

# The Catholic Journal.

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## The Hero of San Juan

Now where shall I settle myself for the morning? There are several friends waiting for cozy, confidential chats—mocking birds nesting in the orange tree, and the red birds over yonder in the apple tree. My inclination leads me to the red birds because from there I can overlook my new neighbor's garden. I'll have to own up to a larger share of curiosity than should rightfully belong to one small person."

Book in hand, Marie Campbell crossed the grassy terrace and seated herself in a rustic bench underneath a giant apple tree, its blossoms of delicate pink forming a fragrant canopy, while all around her nature and spring rioted, the pear and plum trees laden with fragrant snow, and the white stars of the dogwood gleaming against tender greens. The girl leaned her chin in her hand and fell into a reverie; the sweetness and the beauty of it all unfolded her and sank deep into her soul, shutting out for a space the world—the little world of sordid cares and mean ambitions.

Suddenly across her vision there flashed a vivid flame of scarlet.

"Ah, there you are," she cried, instantly alert; "I thought you would soon find me out—and there is your little rooster; you are neat-looking, aren't you?" In seeming answer to her query the red-bird dropped down near her feet and picked up a straw, flew high into the apple tree; in a moment he was back again, winging on a pink bough near her.

"We are old friends, aren't we?" she said to him reflectively. "You've been coming here every spring for so long, and you have taught me more than I ever learned at Madam La Mont's school. Do you know what is troubling me, little bird? Aunt Margaret wants me to marry Robert Reid—and he wants me, too. And I—don't know what I want."

"No, I don't know—and I'm afraid it was love—love and God and nature—that brought you and your little mate together, but this is different. You see I am an orphan, and penniless. I owe Aunt Margaret everything, and Aunt Margaret has notions. Do you know what notions are my friend? I hope not for they are such uncomfortable things."

The birds twittered sympathetically and the girl nodded at him approvingly.

"You understand, I know you do. Aunt Margaret likes him so—he is so rich, awfully rich, and aristocratic, and I like him very well myself, for he is really a very fine young man, but you see love is something very different as I said before."

"Excuse me, but are you talking to the fairies?" asked a politely inquisitive little voice.

The girl started and looked around in surprise. "No," she answered laughing, "but one is talking to me, I think Goblin, sprite or elf, where are you?"

"Up here in this tree!"

A big pecan tree grew up on the other side of the wall and in its overhanging branches was perched a tawny haired boy.

"Ah, there you are! Well, come down and pay me a visit and I'll show you the fairy I was talking to."

The child slowly swung himself to the ground, and, coming to her side, gravely lifted his cap and held out his hand.

"Good morning," he said with an odd little accent. "I am Hubert and I live next door."

"You are my new neighbor, aren't you?" she said, making room for him on the bench.

"Yes—father and I live with father now, you know."

"Your father is such a fine looking old gentleman," she said cordially; "he has such a splendid head."

The child's face glowed with enthusiasm.

"Isn't he grand!" he cried. "Father is a soldier—he is Captain Raymond Strong." The little figure drew itself up proudly.

"He led a charge at San Juan and was wounded."

"Yes, I see him always in his wheel chair. I am very sorry, but I hope he will soon be well."

Her voice was very tender and sympathetic. Instinctively he drew nearer to her.

"He will never be well," he whispered in an awed tone. "He can never walk any more."

She did not answer, but put her arm around the child and held him close. Presently she said, speaking brightly. "What a great comfort to him you must be? You can be little feet for him can you not?"

"Yes, and I read to him."

"Look!" whispered the girl suddenly, and she pointed to the red bird searching for a straw in the grass. "There's the fairy I was talking to."

"Isn't he a beauty?" replied the child in the same guarded tone. Then after a silence: "Do you believe in fairies?"

Before she could answer a shrill whistle sounded. Herbert sprang to his feet. "Father wants me—good-bye! May I come again?"

"Every day!" and she smiled at him invitingly.

At the wall he hesitated. Won't you please tell me your name?" he asked shyly.

"Guess!" But seeing his look of disappointment, she added: "I'll tell you tomorrow. Good-bye."

Soon she saw him wheeling his father's chair into their shaded garden, followed by a negro man carrying a small table, whereon he later placed books and writing material.

She watched the scene with sympathetic interest—the white-haired invalid doomed forever to inaction, and care, but there was something in the man's broad shoulders and the noble carriage of his head that seemed to forbid pity.

"He looks the soldier still," she thought.

The next morning she sat on the bench under the apple tree again, her book unopened on her lap. The red birds were too busy to talk, so she lost herself in dreams. Into them broke Hubert's voice suddenly.

"I haven't guessed it!" he cried, throwing himself down on the grass at her feet.

"Guessed what?" she asked, smiling at him in a friendly fashion.

"Your name—it is Rose?"

"No!"

"Father says it is Violet."

"Wrong again—it is Marie."

"Marie? What a nice name!" Then he looked at her thoughtfully. "Father calls you the spirit of the springtime. He likes me to come to see you."

"Does he?"

"Yes, he hears you singing every morning and to stir him up, he says one must be good."

"Have you a mother?" asked the child, breaking a long silence.

"No," she half whispered, "haven't had one since I was a tiny baby."

"Well, I have one, but I don't remember her."

The girl's curiosity was aroused, but she forbore to question him.

"She's gone on a long journey, but father says some day she's coming home and then I'm to love her. But I love her now—she's so beautiful. There is a picture of her in my room. Sometimes I want to see her so much that it hurts!" he added cooingly.

For more than a week the child came every morning. One day he was later than usual. She saw him wheel his father into the garden, and then over he ran, rosy and panting.

"Can't you come over with me," he cried eagerly, "and talk to father? He wishes so much to see you."

The girl hesitated, looking from the child's sweet face to the erect gray head in the other yard.

"Why, yes, indeed, I'll be glad to go, but I won't climb the wall, thank you; there's a gate further on."

A little later they were crossing the shaded, flowering garden toward the helpless figure in the wheel chair.

"Father, here is Marie," there was a strong brown hand held out to her and a deep pleasant voice said.

"So you escaped from Pan Jora's box after all. I am glad you did, for you have made the boy very happy."

Seeing his face for the first time, the girl started back in confusion, a flood of color suffusing her fair face.

"But—but I thought you were an old man!" she stammered, for in spite of his gray hair, Captain Strong looked very young and the laugh which he greeted her with was boyish in its extreme.

"I'm sorry you are so fearfully disappointed," he said, looking at her quizzically with his bright dark eyes. "But don't trouble about it, for it is something time will soon remedy."

Marie found the two more like companions than father and son, and after she had recovered from her surprise and confusion she entered into conversation with her usual brightness and zest.

"Come again, come often, will you not?" Captain Strong said, when she started home. "You have done us both good and lightened our hearts."

"He seemed to ask no pity for himself," she mused; "so kind and kind to hear him say, 'would never dream that he could not walk. I wonder what has become of his wife!'"

In a short time Aunt Margaret returned from her visit, bringing with her a number of guests, and Marie was so occupied that for several days she found no opportunity to talk with her little friend. But one afternoon, growing weary of the gaily chattering, she picked up a book and stole to her favorite seat under the apple tree. Looking in the invalid's direction, she suddenly exclaimed:

"She's come!"

Sitting near Captain Strong was a woman with Auburn hair, clasping Hubert in her arms. They both looked radiant, but the Captain's face was hidden by his hand.

"Now—now they will be quite happy without me," and she walked slowly and sadly back to the house.

"This is the first day of June," she said to herself next morning. "Hubert's birthday. He has been telling me of it for so long; I am sure he will be disappointed if he doesn't see me today."

So, before the household was astir, she slipped down stairs and over into the other garden, with the gifts for the child. Then for the chirping and twittering of the birds she smiled the place—no sound of father's steps nor sister's voice, but she greeted her, and the woman at the entrance of it. She found the Captain sitting alone on the vine-covered veranda.

"Good morning," Captain Strong, she said brightly; "I have something for Hubert—where is he?"

Not receiving any answer, she turned her gray eyes full upon him and was shocked to see the tragic despair of his face.

"Oh, who is it?" she cried anxiously, as she compassionately laid down her gifts.

"Didn't you know?" he murmured slowly, controlling his voice with difficulty. "His mother has taken him away."

In that simple sentence there thrilled a deep and patient suffering that touched the girl's heart with an answering pain, and her eyes filled with tears.

"Oh, I am so sorry," she said, claimed sympathetically. "I had hoped, so hoped she had come home to stay!"

"Come to stay!" he repeated in bewilderment.

"Yes, your wife, I—"

"My wife?" he interrupted. "Did you think that I had a wife?"

"What a fool! What a fool! I was not to have thought of that possibility."

Then, shaking her wondering look, he went on more quietly. "Hubert was the son of my best friend. His parents were never happy together, and separated when he was a baby. Soon after the Spanish-American War sent our regiment into active service and Hubert's father was mortally wounded. Just before he died he gave the baby to me—neither of us dreaming that his mother would ever want him. She was a very care-less, young thing, given by nature to care or responsibility of any kind, and never loved the little fellow, and father resented his existence."

"Perhaps I did wrong to let you call me father, but he was as dear to me as my own son; and I am to be alone the rest of my life."

"But I am selfish to lay my own happiness on you," he continued. "I'll get along some way, for I have my books, you know."

With a cry she fung herself on her knees by his chair and hid her face against his arm, sobbing bitterly. He lifted her gently and begged her not to grieve for little Hubert and him.

"You must go," he said, and his voice was very grave, "and only remember that you have cast a ray of light into a far-darker life. I shall be better and stronger for having known you, and let me thank you for your presence here."

The moon rose full and glorious in a clear sky of soft blue hue and touched a hazy and glowing band with its shimmering light. A haunting bird song pervaded the midnight air in the distance.

The review was written by the author and from the manuscript of the author's own work.

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Hubert in The Heavy Sleighs.

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## News From Ireland

On Sunday, April 2, his Lordship the Most Rev. Dr. Fogarty, Bishop of Kilmore, ordained to the priesthood Rev. Thomas Browne for the diocese of Kilmore and Leighlin. Father Browne is a native of the County Carlow; is at present transferred on temporary duty to Plymouth, England.

A banner in aid of the beautiful Convent schools, Ballybrack, which were recently erected by the Most Rev. of a cost of considerably over \$2,000, opened on April 11 and closed two days later. The affair was most successful.

Rev. Brother Abnerus Bessie, of the Christian Schools, Longmeadow, Massachusetts, had returned from a visit to the United States, where he was a brother of the late Charles Houston, Bishop of Baltimore, and the Order of St. John Baptist in Baltimore about forty years ago. Bro. Abnerus had a wide experience as a teacher of boys.

The drapery clerks in Kilmuckree went out on strike on April 17, and a reduction in the number of hours of each day's work. Public opinion was so strong that the strikers were their point after three days of inaction, and peace was restored in Kilmuckree.

The Irish bar council has elected Mr. J. J. O'Connell, of the County of Wick, as its president for the year 1910. Mr. O'Connell was elected by a large majority.

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## Fifth Anniversary

of the consecration of the Most Rev. F. Hickey, B. S. Bishop of the diocese of New York.

Tuesday was the fifth anniversary of the elevation to the episcopate of His Excellency, the Most Rev. F. Hickey, D.D., Bishop of New York. The bishop celebrated Mass in the day with the honor of a consecration of the Cathedral school children.

The Young Ladies Guild of the Cathedral gave a Mass in his honor in the evening. More than two hundred young men and women were present for the occasion, which was held in the Cathedral Hall. Most of the decorations were of the hall during the day, and were white, blue, and gold.

At the Mass the Most Rev. Bishop Hickey was the guest of honor. He was accompanied by the Most Rev. John J. McQuinn, Bishop of Albany, and the Most Rev. John J. McQuinn, Bishop of Albany.

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