

## HOW ST. PETER LOST HIS KEYS AND HOW HE FOUND THEM AGAIN.

(An Allegory, Translated from the Spanish "Lectura Popular" for "The Catholic Home.")

"What do you think, reader mine, happened in heaven some years ago?" A very simple thing and easily told—they lost the key. It was quite an accident, but it made some noise at the time, and was very near producing serious results.

This is how it came about.

Everybody knows that St. Peter is in charge of the gates of Paradise; consequently he has in his possession two keys which open and shut the gates. One of these is for the principal entrance, the other is for the wicket only; but both are used indiscriminately, though for some time the applicants have been so few that even on days of jubilee the wicket gate is large enough to let the applicants through without any crowding.

Well, on the eve of one certain jubilee day, it happened that St. Peter was walking to and fro in front of the gateway with the two precious keys slung over his shoulder. After a while he saw a respectable looking personage toiling up the slope. The good saint had already begun to commiserate him and was even going to aid him, in the ascent, when suddenly such a whiff of brimstone assailed his nostrils that he nearly fell down. That respectable looking individual was no other than the evil one himself!

"Your humble servant, sir!" he said to St. Peter, when he had reached the draw bridge.

"God bless me!" answered the apostle, knowing with whom he had to deal, "what is the matter?"

Whilst saying this, St. Peter slyly stretched out his left hand, and with a dexterous twist locked the wicket which had been left open.

The arch-fiend who, ever since his arrival, had kept his hawk's eye fixed on the door, comprehended this silent innendo and bit his lips. A ray of anger darted from his eyes, and to all appearance he was about to lose his temper. However, he changed his mind, and putting on a forced smile, he said in studiously polite tones:

"Trade seems to be very slack here, sir! Let me see! Isn't to-day the first Friday of the month? It seems strange that on such a day you should have so little to do."

"Get out of this!" answered St. Peter, who, as everybody knows, was a trifle hasty. "Get out! You're just one too many here, and where there's one too many there is generally trouble."

"All right, I'll go," said the devil, ironically; "but you need not be in such a hurry. Allow me, before departing, to tell you why I came. I want you to do me a favor."

On hearing the word "favor," the old man, who had always gone on the principle, "Do good and never mind to whom," calmed down somewhat, and said to himself, "Poor devil!" What can he want! After all he has been very unfortunate; then he added aloud:

"Very good; hurry up and say what you want."

"Well, I came," said the rascal in his most saucy manner, "I came, ahem, that is—er—well, you see, I saw you were not very busy up here, and I thought you wouldn't mind stepping down to help us down below, for I haven't enough porters to open the doors fast enough."

Here St. Peter grew red with anger. "Don't trouble yourself, my dear sir," said the devil, who noticed the change. It's all easily explained. The world has changed somewhat. Science and art have not progressed in vain. Modern society has its own etiquette. If you would only change your old-fashioned and conservative ideas you could easily fill up all the room you have to spare. That is to say, we still stick to religion, morality, and so forth. For instance, there's the 'Religion of the Future' of Count Solano; we accept it; there's the 'Religion of Free Nature' which so delights the Masonic world; we don't object to it. Then there's 'Independent Morality,' and so on and so on. In short, we people down below are very tolerant, and it so happens that we are very successful. So would you be if you only left aside all such matters as confessions, penance, mortification, sacrifices, etc., etc. And" (here the enemy began to grow enthusiastic) "what's the use of bothering so much about piety, about long prayers, about devotion to a woman? I mean—"

St. Peter could contain himself no longer. His pent-up fury at last burst forth.

"You scoundrel, don't dare to name our Blessed Lady! I see what you

are after. You desire to separate the world from the Cross, which alone can redeem it—from Christ, who alone can save it; but you've made a mistake. You can't do it, and you won't do it. For between the world and the Cross, between humanity and Christ, there is a connecting link which your serpent teeth can never break!"

"And what is that, pray?" said the devil.

"The Heart of a Mother, the Heart of Our Dearest Lady, who is the Mother of the God-man."

At the mention of Our Lady's name the devil writhed like the serpent that he was, and, darting flames of anger from his eyes, he pulled such a face that St. Peter lost all command of himself.

"Do you dare to laugh so at my Mother?" cried the old fisherman. "Then take that, so you'll remember not to do it again," and lifting up his hands he threw the keys at the devil's head with such force that the keys and devil went rolling down the abyss headlong and with great noise and clamor.

St. Peter watched the descent, and when the devil reached the bottomless pit, thought he might as well re-enter Heaven. But how was he to get in? He'd locked the doors and thrown away the keys! Here was a fine state of things! "If I had been inside it would not have mattered so much about the doors being locked. 'I could have gone to Our Lady,' thought St. Peter; "it's through defending Her that the accident happened, and she would have set the matter right in a moment. But I'm on the outside, so I'll have to descend to earth and seek for some locksmith who can open my door. I'll go to one who prays to me; he'll do the job."

Straightway St. Peter descended to our vale of tears and went to the workshop of one Master Paquillo. This Paquillo was a clever artisan. People said he was an adept; but Paquillo thought himself more than that; but that was a fib. Vanity spoils Paquillo.

"God save all here!" said the saint, on entering the workshop.

"Save you kindly, friend," answered the master.

"I've just come to see if you can open a door for me. I've lost the key."

"Very good—that's easily done."

"But this door has three pairs of locks."

"I don't care if it had twenty; I'd open it."

"But this door is situated most peculiarly."

"I don't care, I tell you. I'd open hell's gate with my tools."

"I don't deny it," said the saint, humbly, "but perhaps you won't open mine. Anyhow, let us be on the move."

And so saying St. Peter and Master Paquillo set forth on the way to heaven. It is uphill work at the best of times, and poor Paquillo, loaded with self-love and pride, found it very hard work. However, St. Peter helped him; at last they arrived at the gate, and Paquillo set to work. He had scarcely begun, when a great crowd began to collect around him. It was composed of people who had been devout to Our Lady, and they had just come out of purgatory by virtue of a pardon she had obtained for them.

"Hurry, hurry, Paquillo!" cried St. Peter; "see the crowd is gathering."

"All right, I'll be done in a moment," and Paquillo went on trying skeleton key after skeleton key, but to no purpose. At last he said, "I can't open the door; you'd best call an engineer."

In a moment St. Peter flew down to the earth. "Where does the best engineer in this world live?" he asked of a youth who was passing.

"Next street; but he's a churl, and will speak to no one."

St. Peter ran off and knocked at the door of the great man's study.

"Come in! What do you want?" said the engineer, without raising his eyes from his desk.

"I came to ask you to do me a favor," said St. Peter, in a supplicatory tone.

"And that favor is what?"

"To open the door of my house."

"Are you come to insult me sir?" said the engineer, wrathfully.

"I beg your pardon, sir," responded St. Peter. "I am aware that you are too clever to bother yourself about such a little thing, but sometimes little things perplex great men."

"Possibly so, possibly so," testily replied the engineer, "but I'd like to see the thing that would perplex me. Where's your door? I'll soon open it for you!" And so saying he matched

up a few instruments, and with the aid of Peter he reached the door in question. Around it were grouped the souls released from purgatory; they were impatient to enter Paradise.

St. Peter, to calm their impatience, exclaimed:

"Your pardon gentlemen! I regret to keep you waiting, but at last I have procured a really talented man of genius who will open the door at once. Genius and talent together tried to open the door, but in vain. The engineer had the same experience as Self-Love had experienced in the person of Paquillo."

"Do you want your spirit level? Your compass?" exclaimed St. Peter every moment.

"No! Confound the spirit level and the compass!" exclaimed the engineer in desperation. "There's some mystery about this door, and science does not deal with mysteries. You'll have to knock the door down; that's the end of it!"

"You barbarian!" muttered St. Peter. Fanny! Knock this door down! Still we'll have to do it; the crowd is getting impatient."

Poor St. Peter was sorely perplexed; and to add to his perplexity knockings were heard from the inside.

"Good heavens!" he cried "now the angels want to come out! After all we must knock the door down."

Once again he descended rapidly to earth and within ten minutes he had brought up and placed before the gate a brigade of sappers and miners. They fell to work. The gateway seemed like an arsenal; blow followed blow; hammers and pickaxes were hard at work. The impatient souls clamorously demanded admittance at one side of the gate, while on the other the angels were striving to get out. The poor doorkeeper felt ready to die through shame, but his cup of misery was not yet filled. The brigade declared the gate to be indestructible!!! The apostle wept, but determined to make one last, one supreme effort. He remembered that he could work miracles.

"Stars of heaven!" he exclaimed, "I command you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to launch yourselves on the door."

A fearful explosion followed these words. The planetary world broke its laws. An army of comets, changing their proper orbits, flung themselves on that indestructible door with the velocity of one hundred million miles a minute. Words fail to describe the shock—and yet the door refused to give way.

Then St. Peter lost all hope. With weeping eyes he gave one last look at the place where he had spent so many happy hours, and thinking himself guilty of a fault which he had not committed, he returned to the earth to pass a second life of penitence.

When he arrived on earth again it was night; the cold was intense, and the unhappy saint knew not where to shelter himself. Sad at heart and weary, he sat himself down on the step of a poor, mean looking house and there gave free vent to his tears—those tears which in other years had procured him a pardon from the Master whom in a moment of weakness he had denied.

"Why do you weep, my good man?" asked a cracked and trembling voice. The saint raised his eyes and saw an old woman near him supported by two crutches. "Why do you weep?" she repeated. Then St. Peter recounted all his misfortunes.

"Is that all?" she said, laughing at the very idea. "Goodness gracious, if that's all, come along, and with the help of God we'll easily mend matters."

St. Peter looked at her; she was an old, infirm, wearied woman. "Such a one," he thought to himself, "could hardly reach the cemetery, let alone the gate of heaven."

"Come, my son," said the old woman. "We'll soon settle the matter."

St. Peter nearly lost his patience, but he remembered what was the effect of his last outbreak, and he restrained himself. "Very good," he said, "lead on—go anywhere—everywhere. I'm ready to do any sort of penance."

In a few moments the old woman and the apostle were on the road to heaven. "To while away the time," said she, "let us recite the Rosary, and putting her hand in her pocket she produced her beads. "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost," "Amen," answered Peter. A heavy wind had arisen, a thick rain was falling, mixed with hail. "Our Father" murmured the old woman amidst the rage of the storm. "Give us this day our daily bread," responded Peter. Ave fol-

lowed Ave; and when they came to the Gloria Patri a thunder clapped sounded through the heavens and a brilliant flash of lightning lit up all the deserted waste. And so they both journeyed forward, reciting the Rosary, while the storm swept on. The path grew narrower and more rugged, the abysses at each side grew deeper, the storm grew louder and stronger, yet at every step the old woman seemed to advance more easily, as if her prayers had given her more strength. At the end of three hours they at length reached the top of the heavenly mountain. A profound sigh escaped from the old woman's breast, and putting forth a lean and withered hand she pointed to the spot where the vast crowd of lately redeemed souls was assembled. "Alas!" cried she, "how long they have been kept waiting!"

When the travelers arrived everybody made way for them. Suddenly the old woman began to change her appearance. She grew tall and straight, and instead of a weak, infirm mortal, she appeared like an angel clothed in light.

"Who art thou?" inquired the blessed souls, who were fascinated by her beauty.

"I am Patience; I am Humility; I am Self-denial, and I bring you the key of heaven!" And saying this she drew something from her pocket and went toward the door—that door that which had resisted the powers art and science and brute force. She touched the lock with the object she held in her hand and the door opened at once. A loud Hosanna woke the echoes of the universe; a flood of ineffable glory filled every heart.

"So you have opened the door at last!" exclaimed St. Peter, joyfully. "But how did you do it?"

"With this," she answered, and she showed him a very small object. It was the cross of her Rosary.

"Salve Crux! Spes Unica!" "Hail, Holy Cross! Our Only Hope!" cried St. Peter, falling on his knees. "Hail! a thousand times hail! and forgive me for having forgotten that thou art the only key which ever opened heaven to man."

The old chronicles say that in addition to the new keys which St. Peter caused to be made to supply the place of the ones he lost he always remembered to carry a bunch of crosses with him in case of necessity.

Reader and hearer! without the cross we cannot reach heaven. No cross, no crown! Wearers of the scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, you have heard how Our Lady fulfills her promise! May we all join the happy crowd that assembles before heaven's gate on the first Friday of every month."

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Supreme Spiritual Adviser—Rev. B. J. McQuaid, D.D., Rochester.

Supreme President—Mrs. E. B. McGowan, Buffalo.

Supreme First Vice President—Mrs. Mary A. Flanagan, Cleveland.

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Supreme Marshal—Mrs. Theresa Lutz, Chicago.

Supreme Guard—Miss Mary A. O'Neill, Titusville, Pa.

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Supreme Auditor—Miss Margaret Kelly, Cleveland; Mrs. Mary H. Murphy, Buffalo; Mrs. Margaret Farrell, Manchester, N.H.

## BAKER'S TREASURE.

One of the most successful of melodramas will be the offering next week by the Baker Stock Company, when "The Indian" will be produced on a most elaborate scale. Its scenes are laid on the plains of the western country and the story deals principally with all classes of Indians in a most exciting and thrilling manner. Seats are now selling for the entire week.

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## CATHOLIC SUMMER SCHOOL.

The rapid growth of the Summer School has been an increasing source of marvel, not only to the few who doubted its ultimate success, but also to a large number of friends who feared the influence of other strong attractions elsewhere. Particularly has this year been a source of dread to the doubting Thomases. The Pan American Exposition at Buffalo with all its enticements of various forms would, they declared, be too strong a rival for the Summer School.

As the session progresses, our wonderers at the existence of such an opinion, for as far as can be seen, there is no ground for it. Instead of being an opposing factor, the Pan American is decidedly a potent aid in bringing people to Cliff Haven.

As has been mentioned in other letters, the attendance at the present session from the far western states has been a matter of great surprise to many. This has been largely occasioned, it may be seen after a little thought, by the bringing forward to the Exposition of so many people who have further made use of the opportunity by visiting the Summer School some out of curiosity, some out of a desire to stay and learn, but all so remain finally as long as time would permit.

People from the east, also, in their desire to visit Buffalo, have not forgotten Cliff Haven, but have joined both places in their itinerary by making the delightful trip through beautiful Lake Ontario down the far famed St. Lawrence, along by the Thousand Islands, and through the Locks and Rapids to Montreal, whence they come to Cliff Haven. The Exposition has in all probability done more to bring people to the Summer School than any other external influence of recent years.

At present the attendance mark is going up at an extremely rapid pace. There will without any doubt or exaggeration be at the end of this week at Cliff Haven as many people, if not more, than were ever before at any one time. The three hundred extra accommodations provided for this year by the erection of the new cottages make it possible, however, finally to be housed most comfortably.

With the increase in numbers of people comes a like increase in social activity, which within the past week has taken on a new impetus. Several delightful entertainments have been given at the various cottages, among which were a "dough" party at the Brooklyn, a camp fire at the College camp, a euchre at the New York, and a hop at the Champlain club.

Rev. Dennis Driscoll of New York, whose beautiful voice has frequently given pleasure at Cliff Haven in church and in cottage, sang at exquisite style, "Dreaming," at the New York cottage recently. Always pure and sweet in quality, and of fine expression, Father Driscoll's voice is gladly heard and as warmly received. Mr. Bernard Sullivan, another singer who has given great pleasure this summer, rendered "The Last Chorus." This song, a favorite among a large number of people, is one that makes great demands on the singer; but Mr. Sullivan, however, was fully equal to the occasion. He poured out a full, sonorous volume of sound that is always exquisitely sweet and true in tone. He manifests at all times his thorough knowledge of and sympathy with what he is singing, thus making his solos always awaited in eager expectation.

Dr. Alkan's Address is lecture on "Buddhism," is acknowledged as all sides, he being the author of this remarkable book, "The Dhammapadam and of Buddhism," which he presented as his thesis to the Catholic University, and which afterwards won such high praise from the critics, and of whom remarked in the New York Sun that it had done what few books did, that it proved what it had set out to prove.

The last evening lecture of the past week by Mr. Morgan M. Sherry, of Allentown, Pa., was the first presentation of the Summer School and a present treat. He was also the last of the three past presidents to return to Cliff Haven for the decennial session. His topic, "The Religious Outlook of the Twentieth Century," was very similar to that of Mr. Carruth's, but his treatment was quite different. The lectures, however, were none the less satisfactory, the difference in point of view tending to make them of very great value. He had a firm grasp on his ideas, knew how to present them logically, and he possessed the power of persuasion and of ably.

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## A CATHOLIC ACCIDENT.

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