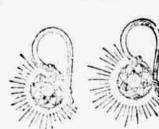




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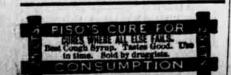
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By REV. CHARLES M. SHELDON, Author of "In His Steps: What Would Jesus Do?" "Malcom "Robert Hardy's Seven Days," Etc.

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[CONTINUED.]

CHAPTER VII.

The anonymous letters, or rather scrawls, which Philip found by the side of his unconscious wife as he stooped to raise her up read as follows: Preacher-Detter pack up and leave. Milton is not big enough to hold you silve. Take warning

breacher's Wife—As long as you stay in Milton breacher's Wife—As long as you stay in Milton there is danger of two funerals. Dynamite kills

Philip sat by the study lounge holding these scrawls in his hand as his wife recovered from her fainting fit after he had applied restoratives. His neart was filled with horror at the thought of the complete cowardice which could threaten the life of an innocent woman. There was with it a feeling of intense contempt of such childish, dime novel methods of indimidstlen as that of sticking a knife into the study desk. If it had not been for its effect on his wife. Philip would have Inughed at the whole thing. As it was, he was surprised and playmed that she had fainted, a thing he had never known her to do. and as soon as she was able to speak he listened anxiously to her story.

"It must have been an hour after you had gone, Philip, that I thought I heard a noise up stairs, and, thinking perhaps you had left one of your windows down at the top and the curtain was flapping, I went right up, and the minute I stepped into the room I had the feeling that some one was there." "Didn't you carry up a light?"

"No. The lamp was burning at the end of the upper hall, and so I never thought of needing more. Well, as I moved over toward the window, still feeling that strange, unaccountable knowledge of some one there, a man stepped out from behind your desk. walked right up to me and held out those letters in one hand, while with the other he threw the light from a small bull's eye or burglar's lantern upon them."

Philip listened in amazement. "Sarah, you must have dreamed all

that. It isn't likely that any man would do such a thing." "Philip, I did not dream. I was ter

ribly wide awake and so scared that I couldn't even scream. My tongue seemed to be entirely useless. But I felt compelled to read what was written, and the man held the papers there until the words seemed to burn my eyes. He then walked over to the desk and with one blow drove the knife down into the wood, and then I fainted away, and that is all I can remember.

"And what became of the man?" asked Philip, still inclined to think that his wife had in some way fallen asleep and dreamed at least a part of this strange scene, perhaps before she went up to the study and discovered the letters. "I don't know; maybe be is in the house yet. Philip, I am almost dead for fear-not for myself, but for your life."

"I never had any fear of anonymous letters or of threats," replied Phillp, contemptuously eying the knife, which was still sticking in the desk. "Evidently the saloon men think I am a child to be frightened with these bugaboos, which have figured in every sensational story since the time of Captain Kleid."

"Then you think this is the work of the saloon men?"

"Who else can it be? We have no other enemies of this sort in Milton."

"But they will kill you. Oh, Phillip, I cannot bear the thought of living here in this way! Let us leave this dreadful place."

"Little woman," said Philip, while he bravely drove away any slight anxiety he may have had for himself, "don't you think it would be cowardly to run away so soon?"

"Wouldn't it be better to run away so soon than to be killed? Is there any bravery in staying in a place where you are likely to be murdered by some coward?"

"I don't think I shall be," said Philip confidently. "And I don't want you to be afraid. They will not dare to harm you."

"No. Philip!" exclaimed his wife eagerly; "you must not be mistaken. 1 did not faint away tonight because I was afraid for myself. Surely I have no fear there. It was the thought of the peril in which you stand daily as you go out among these men, and as you go back and forth to your meetings in the dark. I am growing nervous and anxious ever since the shooting, and when I was startled by the man here tonight I was so weak that I fainted. But I am sure that they do not care to harm me; you are the object of their hatred. If they strike any one it will be you. That is the reason I want to leave this place. Say you will, Philip. Surely there are other churches where you could preach as you want to and still not be in such

constant danger." It required all of Philip's wisdom and love and consciousness of his immediate duty to answer his wife's appeal and say no to it. It was one of the severest struggles he ever bad. There was to be taken into the account not only his own safety, but that of his wife as well. For, think what he would be could not shake off the feel-

ing that a man so cowardly as to resort to the assassination of a man would not be overparticular even if it should chance to be a woman. Philip was man enough to be entirely unshaken by anonymous threats. A thousand a day would not have unnerved him in the least. He would have writhed under the sense of the great sin which they revealed, but that is all the effect they would have had.

When it came to his wife, however, that was another question. For a moment he felt like sending in his resignation and moving out of Milton as soon as possible. Mrs. Strong did not oppose his decision when once he had declared his resolve. She knew Philip must do what to him was the will of his Master, and with that finally she was content.

She had overcome her nervousness and dread now that Philip's courageous presence strengthened her, and she began to tell him that he had better hunt for the man who had appeared so mysteriously in the study. "I haven't convinced myself yet that

there is any man. Confess, Sarah, that you dreamed all that." "I did not," replied his wife, a little

indignantly, "Do you think I wrote those letters and stuck that knife into the desk myself?"

"Of course not. But how could a man get into the study and neither you nor the girl know it?"

"I did hear a noise, and that is what started me up stairs. And he may be in the house yet. I shall not rest easy until you look into all the closets and down cellar and everywhere,"

So Philip, to quiet his wife, searched the house thoroughly, but found nothing. The servant and the minister's wife followed along at a respectful distance behind Philip, one armed with the poker and the other with a fire shovel, while he pulled open closet doors with reckless disregard of

any possible man hiding within and pretended to look into the most unlikely places for him, joking all the while to reassure his trembling followers.

They found one of the windows in Philip's study partly open. But that did not prove anything, although a man might have crawled in and out again through that window from an ell of the parsonage, the roof of which ran near enough to the window so that an active person could gain entrance that way. The whole affair remained more or less a mystery to Philip. However, the letters and the knife were real. of Christ such as he could not but be-He took them down town next day to lieve Christ would most certainly prethe office of the evening paper and ask- sent if he were living today in Milton. ed the editor to publish the letters and He began by describing the exact piece of news to omit, and Milton people were treated to a genuine sensation with him into the church his map of when the article came out. Philip's the town. object in giving the incident publicity was to show the community what a the different localities, "at B street, murderous element it was fostering in where we now are. Here are seven of the saloon power. Those threats and the the largest churches of the place on knife preached a sermon to the this street. The entire distance bethoughtful people of Milton, and citi- tween the first of these church buildzens who had never asked the question before began to ask now, "Are we to mile. Three of these churches are only ger?"

endure this saloon monster much lon-As for Philip, he went his way the same as ever. Some of his friends and church members even advised him to carry a revolver and be careful about going out alone at night. Philip laughed at the idea of a revolver and said: "If the saloon men want to get rid of me without the trouble of shooting me themselves, they had better make me a present of a silver mounted pistol. Then I would manage the shooting myself. And as for being careful about going out evenings, what is this town thinking of that it will continue to license and legalize an institution that makes its honest citizens advise newcomers to stay at home for fear of assassination? No. 1 shall go about my work just as if I lived in the most law abiding community in America. And if I am murdered by the whisky men I want the people of Milton to understand that the citizens are as much to blame for the murder as the saloon men. For a community that will license such a curse ought to bear the shame of the legitimate fruits of it."

The trial of the man with the harelip had been postponed for some legal reason, and Philip felt relieved somewhat. He dreaded the ordeal of the court scene. And one or two visits made at the jail had not been helpful to him. The man had refused each time to see the minister, and he had gone away feeling hungry in his soul for the man's redemption and realizing something of the spirit of Christ when he was compelled to cry out, "They will not come unto me that they might have eternal life." That always seemed to Philip the most awful feature of the history of Christ-that the very people he loved and yearned after spit upon him and finally broke his

heart with their hatred. He continued his study of the problem of the town, believing that every place has certain peculiar local characteristics which every church and preacher ought to study. He was struck by the aspect of the lower part of the town, where nearly all the poorer people lived. He went down there and studied the situation thoroughly. It did not take a very great amount of thinking to convince him that the church power in Milton was not prop-

The seven larges erly distric churches in the place were all on one street, well up in the wealthy residence portion and not more than two or three blocks apart. Down in the tenement district there was not a single church building and only one or two weak mission schools which did not touch the problem of the district at all. The distance from this poer part of the town to the churches was fully a mile, a distance that certainly stood as a geographical obstacle to the church attendance of the neighborhood, even supposing the people were eager to go to the large churches, which was not at all the fact. Indeed. Philip soon discovered that the people were indifferent in the matter. The churches on the fashionable street in town meant less than nothing to them. They never would go to them, and there was little hope that anything the pastor or members could do would draw the people that distance to come within church influence. The fact of the matter was the seven churches of different denominations in Milton had no living connection whatever with nearly one-half the population, and

that the most needy half, of the place. The longer Philip studied the situa tion the more un-Christian it looked to him and the more he longed to change it. He went over the ground again and again very carefully. He talked with the different ministers and the most advanced Christians in his own church. There was a variety of opinion as to what might be done, but no one was ready for the radical move which Philip advocated when he came to speak on the subject the first Sunlay of the month.

CHAPTER VIII.

The first Sunday was beginning to be more or less dreaded or anticipated by Calvary church people. They were learning to expect something radical sweeping, almost revolutionary in Philip's utterances on "Christ and Modern Society." Some agreed with him a far as he had gone. Very many had been hurt at his plainness of speech This was especially true of the property owners and the fashionable part of the membership. Yet there was a fascination about Philip's preaching that prevented so far any very serious outbreak or dissension in the church, He was a recognized leader. In his presentation of truth he was large minded. He had the faculty of holding men's respect. There was no mistaking the situation, however. Mr Winter, with others, was working against him. Philip was vaguely conscious of much that did not work out into open, apparent fact. Nevertheless, when he came up on the first Sun-

day of the next month and began to announce his subject, he found an audience that crowded the house to the doors, and among them were scattered numbers of men from the workingmen's district with whom Philip had talked while down there. It was, as before, an inspiring congregation, and Philip faced it, feeling sure in his heart that he had a great subject to unfold and a message to deliver to the church escribe the knife. It was too good a condition of affairs in Milton. To assist this description he had brought

> ings and the last one is a little over a two blocks apart. Then consider the character of the residences and people in the vicinity of this street. It is what is called desirable-that is, the homes are the very finest, and the people, almost without exception, are refined, respectable, well educated and Christian in training. All the wealth of the town centers about B street. All the society life extends out from it on each side. It is considered the most fashionable street for drives and promenades. It is well lighted, well paved, well kept. The people who come out of the houses on B street are always well dressed. The people who go into these seven churches are as a rule well dressed and comfortable looking. Mind you," continued Phillp, raising his hand with a significant gesture, "I do not want to have you think that I consider good clothes and comfortable looks as un-Christian or anything against the people who present such an appearance. Far from it. I simply mention this fact to make the contrast I am going to show you all the plainer. For let us leave B street now and go down into the flats by the river, where nearly all the mill people have their homes. 1 wish you would note first

houses farthest from our own church building it is a mile and three-quarters. And within that entire district, measuring nearly two by three miles, there is not a church building. There are two feeble mission schools, which are held in plain, unattractive halls, where every Sunday a handful of children meet, but nothing practically is being done by the church of Christ in this place to give the people in that part of the town the privileges and power of the life of Christ, the life more abundantly.

"The houses down there are of the cheapest description. The people who come out of them are far from well dressed. The streets and alleys are dirty and ill smelling, and no one cares to promenade for pleasure up and down the sidewalks in that neighborhood. It is not a safe place to go to at night. The most frequent disturbances come from that part of the town. All the herd characters find ref-

the distance from B street and the

churches to this tenement district. It

is nine blocks-that is, a little over a

mile. To the edge of the tenement

uge there. And let me say that I am not now speaking of the working people. They are almost without exception law abiding. But in every town like ours the floating population of vice and crime seeks naturally that part of a town where the poorest houses are, and the most saloons, and the greatest darkness, both physical and moral.

"If there is a part of this town which needs lifting up and cleaning and healing and inspiring by the presence of the church of Christ, it is right there where there is no church. The people on B street and for six or eight blocks each side know the gospel. They have large numbers of books and papers and much Christian literature. They have been taught the Bible truths; they are familiar with them. Of what value is t, then, to continue to support on this short street, so near together, seven churches, of as many different denominations, which have for their members the respectable, moral people of the town? I do not mean to say that the well to do, respectable people do not need the influence of the church and the preaching of the gospel. But they can get these privileges without such a fearful waste of material and power. If we had only three or four churches on this street they would be enough. We are wasting our Christianity with the present arrangement. We are giving the rich and the educated and well to do people seven times as much church as we are giving the poor, the ignorant and the struggling workers in the tenement district. There is no question, there can be no question, that all this is wrong. It is opposed to every principle that Christ advocated. And in the face of these plain facts. which no one can dispute, there is a duty before these churches on this street which cannot be evaded without denying the very purpose of a church. It is that duty which I am now going to urge upon this Calvary church.

"It has been said by some of the ministers and members of the churches that we might combine in an effort and build a large and commodious mission in the tenement district. But that, to my mind, would not settle the problem at all as it should be settled. It is an easy and a lazy thing for church members to put their hands in their pockets and say to a few other church members: 'We will help build a mission if you will run it after it is up. We will attend our church up town here while the mission is worked for the poor people down there.' That is not what will meet the needs of the situation. What that part of Milton needs is the church of Christ in its members-the whole church on the largest possible scale. What I am now going to propose, therefore, is something which I believe Christ would advocate, if not in the exact manner I shall explain, at least in the same spirit."

Philip paused a moment and looked over the congregation earnestly. The expectation of the people was roused almost to the point of a sensation as he

went ou:

"I have consulted competent authori ties, and they say that our church building here could be moved from its present foundation without serious damage to the structure. A part of it would have to be torn down to assist the moving, but it could easily be replaced. The expense would not be more than we could readily meet. We lem of the tenement district in Milton are out of debt, and the property is free from incumbrance. What I propose, therefore, is a very simple thing "Look now," he said, pointing out -that we move our church edifice down into the heart of the tenement district, where we can buy a suitable lot for a comparatively small sum, and at once begin the work of a Christian church in the very neighborhood where

such work is most needed. "There are certain objections to this plan. I think they can be met by the exercise of the Christ spirit of sacrifice and love. A great many members will not be able to go that distance to attend service any more than the people there at present can well come up here. But there are six churches left on B street. What is to hinder any Christian member of Calvary church from working and fellowshiping with those churches if he cannot put in his service in the tenement district? None of these churches is crowded. They will welcome the advent of more members. But the main strength of the plan which I propose lies in the fact that if it be done it will be a live illustration of the eagerness of the church to reach and save men. The very sight of our church moving down off from this street to the lower part of the town will be an object lesson to the people, and the church will at once begin to mean something to them. Once established there, we can work from it as a center. The distance ought to be no discouragement to any healthy person. There is not a young woman in this church who is in the habit of dancing who does not make twice as many steps during an evening dancing party as would be necessary to take her to the tenement district and back again. Surely any Christian church member is as willing to endure fatigue and sacrifice and to give as much time to help make men and women better as he is to have a good time himself. Think for a moment what this move which I propose would mean to the life of this town and to our Christian growth. At present we go to church. We listen to a good choir, we go home again, we have a pleasant Sunday school, we are all comfortable and well clothed here, we enjoy our services, we are not disturbed by the sight of disagreeable or uncongenial people.

"But is that Christianity? Where do the service and the self denial and the working for men's souls come in? Ah, my dear brothers and sisters, what is this church really doing for the salvation of men in this place? Is it Christianity to have a comfortable church and go to it once or twice a week to enjoy nice music and listen to preaching, and then go home to a go od din ner, and that is about all? What have we sacrificed? What have we denied

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ourseives! What have we done to show the poor or the si ful that we care anything for their ouls or that Christianity is anything but a comfortable, select religion for those who can afford the good things of the world? What has the church in Milton done to make the workingman here feel that it is an institution that throbs with the brotherhood of man? But suppose we actually move our church down there and then go there ourselves weekday. and Sundays to work for the uplift of immortal beings. Shall we not then have the satisfaction of knowing that we are at least trying to do something more than enjoy our church all by ourselves? Shall we not be able to hope that we have at least attempted to obey the spirit of our sacrificing Lord, who commanded his disciples to go and disciple the nations? It seem to me that the plan is a Christian plan. If the churches in this neighborhood were not so numerous, if the circumstances were different, it might not be wise or necessary to do what I propose. But as the facts are, I solemnly believe that this church has an opportunity before it to show Milton and the other churches and the world that it is willing to do an unusual thing, that it has within it the spirit of complete willinguess to reach and lift up mankind in the way that will do it best and most speedily. If individuals are commanded to sagrifice and endure for Christ's sake and the kingdom's, I do not know why organizations should not do the same. And in this instance something on a large scale, something that represents large sacrifice, something that will convince the people of the love of man for man, is the only thing that will strike deep enough into the probto begin to solve it in any satisfactory or Christian way.

"I do not expect the church to act on my plan without due deliberation. I have arrived at my own conclusions after a careful going over the entire ground. And in the sight of all the need and degradation of the people and in the light of all that Christ has made clear to be our duty as his disciples it seems to me there is but one path open to us. If we neglect to follow him as he beckons us, I believ we shall neglect the one opportunity of Calvary church to put itself in th position of the church of the crucific Lamb of God, who did not please himself, who came to minister to others who would certainly approve of any steps his church on earth in this age might honestly make to reach men and



Cape Girardeau Co., Mo., writes: "When I look at my little boy I feel it my duty to write you. Perhaps some one will see my testimony and be led to use your 'Pavorite Prescrip-tion' and be blessed in the same way. I took nine bottles and to my sur-prise it carried me through and gave us as fine a little boy as ever was. Weighed ten and one-half pounds. He is now five months old, has never been sick a day, and is so strong that every body who sees him wonders at him. He is so playful and holds him-self up so well."

