

CHAPTER VIII

“GOD ANSWERS SHARP AND SUDDEN ON SOME PRAYERS,
AND THRUSTS THE THING WE PRAYED FOR IN OUR FACE.”

DARKNESS had come and snow was falling as they climbed into the cab and started for the Falls. They paralleled the trail across the river that Hennepin had taken nearly two centuries before. When he had returned and had crossed to the site of Lewiston he built his bark chapel. Was the tradition current in Father Lynch's time that Hennepin had named the chapel "Our Lady of the Angels?" If so, did Father Lynch then and there promise Our Lady that if she would help him get that property he would dedicate it to her under the same title? It may be. Certain it is he was very prayerful that night—solemn. It was Christmas week; in all probability, Monday, December 29th, or the day following. On the first Christmas night there was no room for Our Lord at the inn. Here was another inn: if it were the same Lord's will, the priest would see that there would be room made for Him here. Mary and the angels adored that first Christmas night: that cave was really a chapel of Our Lady and the Angels adoring their Lord. The priest would give honor to them all; and St. Joseph would protect them, and the Wise Men of the world would forsake their homes and come to study and adore the Babe of Bethlehem in the cave above the rapids of the river.

As the cab sloshed through the snow, other thoughts would come, too. This is the very road that La Salle took on his way to the building of the Griffon; the very road that afterwards three nations fought for. The blood of a century's warring had almost cemented the dust. They had fought for what? Simply to have the privilege of sending the pelts of the beasts across the ocean. The nations were merely playing a bloody game of

"Hides Across the Sea," instead of "Hands." Even later than the massacre of the Devil's Hole, the long files of Indians staggered with their burdens to the head of Lewiston hill, and delivered them to the cars that slid down the log rail to the ships. The Indian that turned the windlass was the privileged character. The only thing he had to do all day was to retard the wheel that released the rope to which the cars were tied; and when the cars were emptied at the ships and again reloaded with the cargo destined for Lake Erie ports, he only had to grind again and pull the cargo up, and load it on the backs of the carriers for their seven miles jaunt to the Falls. He was the envied of his brethren. And when they all had gathered at evening for their wages, they took their bottle of whiskey and plug of tobacco to their wigwams and dreamed of some day being a "wheeler" instead of a walker. What a motley of degradation and romance has this region been for two hundred and forty years, since the time, six months after Shakespeare's death in England, when Father D'Allion came to evangelize the Neuters here, to last March 6th when the Supreme Court of the country declared in the case of the Missouri colored man, Scott, that in the meaning of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States negroes were neither "people" nor "persons!" In that period how this region has been the stage of knights and cavaliers, adventurers, explorers, Indians, tradesmen, martyrs, priests, scientists, philosophers, novelists, mountebanks; and now, if God wills, it will have its theologians. The Atlantic cable is to be laid this year, so they say, that we might send our messages to England: we will lay a cable that will send messages to Heaven.

They pulled up at Mr. Vedder's home. He came to the door. They would take his farm at the price named. They had not the money with them for an option. They would be back on Thursday, New Year's. Would he hold it for them? He would. And there on the porch in the night while it snowed, the bargain was made. We have gone over Father Lynch's account

books, and we know that he had not at the time a hundred dollars in the treasury. His books reveal that he made a hurried trip to Rochester: perhaps the Bishop was there. There is an entry about this time of receiving from the Bishop a thousand dollars, but no explanation of the item. Or maybe the visit was to a friend who was willing to help. However it was, we find him back at Niagara on January 1st. He, evidently, lays down the option money. Some time shortly after, difficulties arise. Protests pour in to Mr. Vedder. It is all right to have the Episcopalians at the Whirlpool, and the demons at the Devil's Hole; but to have Catholics on the Heights! "That way madness lies!" Why not put the Catholics in the Devil's Hole? At the bottom? But on the Heights! They are going to build a mill there, too—a priest factory! These farmers knew all about these Catholics. "Haven't we read and heard of their evil doings all our lives? And now we are threatened with a mob of high-powered Catholic boys' energy loosened right in our midst!" These honest and patriotic rustics must protect their hearts and hearths and homes and hogs. They must remember how their forefathers had fought and bled to free their firesides from the foreign foe! They scented danger to their faith and morals, as well as to their chickens and cherries. They brought pressure to bear upon Vedder. But he stuck to his guns; and afterwards proved himself a most patient creditor, whether for the mortgages he held or the provisions he furnished. In fact, all these honest but misguided protestors afterwards became the boys' greatest friends. Those were the days before the modern "thumb-tourists" lined Portage Road like crows on a corn-field fence in autumn, and flapped their wings at passing autos and cawed some message anent the uplift of collegiate humanity; those were the days when uplifts into passing vehicles meant something, for there were no trolleys nor busses. And vehicles were appreciated, even though they were but empty hay wagons or springless dump carts. When these farmers afterwards realized that their orchards and their melon patches were safe, and

that the boys were gentlemanly little fellows, howbeit supercharged with boyish ebullition, they always stopped and proposed a "lift" to them; and seldom did the boys return home without their pockets bulging, if not with the first fruits of the chase, at least with the last fruits of the field.

But at the time of the protests the future was unknown. Possibly, it was those protests that interfered with the dispatch of the business. Whatever the reason, we know that Father Lynch made another call at the Falls on February 20th, and another on the 23rd. On that date the "Agreement" was signed by both priests to pay Vedder on April 1st \$2,000, and the remaining \$6,250 on or before February 23rd, 1858 at seven per cent interest. Father Lynch never thought, with all his optimism, that within the year he would be able to reduce the principal; it meant therefore, that in a year's time he would have to pay Vedder \$6,687.50. He was not worrying over that: he was not a man that went gunning for trouble. He was worrying where he would get the \$2,000 in the next five weeks. But he got the \$2,000 from God knows where within three weeks, and could not wait till April 1st: "Something might happen!" He rushed to the Falls again, and received the deed.

But this was not all that was happening in the meantime. That Half Way House with its bar and bowling alley had obsessed him. How practical are those Germans! Patrons of the bar could drink while they laid their wagers on the coming game. They could bowl till they got thirsty and heated, and then drink again till they felt the surge of a champion's blood calling them to renewed combat. They could bowl till exhaustion overtook them, and drink till revived stimulation made them swear they could knock all the pins across the fields to Military Road if the bartender had not placed in the alley a whole regiment of pins instead of ten; and they could do it to the whole regiment if only those pestiferous pins would stop marching up and down the window sills. Then would it be time to roll the bowlers to bed betimes, so that

they might have a little game in the morning to work off the dreams of the night. Yes, those Germans were nothing if not practical.

But Father Lynch thought that he must be practical, too. He must get that place. What were the practical means for getting it? You can picture the President of St. Mary's Seminary, say, on January 2nd, calling the "Faculty" and begging him to sit down a moment on "that stool." They must hold a council. Before the meeting would be called to order, the "Faculty" would wish to know where the President was going to get \$2,000 by April 1st—All Fools' Day? And supposing he did know, where on earth could he hope to get almost \$6,700 in a year? And besides, in view of the present temperature and the depleted wardrobe of the institution, did the Chair think it wiser to invest in farm lands than in overcoats? Moreover: after the elections of the preceding November, the country had a new President; and the financiers of the land were talking of being on the verge of a great panic. Suppose it should come in the very year that the Chair wishes to raise \$6,700, where will the Chair be?

The Chair would contend that they both must pray all the harder. Let the Blessed Mother take charge of the case. Isn't the seminary going to be hers? Will Our Lady of the Angels allow her children of the ages to want?

And the "Faculty" rebut with: "It is all right to have faith; but the Blessed Mother expects us to use our common sense. When the country is facing a national panic it is no time for paupers to be running into debt. If the panic should come (as it did come, with a vengeance) many present millionaires will in a few months be paupers. If that be so, what in a few months will present paupers be who spend their pittance on options on real estate instead of woolens for underclothing? Faith is a wonderful gift of God; but so is reason. Because the one is supernatural is no excuse for discarding the other. God wishes us to use both." But the "Faculty" would have to give unanimous acquiescence to the decision of the Chair

that faith is the use of reason—of reason in its highest form.

And the "Faculty" would see "his" President don their overcoat, slowly, meditatively. Where was the overcoat going? The overcoat from its subterranean cavern announces that it is going to see a lawyer about the purchase of a couple of hundred more acres with the Half Way House thereon. The overcoat has come to the conclusion it might be bought. What madness sometimes possesses an overcoat!

The lawyer, Mr. Edwin Thomas, of Buffalo, made his inquiries with more deliberation. The De Veaux estate was incorporated. Corporations do not act as quickly as do priests that have been trained by Texas mules. There are difficulties in the way. Hoffman of the Half Way House has leased the premises until April 1st, 1858. Besides, he has paid his liquor license for a year. However, his lease states that in case the premises are sold, the license ceases, provided he has been given sixty days' notice. On March 25th we find Father Lynch making an agreement with Hoffman that in the event of the former's purchasing the place the latter may live there till April 1st, 1858, and pay rental of \$120 for the full term; but he is to use the premises "for a dwelling and no other purpose." Evidently, the priest wishes it not to be thought that he is more spirituous than spiritual.

And on the following April 6th he signs the terms of the DeVeaux estate: 185 acres less the two strips of land owned by the railroad at \$100 per acre. When the deductions are made, the total price is \$15,582.00. \$1,558.20 (ten per cent) to be paid upon the transfer of the deed; \$1,402.38 to be paid every year for ten years with interest. Which means that by April 6th, 1858 he must have \$1,500 ready for the De Veaux estate, and on the preceding February 23rd, \$6,700 for Vedder: \$8,200 within a year, besides paying back the \$3,558 that he had borrowed to make the initial payments on the properties. Facing a year of national panic, he faced a payment of \$11,758; and after he should have paid it, he would have to face his remaining debt of \$13,621, which he would still owe the

De Veaux estate. However, they will not be all his liabilities in the ensuing year. There will be the transportation of his charges; the provisions, light, heat, books, equipment; the gradual alterations of the house, alley and barn to suit his purposes and a million incidentals. Altogether, his liabilities before the fateful night of February 23rd, 1858 will be at least \$20,000.

And what of his assets for the coming year? Well, he has a purse quite tubercular, fitfully coughing up hemorrhages of dimes and half dollars, but his heart is sound, and full of faith. In his cashbook at this time he jots down memoranda, as though counting his hopes before they were hatched. He has his seven pupils. He even writes their names, lest any hope should escape his memory: Thomas Fainsett, Hugh Mulholland, David Kenrick, Edward Rigney, J. J. Lamey, Martin Zimmerman, and a boy named Molloy, without any baptismal name recorded. True, three of them pay nothing; and not all the other four will pay their full tuition; but they will bring in something. There will be three priests: Father Thomas Smith will arrive from Missouri any day now. The Mass offerings given to the three priests; his own offerings for missions and retreats; various other donations given, perhaps, by those interested in the education of the clergy; his own appeals in churches for collections, etc.; well, he can calculate that at the highest his assets will be \$5,000. That means: By the eve of his February payment he must have paid, or be prepared to pay \$15,000. How will he do it? Roughly, he will divide that \$15,000 into two kinds of debts, —imperative and conciliatory. The imperative debts will not brook a delay: he must pay his mortgages and interest on the day they are due, or he may lose his property. They would amount to almost \$10,000. The other \$5,000 he will delay as long as he can, and pay piecemeal as best he can. But \$10,000 he must get from some source he knew not where. He must pray to Our Lady Queen of Angels to send someone to him with \$10,000 before February 23rd, 1858. She must send into

someone's heart the thought, "I have \$10,000 that I would like to give away where it would do most good," and send him to me. Those things happen in story books, and in lives of the saints; why cannot they happen to mere sinners who are struggling to make saints through the priesthood? Such things happened to St. Theresa and to St. Vincent de Paul? True, they were saints; but it did not happen because they were saints, but because they had faith. If ever I see a man standing on the street curb with a \$10,000 look in his eye, I'll go up to him and say, "Well, here I am!" The Blessed Mother will send him. Yes, she will. It is her work more than mine. I simply must pray with faith, and worry nothing. Let me see: February 23rd is the eve of St. Matthew's Day. Was the Mother with the crowd that jostled her Son the day when He, passing out of Capernaum, paused before the table of the tax gatherer? Did she pray for him? Does that explain why there entered the publican's heart the grace to forsake his wealth for the priesthood? She can just as easily today touch another heart to separate itself from \$10,000 for the sake of the priesthood.

The \$10,000 became an obsession with him, just as in boyhood the mental vision of the Falls had obsessed him. \$10,000, "a good round sum!" If only he could find a man with \$10,000 to give away for a worthy cause! Just as this time the "faculty" was increased one hundred percent by the arrival of Father Thomas Smith from Missouri. Naturally, the first question of the President would be, "Do you know of anyone that might wish to give away \$10,000?" But the reply would be disheartening: "No, do you know of any man that wishes to give away an overcoat? I haven't one. Not so cold in Missouri!" Now there would be three men for one overcoat. It was explained to the traveler that in this college overcoats were almost as rare as high hats in Eden; but that the college would buy him one just as soon as it could find a man suffering with a \$10,000 ache: Father Lynch, like a dentist would relieve him of his pain.

The January term opened with twenty smiling faces instead of seven, all aglow with the prospects of their new home on the Niagara. Father Lynch left them to the tender mercies of the two other priests, grasped the overcoat to prepare the new place, to give missions and retreats and to hunt for the man with the \$10,000. Things looked roseate. The deeds were preparing. Hoffman promised to surrender his lease on April 30th, and would remain in the house with his wife and babies to care for things. On April 28th the goods and chattels were removed to the "Seminary of Our Lady of Angels." The boys must pray to her every day. The priests must offer their "office" and rosary and Mass in honor of her. For she was going to send someone with \$10,000 so that they might stay in the place they had dedicated to her.

In the late spring the boats started their daily runs from Buffalo to the Falls—to a wharf that was at the site of the present Carborundum plant. May Day, the first day of Mary's month, saw the procession of twenty boys and two priests ascend the gang plank. The third priest was awaiting them at the Falls landing with a hay wagon hired for the occasion. Some time in early afternoon they landed, and after some preliminary sight-seeing, bundled into the wagon and started up Portage Road. Along the old Indian trail they came, feeling like the redskins at a war dance. Many of them alighted and ran along the road, yelling like Senecas seeking scalps. Scattered farmhouse doors opened, and wagging heads with aprons held to cheeks just knew that Mr. Vedder had made a terrible mistake; and we are not so sure that Mr. Vedder did not share their fears.

At the new house, Father Lynch took the room to the right as you entered; the two priests, rooms on the second floor; the smaller boys in rooms above the former bowling alley; and some of the larger boys in the loft of the barn. Immediately the barn became the "University." But this was not to be a perennial holiday. Classes began next day. Recreation hours and recreation days were not spent all in games. There was

work to be done: trees to be felled and sawed; fields to be ploughed and cultivated; rocks to be broken for driveways; horses to water; chickens to feed; and hogs to be lured with corn cobs to the fence of the pen, and, too often, alas! snouts to be whacked instead of jaws to be filled. But all the work was not strictly utilitarian; some was positively extremely social, if not ornamental. The water problem did not begin in Al Smith's day, nor the generation before. The utility of dams was seen here in 1857 by the new arrivals. As we have before noted, the ravine that is now southwest of the cemetery, cut the road eastward and went past the present site of the Seminarians' gymnasium door up to the site of the present College Lake. In that year it was not dammed—at least, in the primitive acceptation of the term. But young brains saw the possibilities of water power: they dammed it and blessed it at the same time, for it afforded the finest exemplar of the only and original ol' swimming hole! On any hot afternoon, after missing the second aorist in your Greek class, there was always the possibility of finding it at the bottom of the dam. Maybe that is the explanation of why that classic tongue is even today so often referred to as "that dammed Greek."

Among the twenty divers was John Lamey who after the war came back as a Vincentian for a year; and later, came back for two terms of longer duration. He died in New Orleans in 1878. He was one of the original seven. Another student of the Buffalo house was a Michael Cavanagh who, too, as a Vincentian came back to Niagara, as Procurator, from '69 to '82. He, also, died in New Orleans, March 4th, 1897. Another who shortly after joined them on the diving board was a boy fifteen years of age, a square-shouldered little fellow, more solid than stolid. His companions called him Paddy Kavanagh. None of them could foresee (and it would not have worried them if they could) that in twenty-one years he would be President of the institution, and would remain in that office for sixteen years. None could foresee that in those sixteen years the institution would be of imposing stone structures,

with hundreds of students passing through spacious halls, and all lovingly referring to him as "P.V." When he died, a real man died; and, possibly, a saint. The feast of the Immaculate Conception was the eve of his death,—the last month of the last year of the last century. He made his eight days' retreat on his deathbed; and at its close said with a sigh, "Nunc dimittis, servum tuum, Domine, secundum verbum tuum in pace," and died. The compline of his day was over.

But the boys of May and June '57 had little worriments about futures. Study, prayer, work, play were so intermingled that they forgot almost everything but the present. If they found study to be real work, they likewise found work to be real play; found play was prayer if offered up to God; and prayer was rest; and sleep was almost Heaven. Our College chronologists do not state what the boys thought of rising; but we can infer. However, we find Father Lynch saying years afterwards that these opening years of Niagara were like scenes transplanted from the Middle Ages of monks on the mountains clearing their lands, and singing as they toiled. An unwillingness to help was unknown among the students. They entered into his ideas with a readiness that made him think that some special designs had God over these young hearts; this must be God's work. No man could do it. He taught them that they were training to be soldiers—soldiers of Christ. They must learn to bear hardships smilingly; must learn self-sacrifice now, or they would never learn it after ordination. Half of education is the training of the will, to make yourself do what you know you should do, especially when you feel like not doing it. Then is the time to strengthen the will: do it for the love of Christ on the cross. Do not lose an opportunity of so strengthening the will: an opportunity lost, never returns. When you think you cannot do a thing you should do, say a prayer, look at the crucifix, and say, "Then Our Lord will do it with me." Keep at your will till you are its master. It makes no difference how smart you are: if your will be weak, you are a failure. A learned mind guided

by a weak will, or by a will that is strong only in the weakness of its pride, makes a dangerous man,—a criminal.

The constant theme of his talks to the boys might be summed up in, "Honor is the subject of my story;" not the honor that is praised by men, but the honor praised by Christ; honor not so much in deeds as in motives. Not lip service, nor eye service—the honor of cowards; but heart service, the honor of saints and martyrs. They were Knights—Knights of a Queen, the Queen of Angels. Honesty, love and purity are the badges of her Knighthood. He placed a statue of the Queen of Angels in their rude study hall to remind them that even when no priest was present, they still were her Knights: they must keep silence as a mark of honor, and must study as a mark of duty. And when they should have failed, as at times they would, either in the study hall or elsewhere, they must redeem the fault by going to the prefect or to himself, and by stating the fault, and the intention to redeem it, start anew. "For," he oftentimes said to them, "a fault confessed is a fault forgiven. That means strength for the future."

Here was the "honor system" pure and simple; but a system actuated by a supernatural motive; and, though it may seem strange to our modern methods, it worked. When, some years afterwards, Father Lynch was in Rome he was telling Pius IX how well the system worked among the boys along the Niagara; and the Pontiff, marveling how the American boy responded to the supernatural motive, said, "Oh, call your seminary 'Our Lady of Angels,' because they live like angels." We suppose that the priest replied, "Why that is what it is called,—has been since 1857." This report was quite different from Bishop Connolly's in 1818: "The American youth have an invincible repugnance to the ecclesiastical state." A half century of priestly efforts had wrought a mighty change in the hearts of the young.

However, had Pius IX come over to Niagara the following winter, we doubt that he would have recognized his "angels"; at least he would have had to make an act of faith that he was

entertaining angels unaware. They certainly did not look the part; and it was not all their fault. Whoever heard of a frozen angel? We can picture an angel trembling with fervor, but not with icicles. That was the scene presented many a time and oft in the winter of '57 and '58; and after, too. You see, "improvements" had already begun at Niagara. One of the first improvements was to run a veranda along the southern side of the old bowling alley. The sun struck it about nine o'clock a-mornings, and warmed it up as cozy as an Alaskan sun parlor with all the windows shattered. Tin basins smiled on benches along the whole length. But water never froze in those basins,—if the owners had the forethought the previous night to empty them. If you lived in the "University," and a blizzard chose to whip things up merrily on the campus, you could before the dawn emerge from the barn door and run in a northerly direction, towards a point where your recollection told you the house had stood on the previous night. If you fell against anything soft—that was a snow bank. If you fell against anything hard—that was the house. If you missed the house, you might pull up in Lewiston. Hence the necessity of carrying a compass. However, only the weaklings washed on the veranda,—those whose family history showed a tubercular trend. The real stalwarts washed in the trough by the pump that stood between the house and the barn. This was a real lavatory with two temperatures of water—cold and icy—according to the season. We think that in all the history of all the colleges in all this country this is the only instance of a boys' lavatory without a broken window. It was a strictly fresh air lavatory, with no horrid steam radiators drying up the mucous membranes.

These Spartans arose at five o'clock; the priests, an hour earlier. History does not record, but we are quite sure that on dark winter mornings when tousled heads turned out of the "Varsity" door, and shivering hands explored deeper depths of pockets; and shoulders turned forward as though to hug each other, there must have been a lantern hanging on the

pump, like the light "in the belfry of the North Church Tower . . . lonely, and spectral and somber and still." And just as still and as somber would they gaze through the blinding snow at the lonely light announcing that the enemy-prefect had "by land" departed from yon house full fifteen minutes ago, that he himself had placed the light there before awakening the sleeping farmers of the loft, and had returned to the silence of the chapel. But had he returned? Maybe he was, as sometimes was his wont, waiting in the bake-house room on the first floor here? Going to make a second call? Thus would they debate till they were sure that in the loft above

*They could hear like a sentinel's tread
The watchful prefect's heavy trot,
Trotting along from cot to cot,*

And astonished to whisper, "What! In bed!" Then all abreast the doughty Paul Reveres would gallop over the snow to the light. Never would that light fail except when the west winds from the plains of Canada blew it from the belfry pump, and threatened to blow the pump across to the Indian Reservation. Never would that light fail, though sometimes sleepy eyes failed to see it through the blizzard. And many a time and oft those Spartan youngsters, after dousing their faces, reversed the Revere gallop, and, instead of seeking the warmth of the chapel, sought again the loft of the barn to thaw out the icicles on their ears beneath the blankets. Pneumonia? Why, there is not recorded for the winters of those years one case of any kind of sickness except in him who had not the opportunity to stay there all the time.

He that had to interrupt his course of treatment at this sanatorium was the President himself. He was away most of the time on his mission work and on his gunning tours for the man who was going to give him \$10,000. Christmas of '57 came, but no gift sent through the Mother of God. Still, there were sixty days yet. It would come. Meanwhile he must work and pray as hard as he could. Work as though you believed

everything depended upon you, and trust in her as though you believed that nothing depended upon you: that was the doctrine. After he should have received that \$10,000 and have paid off the balance of the Vedder mortgage and the second payment to the De Veaux estate, then could he take a little rest. Not now. Now is the time for work, work, work and prayer, and prayer. Years afterwards he said that there were many wiseacres even in the Community who had prophesied his failure, who were waiting to see it fail in order to pipe "I told you so!" They must never say it. He must work and pray all the harder. And so he worked sleeplessly, feverishly night and day, preaching, praying, planning, scheming. He began to eat and sleep less, and work all the more. He wished he could work in two places at the same time. Let his nerves frazzle: he would never lose his nerve or his faith. He grew weaker and weaker: but never mind that,—his will and his faith must grow stronger and stronger. But what if he died? What cared he? Death would be a release. He would work till that release came. If it came before the 23rd of February, all the easier. He would work till he fell, and then pray till he died. He realized that he had tackled a problem more discouraging than a Texas mule. In those Texas days he had learned two things: first, always figure out where the next moment the hind hoofs are going to be, and you make sure to be some place else; secondly, never leave hold of the bridle. If you lose hold, you surely will know where the hoofs are going to be, but you won't be able to be any place else. Those two mortgages would hit harder than hoofs. He knew just where they were going to be on February 23rd. If he should let go the bridle, he is through. Therefore, he must hold on, keep on maneuvering by prayer and work till he should be in the saddle again. February 24th would see him loping down the rest of the year in perfect peace. The Blessed Mother would help him mount,—if he kept hold of the bridle.

But this gift of \$10,000 was worse than a mule: he could not even see where the head or tail of it was. It was not even

a shadow. If he could see even the shadow, he might trace its source; but you cannot wrestle with a vacuum. St. Paul spoke of the Grecian shadow-boxer as one beating the air, but gave no directions about one trying to mount a shadow-mule, or where to hunt for such a shadow. Yes he does, too: does he not say, "I will that men pray in every place"? "Every" place. And "whether you eat, or drink or whatsoever else you do, do all for the glory of God"? A man's life must be a prayer. Everything done for Him, in every place. Only then is a man mounted on a steed that carries him to success,—to God. That's it: more prayer, more prayer. To the man of prayer utter hopelessness spells utter confidence. When things are most hopeless, then are they most hopeful. When man can do no more, then God steps in and perfects the work. 'Tis thus He shows how strong He is, how weak we are. Is not that the doctrine of St. Vincent? If that be so, then God had better hurry up: there are not many ounces of energy left in this nerve-wracked body. Yet, this man is conscious still, isn't he? Well, he would pray and work till unconsciousness gave surcease to sorrow: then God would have to work.

Thus worn out in mind and body he entered the pulpit of the Buffalo Cathedral one night in the early part of January, 1858. He would make this body finish the retreat he was giving the men of the parish. But his voice and brain were weak. Everything seemed distant and unreal. It seemed he had a dual personality: he thought he saw and heard himself preaching from the prow of an undulating ship in a storm to men that struggled in the water. They were crying for help. His vessel was sinking. He must help those men: they were his men. If he dove he could save them all; but the ship was pitching so he could not well get a foothold for the leap. Well, then, he would fall in.—He collapsed in the pulpit.

The men carried him to the Sisters' Hospital. "Erysipelas of the head," said the doctors. "The brain is affected. No hope." In his delirium he moaned about "\$10,000 . . . Mary, how from all ages . . . Hic habitabo quoniam elegi eam . . .

Those hoofs . . . I got the bridle . . . Pray, pray . . . Best I could . . . Unworthy to be heard, etc." He made his confession somehow, and even received the Viaticum; but mixed warnings about "men sinking" with the prayers of Extreme Unction. He lingered for a few days thus. While still moaning and muttering, a strange priest inquired at the office if he might see the sick man. "No, not today. Tomorrow,—maybe." The stranger came back the next day, and sat by the bed. The patient dimly recognized him as a fellow priest. But who was he? What did he want? Didn't feel like talking. Everything was all right. He was going to die, thanks be to God. The heavy eyelids closed. But they opened again and gazed with death languor around the room. The stranger was there still. How many days had he been sitting there? Why didn't he go away? He was talking now. I don't want to hear any talk. Too tired. Why won't they let me die in peace! I want to keep my thoughts on God, not man. I have only one sorrow: the Seminary must be sold soon. God's will be done. But I should have only one wish,—to die in peace with God. Now, if that priest would only get down on his knees and pray for me, it would give me comfort. But he keeps talking, talking. He is talking now about a debt. Well, I've only one creditor I should now worry about, and He is very lenient. I owe Him most, and He is most willing to cancel all my debts. What are the creditors of life compared with Him! He understands. He makes allowances for human frailties. He will not foreclose on His mortgage if the debtor but grieves for the debts impossible of payment. But the debtor must prepare his statement: he must account for every thought, and word and act. But this priest by the bed acts contrary to the ways of priests at deathbeds. He mixes his soothing words of hope and confidence with words of mortgages and moneys. I want to hear no more of them. Haven't I prayed for Mary to send me \$10,000? Haven't I often reminded her that never a prayer had been said to her in vain? I was unworthy to be heard in the way I wished; but she will give me something

better,—she'll give me Heaven. Had she given me the \$10,000 it might have harmed me. She knows best. I trust her. But why should this stranger come to me and keep reminding me of the mortgage . . . What! he wishes me to give him \$10,000? Why, the mortgage is not due till the 23rd of next month . . . Hey? What is that? This stranger wishes to give me \$10,000! Say that again: to me! Is this an answer to my prayer, or is it another imagination? Maybe a temptation of the devil? Is my brain enmeshed again with visions of things that are not? You are real? Come, let me feel you!

Gradually the mind emerged from the shadowy canyons and focused on the man before him: this stranger was actually asking him to accept \$10,000 for his seminary! Did he come from Heaven? "No," said the stranger, "Brooklyn". He introduced himself as Father John McGinniss. He explained that he had \$10,000 which he was keeping for his support when sickness or old age should come. He really did not wish to keep it if he could be assured of a home when most he would need it. He wished to give it where it would do the most good. When he had arrived in Buffalo on a vacation two days ago, he paid his respects to the Bishop. In the course of conversation he mentioned the problem of the \$10,000. Did the Bishop know of any worthy cause? The Bishop could enumerate a hundred worthy causes right in his own diocese; but the most immediate worthy cause was that of the new seminary. The man that had started it was sick in the hospital in the city. Why not go to the hospital and talk it over with him? The talk would ease the patient's mind: he could die in peace when he knew his work would be carried on.

"Die in peace?" asked the patient. "Why, I'm not going to die yet! This is the answer to my prayer. I'm going to live and work for the Blessed Mother that sent you here." Immediately he took a turn for the better. In a few days he was sitting up. A few weeks found him back on the Gorge.

But there were some delays. Father McGinniss, in order to help a church in Brooklyn had invested his money in a mort-

gage. Bishop Loughlin would have to be consulted, for he would have to get money elsewhere to replace Father McGinniss'. But both were sure that, once the Bishop understood the circumstances, he would release the money immediately. Meanwhile speed was necessary. The ominous 23rd was coming on apace. They both wrote. The Bishop released the money just as soon as he could. But weeks went by, and neither priest had received a word from the Bishop. They wrote again. Then came a letter saying that he had sent the check for \$10,000 several weeks ago. The postoffices were notified. Trailers went in every direction. At last, almost on the eve of its need the letter showed up. Evidently, the Bishop in his hurry to get the check off in time had written the address not with perfect legibility. It had gone to Natchez instead of Niagara; and the postal authorities of the former place had been trying to locate the Rev. John Lynch.

Father McGinniss gave the check to Father Lynch, and the latter deposited it; and on the appointed day gave Mr. Vedder the money as though it was the most casual thing in the world. The latter was surprised. There must be good backing to that priest-college. Credit arose as high and as strong as Olympus. Vedder was sorry that he had lost a good investment. He would have to hunt around for another investment, and maybe not so safe. He assured the priests that if they really needed any money any time, he would be only too glad to take out another mortgage with easier terms,—as easy as De Veaux's ten years. Some time afterwards they allowed him to take two mortgages, and run up a big bill for meats and provisions. But he always got his money,—eventually.

However, the gift of the \$10,000 was not perfectly stringless; but all the strings were silken and comfortable. Father McGinniss gave the money as a gift, and the money was deposited in Father Lynch's name; the Brooklynite stipulated that he would hold the mortgage instead of Vedder; but that he did not wish any of the principal to be paid, nor any interest. The reason for holding the mortgage was this: he wished

to resign from active parish duty, and to live with the priests at the seminary and as the priests at the seminary; that is, he would teach without pay as they did; and do any manual work to help along the cause, just as they. In the meanwhile they could house, feed and clothe him. If his services as a professor would be valued at \$2,000 a year, it would mean that he would be giving the seminary another \$10,000 every five years. Yet even so, he would feel more independent if he held a mortgage for which no interest was coming. Of course, that was more than acceptable to Father Lynch. But there was no written agreement to this effect. What did they care for written agreements? Were not they both gentlemen? Their word was as good as their bond. So the only thing written between them was the mortgage that Father Lynch signed.

But, alas and alack, that gentlemen are not always business men! Father McGinniss enjoyed his new home and enjoyed the work of training young men for the priesthood. The quiet of the seminary life appealed to him, and the enthusiasm of professors and students inspired him with energy. He worked not only with his brain, but with his brawn. The third anniversary of his gift found him digging in a sandbank in preparation for the mortar of a new building. Pneumonia seized his perspiring body and in a few days he died,—January 12th, 1861. The priests and boys had grown to love him. They sang his Mass and carried his body to the head of the cliff overlooking the river. He began the cemetery, as he had saved the seminary.

Immediately relatives from Philadelphia, Pottsville, New York, California, and Ireland began suit for \$10,000 against the struggling seminary. He had left no will, and no written statement that the mortgage found among his effects was held simply for the sentiment of independence. But he felt not these strifes. He lay peacefully above the surging waters, as he lies today. For nearly thirty years after his death the seminary honored his memory by freely giving annual board and tuition to two deserving young men studying for the priesthood. It

was moved so to do, not by any obligation save that of charity. There are still some old gray haired priests scattered throughout the country today who can reverently kneel in memory at his grave and thank him for all that God has allowed them to do in their long years of service for souls. They and all that have received their priesthood through his generosity must have remembered him in their daily masses. How many souls have those priests saved? His body may lie on the high river's rock, "the world forgetting, by the world forgot;" but angels must guard that tomb, and souls of Heaven must daily gather to sing eternal songs of thanks. Reader, pause! Say a prayer for him that gave his all for the training of priests to save the souls of them for whom Christ died. Perhaps (who can tell?), perhaps God will give you the grace to do what that simple priest has done. And generations yet unborn, to thank you for the Heaven you for them have won, will gather with the angels around your tomb, and will call you "Blessed!"