard this time."

"I wonder how much it'll be," Sam said reflectively.

"I don't anticipate a penny less than two thousand pound," said Mr. Hamlyn, triumphantly. "P'raps a good bit over. You see, we got 'er just at the last moment. It was me taking the consecrated wafer did it. She woke up as pleased as Punch, it gave her strength for the afternoon, and had the lawyer round at once. I never thought she'd go off so sudden, though."

"Nor did I, Pa. Well, it's a blessing that she was able to contribute her mite towards Protestant Truth before she went."

"What?" said Mr. Hamlyn sharply; "mite?—has Gussie Davies any idea of 'ow much the legacy is, then?"

"I only spoke figuratively like, Father."

"How you startled me, Sam!" said the secretary, his face resuming its wonted expression of impudent good humour.

"How's the cash list to-day?" Sam asked.

"Pretty fair," answered his father, "matter of five pound odd. It's me getting hold of that wafer, it's sent the subscriptions up wonderful. I wouldn't part——"

Sam, who was sitting with his back to the door of the room, saw his father's jaw drop suddenly. His voice died away with a murmur, his face went pale, his eyes protruded.

The younger man wheeled round his chair. Then he started up, with an exclamation of surprise and fear.

Both the Protestant champions, indeed, behaved as if they had been discovered in some fraud by an agent of the law.

Two people had come suddenly into the room, without knocking or being announced. The secretaries saw the blanched face of a clerk behind them.

During its existence, the Luther League had welcomed some fairly well-known folk within its doors.

This afternoon, however, a most unexpected honour had been paid to it—probably the reason of Hamlyn's extreme uneasiness.

A broad, square man of considerable height, with a stern, furrowed face, wearing an apron and gaiters, stood there, with a thunder-cloud of anger on his face.

It was His Grace, the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Lord Huddersfield was with him.

The Archbishop looked steadfastly at Hamlyn for a few seconds. His face was terrible.

In the presence of the great spiritual lord who is next to the royal family in the precedence of the realm, the famous scholar, the caustic wit, the utter force and *power* of intellect, the two champions were dumb. Hamlyn had never known anything like it before. The fellow's bounce and impudence utterly deserted him.

The Archbishop spoke. His naturally rather harsh and strident voice was rendered tenfold more penetrating and terrifying by his wrath.

"Sir," he said, in a torrent of menacing sound, "you have profaned the Eucharist, you have mocked the holy things of God, you have made the most sacred ordinance of our Lord a mountebank show. You boast that you have purloined the Consecrated Bread from church, you have exhibited it. Restore it to me, wretched man that you are. By the authority of God, I demand you to restore it; by my authority as head of the English Church, I order you."

Hamlyn shrank from the terrible old man clothed in the power of his great office and the majesty of his holy anger, shrank as a man shrinks from a flame.

With shaking hands he took a bunch of keys from his pocket. He dropped them upon the floor, unable to open the lock of the safe.

Young Hamlyn picked them up. He turned the key in the wards with a loud click and pulled at the massive door until it slowly swung open.

Lord Huddersfield knelt down.

Hamlyn took from a shelf a little box that had held elastic bands.

The Archbishop started and flushed a deep crimson.

He took a pyx from his pocket and reverently took out the desecrated Host from the box, placing it in the pyx.

Then, with a face that was suffused to a deep purple, he touched the kneeling peer upon the shoulder. Lord Huddersfield rose with a deep sob of relief.

The Archbishop looked *once* at Hamlyn, a look the man never forgot.

Then the two visitors turned and went away as swiftly and silently as they had come.

It was a long time before either father or son spoke a word.

At last Hamlyn cleared his throat and mouthed a sentence. It would not come. All that Sam could catch were the words

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Love Alone is Lord

By F. Frankfort Moore

Author of "The Jessamy Bride," etc.

This latest story by the author of *The Jessamy Bride* has for its theme the only really ideal love affair in the romantic life of Lord Byron. The story opens during the poet's boyhood and tells of his early devotion to his cousin, Mary Chaworth. Mr. Moore has followed history very closely, and his descriptions of London society when Byron was the rage are as accurate as they are dramatic. Lady Caroline Lamb figures prominently in the story, but the heroine continues to be Byron's early love, Mary Chaworth. His attachment for his cousin was the strongest and most enduring of his life, and it failed of realization only by the narrowest of chances.

A Fascinating Romance

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