



Convert of the Great Heart

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Rev. Stephen Masterton, a circuit preacher of northern California, while conducting a revival at Tazajana, succumbed to the physical and spiritual strain brought on by his religious labors. He is ordered away to a sleepy old Spanish town in the southern county to recuperate.

He had broken her fall and almost instantly, yet with infinite gentleness, he released her unharmed, with hardly her crisp frounce crumpled, in an upright position against the wall. Her guitar, still hanging from her shoulder by a yellow ribbon, had bounded



What for You Not Remain to Yourself in Your Own Case?

elastic and resounding against the wall but lay intact at her satin-slipped feet. She caught it up with another quick little cry, but this time more of sauciness than fear, and drew her little hand across the strings, half defiantly.

She broke into a silvery laugh. She was thin, yet plump; barred with black and yellow, and small warts like a pretty wasp. Her complexion in that light was a sheen of pearl satin that made her eyes blacker and her little mouth redder than any other color could.

But she looked pertly in his face, stood her guitar upright before her, and put her hands behind her back as she leaned saucily against the wall and shrugged her shoulders.

"It was the fault of you," she said, in a broken English that seemed as much infantile as foreign. "What for you not remain to yourself in your own case? So it comes. You creep in the dark and shake my wall, and I fall. And she, pointing to the guitar, 'It's a most broken! And for all these, I have only make you a serenade. Ingrate!'

"I beg your pardon," said Masterton, quickly, "but I was certain. I thought I might help you, and--"

"Make yourself another cat on the wall, ah? No; one is enough, thank you, frown lowered on Masterton's face. "You don't understand me," he said, bluntly. "I did not know who was here."

"Ah, bueno! Then it is Pepita Ramirez, you see," she said, tapping her bosom with one little finger. "All the same, the niece from Manuel Garcia, who keeps the Mission garden and sits there. And you?"

"My name is Masterton." "How moon?" "Masterton," he repeated. She tried to pronounce it once or twice despatchedly, and then shook her little head so violently that a yellow rose fastened over her ear fell to the ground. But she did not heed it, nor the fact that Masterton had picked it up.

"Ah, I cannot!" she said, poutingly. "It is as desecrated to make go as my guitar with your serenade."

"Can you not say 'Stephen Masterton'?" he asked more gently, with a wistful and forgiving sense of her childishness.

"E-ste-fan? Ah, Esteban! Yes; Don Esteban! Bueno! Then, Don Esteban, what for you sink so melancholy one night, and one night so fierce? The melancholy, he was no so bad; but the fierce--ah! he is wicked! But, how the Americano make always his serenade?"

And his hymn of exaltation had been mistaken by these people by this--this wanton child!

"It was no serenade," he replied, curtly; "it was in praise of the Lord!" "Of how moon?"

"Of the Lord of Hosts--of the Almighty in Heaven." He lifted his long arms reverently on high.

"Oh!" she said, with a frightened look, slightly edging away from the wall. At a second glance she stopped. "Then you are a soldier, Don Esteban?"

"No!" "Then for what you sink? I am a soldier of the Lord, and you will make die in His army?" "Oh, yes, yes, yes," she gathered up her guitar tightly under her arm, shook her small finger at him gravely and said: "You are a hoombog, Don Esteban; good a night," and began to glide away.

"One moment, Miss--Miss Ramirez," called Masterton. "I--that is, you--you have forgotten your rose," he added feebly, holding up the flower. She halted.

"Ah, yes; he have drop, you have pick him up, he is yours. I have drop, you have pick me up, but I am not your. Good a night, Commandante Don Esteban!"

With a light laugh she ran along beside the wall for a little distance, suddenly leaping up and disappeared in one of the largest gaps in its ruined and helpless structure. Stephen Masterton gazed after her stupidly, still holding the rose in his hand. Then he threw it away and reentered his home.

Lights, he said, he addressed himself, prayed fervently--so fervently that all remembrance of the little, foolish incident was wiped from his mind--and went to bed. He slept well and dreamlessly. The next morning when his thoughts recurred to the previous night this seemed to him a token that he had not deviated from his spiritual integrity; it did not occur to him that the thought itself was a tacit suspicion.

So his feet quite easily sought the garden again in the early sunshine, but he had not taken into account the vivifying freshness of the morning, the renewed promise of life and resurrection in the pulsing air and potent sunlight, and as he stood there he seemed to see the figure of the young girl again leaning against the wall in all the charm of her irrefragable and innocent youth. More than that, he found the whole scene reenacting itself before him; the nebulous drapery half hidden in the foliage, the grey and the fall; the momentary soft contact of the girl's figure against his own, the clinging arms around his neck, the brush and fragrance of her frounce--all this came back to him with a strength he had not felt when it occurred.

He was turning hurriedly away when his eyes fell upon the yellow rose still lying in the debris where he had thrown it--but still pure, fresh and unfaded. He picked it up again with a singular fancy that it was the girl herself and carried it into the house.

As he placed it half shyly in a glass on his table, a wonderful thought occurred to him. Was not the episode of last night a special providence? Was not that young girl, wayward and childish, a mere neophyte in her idolatry of religion, as yet unsteeped in sloth and ignorance, presented to him as a brand to be snatched from the burning? Was not this the opportunity of conversion he had longed for? The chance of exceeding his gifts of exhortation, that he had been hiding in the margin of solitude and seclusion? Nay, was not all this predestined? His illness, his consequent exile to this land of false gods--this contiguity to the mission--was not all part of a supremely ordered plan for the girl's salvation, and was not he elected and ordained for that service? Nay, more, was not the girl herself a mere unconscious instrument in the hands of a higher power; was not her voluntary attempts to accompany him, his devotional exercises a vague stirring of that predestined force within her? Was not even that wantonness and frivolity contrasted with her childishness--which he had at first understood--the stirrings of the flesh and the spirit, and was he to abandon her in that struggle of good and evil?

He lifted his bowed head that had been resting on his arm before the little flower on the table--as if it were a shrine--with a flash of resolve in his blue eyes. The wrinkled Convertionist scarcely recognized her gloomily abstracted master in this transmuted man. He looked ten years younger.

She met his greeting, and the few direct inquiries that his new resolve exacted him to make more freely, with some information--which a later talk with the shopkeeper, who had a fuller English vocabulary, confirmed in detail.

"Yes! truly this was a niece of the mission gardener, who lived with her uncle in the ruined wing of the old Pre-

side. She had taken her first communion four years ago. Ah, yes, she was a great musician and could play on the organ. And the guitar, ah, yes--of course, it was his and inherited with the Caballeros, young and old, but she cared not for any.

Whatever satisfaction this latter statement gave Masterton, he believed it was because the absence of any disturbing worldly affection would make her an easier convert.

But how continue this chance acquaintance and effect her conversion? For the first time Masterton realized the value of expediency; while his whole nature impelled him to frankly and publicly seek her society and openly exhort her, he knew that this was impossible; still more he remembered her unmistakable flight at his first expression of faith. He must "be wise as the serpent and harmless as the dove." He must work upon her soul alone, and secretly. He who would have shrunk from any clandestine association with a girl from mere human affections, saw no wrong in a covert intimacy for the purpose of religious salvation. Ignorant as he was of the ways of the world, and inexperienced in the usages of so-

ciety, he began to plan methods of secretly meeting her with all the intrigue of a gallant. The perspicacity as well as the intuition of a true lover had descended upon him in this effort of mere spiritual conquest.

Armed with his information and a few Spanish words, he took the yellow Concepcion aside and gravely suborned her to carry a note to be delivered secretly by Miss Ramirez. To his great relief and some surprise the old woman grinned with intelligence, and her withered hand closed with a certain familiar dexterity over the epistle and the accompanying gratuity. To a man naively one-sided, it might have awakened some suspicion, but to the more sanguine hopefulness of Masterton it only suggested the fancy that Concepcion herself might prove to be a convert, and that he should in due season attempt her salvation also. But that would be later. For Concepcion was always with him and accessible; the girl was not.

The note, which cost him some labor of composition, simple and almost business-like as was the result, ran as follows:

I wish to see you upon some matter of grave concern to yourself. Will you oblige me by coming again to the wall of the mission tonight, at early candle light? It would avert worldly suspicion if you brought also your guitar.

The afternoon dragged slowly on; Concepcion returned, she had, with great difficulty, managed to secure her, but not alone; she had, however, slipped the note into her hand, not daring to wait for an answer.

In his first hopefulness Masterton did not doubt what the answer would be, but as evening approached he grew concerned as to the girl's opportunities of coming and regretted that he had not given her a choice of time.

Before his evening meal was finished he began to fret for her willingness, and doubt the potency of his note. He was accustomed to exhort orally--perhaps he ought to have waited for the chance of speaking to her directly without writing.

When the moon rose, he was already in the garden. Lingering at first in the shadow of an olive tree, he waited until the moonbeams fell on the wall and its crests of foliage. But nothing moved among that ebony tracery; his ears strained for the familiar tinkle of the guitar, all was silent. At the moon rose higher he at last boldly walked to the wall and listened for any movements on the other side of it. But nothing stirred. She was evidently not coming--his note had failed.

He was turning away sadly, but as he faced his home again he heard a little laugh beside him. He stopped. A black shadow stepped out from beneath his own almond tree. He started, when, with a gesture that seemed familiar to him, the shadow of the girl in the shadow seemed to fall away with a black mantilla and the face of the young girl was revealed.

He could see now that she was clad in black lace from head to foot. She looked taller, older, and she fancied even prettier than before. A sudden doubt of his ability to impress her, a swift realization of all the difficulties of the attempt, and, for the first time, perhaps, a dim perception of the incongruity of the situation came over him. "I was looking for you on the wall," he stammered.

"Madre di Dios!" she retorted, with a laugh and her old audacity, "you would that I shall always hang there, and drop upon you like a pear, when you shake the tree? No!"

(To be continued.)

RAILROAD NOTES.

In his forthcoming report on the railroads of the United States, Secretary Latta will dwell at length on the subjects of capitalization and rates for the transportation of freight and roads. The following is a synopsis of the two papers:

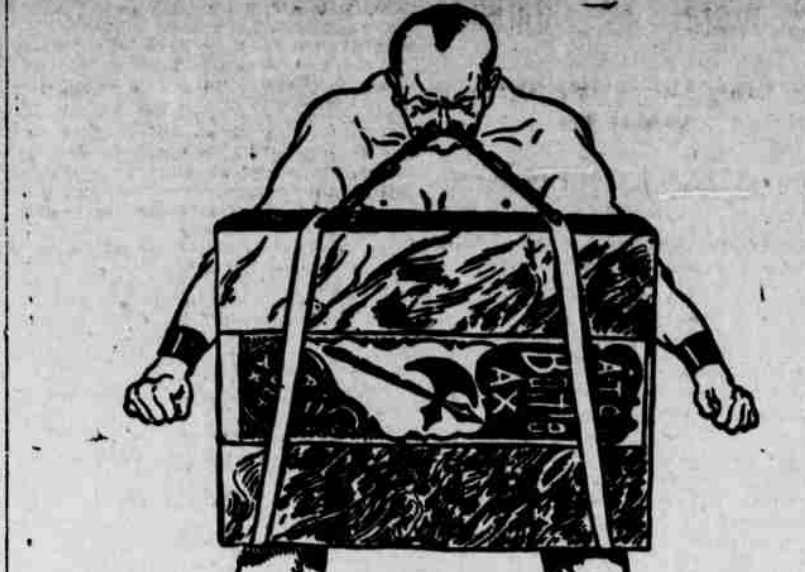
The total outstanding stock capitalization of steam railroads is reported at \$2,948,312,560.41. The funded or bonded indebtedness is reported at \$2,284,539,665, making a total stock and funded capitalization of \$5,232,852,125.41. Independent of current liabilities, which are reported at \$123,907,882.22, and which if added to the above make a grand total of capitalization of \$5,356,759,997.23. The five companies having the highest stock capitalization are the Pennsylvania, \$123,239,750; New York, Lake Erie and Western, \$86,273,500; Lake Shore and Michigan Southern, \$2,000,000; Pittsburg, Chicago and St. Louis, \$48,685,000; New York, Pennsylvania and Ohio, \$44,999,350; or a total of \$358,261,301. These five lines last year showed a stock capitalization of \$258,514,891. It will be seen therefore that there has been but a comparatively slight change in the stock capitalization of these companies during the year, and that a reduction of the New York, Pennsylvania and Ohio is included in this list, although the stock capitalization of this line beyond that of the Philadelphia and Reading.

Freight officials, in speaking of the sharp falling off in business with the east and west lines, say that with holding grain from shipment is the chief cause. The farmers' thinking that it is their opportunity, and they are cribbing their corn until the scarcity will affect prices.

Chief Engineer Becker, of the Pennsylvania lines west of Pittsburg, is advocating all new stations so as to make it entirely unnecessary for passengers, in approaching or leaving, to cross the main tracks. Wherever the location will permit the location of sidings or overhead bridges with sidings leading to the proper tracks such improvements are being made, regardless of cost.

A passenger conductor who has been in service nearly thirty years said recently that the railway superintendents made a mistake that they did not, when making up the time schedules, to wait hours would best accommodate the traveling public, where the time of a train could be shortened. He said that the railway superintendents for safety. The conductor thinks that a little attention on the part of the transportation department to this suggestion would be wise.

Twenty thousand tons of railway supplies are now coming down the Ohio river and are being tied up for six months or more at Pittsburg.



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THE WORLD OF BUSINESS

Stocks and Bonds. New York, Dec. 10.--The excitement in the industrial is gradually subsiding. At the opening there was a drive to tobacco which carried the stock down from 7 1/4 to 6 1/2 on rumors that the company had sold one million new stock. The rumor was denied and the price gradually worked back to 7 1/4 and closed at 7 1/4. Sugar was strong during the early session rising to 107, but in the afternoon a selling movement carried the stock down to 105 1/2. The general list was favorably influenced by the reduction in sterling exchange and the announcement that no gold will be forwarded to Europe and also by the proposed distribution of the regular dividends of the Manhattan and Western Union companies. Manhattan rose from 10 1/4 to 10 3/4 and Western Union from 87 1/2 to 88 1/2. Subsequently there was a reaction to 102 and 87 respectively. The railway list was dull throughout and at one time showed gains of 1/8. In the afternoon weakness the improvement was lost. Gas ruled steady at 67 1/2 and 68 1/2. Speculation closed quiet and irregular. Net changes show declines of 1/8 to 1/4 in the railway list and 1/8 to 1/4 in the industrial. Gas gained 1/8; Manhattan, 3/4. Total sales were 236,000 shares.

The range of today's prices for the active stocks of the New York stock market is given below. The quotations are furnished The Tribune by W.H. Allen, Allen & Co., stock brokers, 412 Spruce street, Scranton.

Table with columns: Op'n, High, Low, Close, Change. Lists various stocks like Am. Tobacco Co., Am. Cotton Oil, Am. Sugar Ref., etc.

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