

# Stairs of Sand

By Anna M. Regan

(Continued from Last Week)

## CHAPTER 3

After supper that evening, Sara wended her way to the McTash cottage, one of several located in the pines on the far side of the quarry. The cottages were built by the Leavitts and all the occupants were employees of theirs. The hush of twilight was over everything, and the air was sweet with the fragrance of blossoms drenched with dew. Night was Sara's favorite time for prowling, and during the summer months she ranged the neighborhood visiting all the cottages, partly to look after the sick and needy, and partly because she was interested in her hurbable neighbors.

It was toward a cottage somewhat apart from the others that she now made her way. An open doorway threw a pale corkscrew of light on a small porch and on to a path through the rank grass. A long, lank woman with a mass of wiry gray hair came out of the door as Sara approached.

"That you, Miss Sara?" she asked shrilly, peering through the dusk. "Better be keerful, that path is so narrrer."

"How's everybody, Mrs. McTash?" Sara inquired. "Haint ary one of us too well. Eph's been laid of work so long we have to live mostly on game and greens we can pick up. Don't always have flour. Eph told me the other day I reminded him of a reptile a crawlin' through the bushes. I tole him I was never druv to it when he could pervide."

"Yes," said Sara. "Dad always said Eph was the best worker in the quarries."

"You said it! He did work hard but he's done for now, I guess. Eph's she called through the open door. "Come out and see Miss Sara."

A short, stout man with a mop of white hair, shambled out the door with the aid of two canes. He showed a dash of bravado as one who found life supportable even at its worst.

"Howdy, Miss Sara. Cull's gone down the village," said McTash, "to get me crutches. These cane's pretty nigh wore my hands out. Makes me most crazy, time drags so. There's nothing I can do, you see."

"I'll bet you'll be glad to get back to work," Sara smiled. "What time do you expect Cull back?"

"He ought to be back by now," his mother explained. "He's plum crazy to stop a while to watch 'em fixin' autos at Klun's Garage." He 'tows he wants to study 'em all the way through."

"The family history was postponed by the arrival of a slim, tow-headed youth. At first sight of Sara his shoulders straightened and a smile broke over his weak face.

Sara had always stood up for Cull when others called him subnormal and backward. When he fell behind in school she taught him herself until he made his grades. Sara's eyes softened as she looked at him.

"Well, Cull," she smiled, "I thought you had forgotten me! You haven't been up to the house for weeks!"

Cull shuffled from one foot to the other and twisted his cap. Sara's presence seemed to rob him of all power of speech.

"It's the automobiles," his mother insisted. "Are you learning about autos, Cull?" Sara asked. "Do you like that better than working in the quarries?"

"Yes'm. I can fix most everything now. I fixed Mr. Nat's Ford last night."

"Nat's Ford!" repeated Sara. "I didn't know he had one yet. Did he have an accident?"

"He said some piker rammed him."

"Was he—all right?" she asked anxiously. "Sort of," said Cull, evasively.

Sara turned to go home; then remembering her errand, she said:

"I want you to come up to the house, Cull, and help us out for a while. We are going to have company and Aunt Emmy needs help. Will you come tomorrow? The job may last the rest of the summer."

Cull said he'd come, but evinced little enthusiasm. He took the lantern from the hook on the porch and silently escorted Sara around the quarries and up the hill.

path. On the way Cull asked wistfully: "When I'm up there will you ask Mr. Nat to let me take keer of his machine?"

"Yes, I will, Cull, and I'm sure that car will need a lot of fixing before Nat learns to drive it."

"Gosh, that'll just suit me!" said Cull. "With Carol Dempsey's arrival, Sara had little time for her drawings and her concern over Hedda's incipient love affair was forced into the background, Carol alone would have proved sufficiently disturbing, but Carol with a French maid was cyclonic.

Early one morning, several days after Carol's arrival at Cherry Lane Farm, Uncle Philo and Aunt Maria Leavitt descended from the city upon their relations. The news had reached them in some unexplained manner and they decided to come out and look things over. They felt they must fix the responsibility on the one who had dared to turn the Leavitt homestead into a boarding house. They had heard, too, that the young woman was of questionable character.

After Uncle Philo had talked over everything pertaining to the new boarder and her morals, he told the girls to bring the young woman to Jake's room just as soon as possible.

Sara, in a hurry to have the whole affair over as soon as possible, rushed upstairs to awaken Carol. Neat, careful, housekeeper as she was the fat very near despair as she looked along the upper hall where Carol's belongings had spilled out of her own room and nearly filled the passageway. As she opened the door and spoke to Carol, she sat up in bed and stretched herself sleepily.

"What do I have to get up for?" she asked. "The family's ready to sit on the question of your eligibility to become Cherry Lane Farm's first boarder. You see you are getting a divorce from your husband and the elders of our family refuse to condone that fact only in exceptional cases."

"What are you going to do about it?" she asked. "Hold a court of inquiry?"

"Worse than that. You'll be lucky if you are not court-martialed."

Carol snuggled back into her pillows. "They're not going to see me downstairs! I'll not tell them a word."

"Can't you give them a few thrills?"

"There's not a thrilling thing about it. Reg and I agreed to separate although we are going to always be the best of friends. He's never once been unkind to me."

"If there's no checkered details how can you get a divorce?" Sara's face expressed disappointment—surprise.

"Reg has never thought of a thing but my happiness," Carol insisted. "He's going off to Russia for two or three years and as long as I won't go with him he wants me to be free to live my own life. I was just wondering if there was over any bridge or dancing out here?"

"Nat and Lois go around some, but seldom bring their friends here."

"Our father is an invalid, tied to bed—and I'm Grandmother, too, is rather feeble."

"Haven't you any men friends—no regular callers?" asked Carol, aghast.

"Just one, I might say, Mr. Neil Cramer, from the city, a landscape artist."

"Now you run downstairs and plead my case because I'm not going to appear at all."

"It seems to me your appearance on the scene would help Hedda and I to carry our point."

"Nothing doing. If they decide I can't stay here for a while, I'll go. I guess I'll get up and go riding," she announced.

"What are you going to ride?"

"Haven't you any horses?"

"Not ary a one," laughed Sara. "I'll telegraph Dad to send down two with a groom. You can ride, surely!"

Sara shook her head. "Well, you can learn," Carol insisted.

When Sara entered her Father's room all eyes looked toward the door expecting that young lady who had recently come among them would appear with her. Grandmother was seated by her son's bed. At the foot of the bed were grouped about Uncle Philo and Aunt Maria and a Mr. Lewis, an attorney who transacted legal matters for Cherry Lane Farm.

"Isn't the young woman to appear before us?" asked Uncle Philo, as head of the family. Sara shook her head and took her seat by the window.

"She says there is nothing to tell. Although her husband and she are the best of friends they agreed to separate. He is going to Russia for two or three years and he wants her to be free."

An appalling silence ensued, during which Sara cast a questioning eye around the circle.

"It seems to me," said Aunt Maria, "The Scriptures are so clear on that point. 'What God has joined together.'"

"Maybe God didn't do it," suggested Sara, from the window. "Carol said they were married in the City Hall."

"If you cannot be serious," Sara, Grandmother intervened, "please say nothing."

Glancing from the window to where Carol stood on the front porch she heard her say to some invisible person coming up the lane from the opposite side of the house. "Well! Who are you, and what do you want?"

A gay, impudent voice called back: "I'm Nat Leavitt, but just who are you?"

Then Sara saw Carol's face express pleased surprise, and she noted the warm response with which she met Nat's welcome. She understood Nat's language. He was of her own kind.

(Continued Next Week)

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## The Pope's Encyclical On Labor

(Continued from Page Two)

the reason of their going so far astray, and we seem to hear what many of them allege in excuse: The Church and those professing attachment to the Church favor the rich and neglect workmen and have no care for them; they were obliged therefore in their own interest to open the Socialist ranks.

What a lamentable fact, venerable brethren and beloved children, that there have been, and that there are even now, some who, while professing the Catholic faith, are well nigh unmindful of that sublime law of justice and charity which bind us not only to give each man his due, but to support our brethren as Christ, our Lord Himself, would still, had there any those who out of greed for gain do not shame to oppress the workman. Indeed there are some who can abuse religion itself, cloaking their own unjust imposition under its name that they may protect themselves against the clearly-just demands of their employes.

We shall never desist from gravely censuring such conduct. Such men are the cause that the Church, without deserving it, may have the appearance and be accused of taking sides with the wealthy and of being little moved by the needs and sufferings of the disinherited.

That those appearances and these accusations are unwarranted and unjust: the whole history of the Church clearly shows. The very encyclicals and pastoral letters which we are celebrating afford the clearest evidences that these calumnies and contumelias have been most unfairly thrust upon her teaching.

### Invitation to Return

But we are far indeed from being exasperated by these injustices or dejected by our pastoral sorrow. We have no wish to drive away or reject our children who have been so unhappily deceived, and who are wandering so far from the paths of truth and salvation. On the contrary, we invite them with all possible solicitude to return to the maternal bosom of the Church. God grant that they listen to our voice. God grant that when they set out, thither they may return, to their Father's house, there they may remain, amongst the ranks of those who, zealously following the direction promulgated by Leo XIII and solemnly repeated by ourselves, unflinchingly endeavor to reform society according to the mind of the Church on a firm basis of social justice and social charity.

Let us be their firm persuasion that nowhere, even on earth, can they find an ampler happiness than in company with Him who, being rich, became poor for our sakes, that through His poverty we might become rich; who was poor and in his home from Him who invites to Himself all who labor and are burdened, that they may refresh them boundlessly in the love of His heart; who, in fine, without any respect for persons, will require more of him to whom more has been given.

### Moral Renovation

However, if we examine matters diligently and thoroughly, we shall perceive clearly that this longed-for social reconstruction must be preceded by a profound renewal of the Christian spirit, from which multitudes engaged in industry in every country have unhappily departed. Otherwise, all our endeavors will be futile, and our social edifice will be built not upon a rock but upon shifting sand.

We have passed in review, venerable brethren and beloved children, the state of the modern economic world and have found it suffering from the greatest evils. We have investigated anew Socialism and Communism and have found them, even in their mitigated forms, far removed from the precepts of the Gospel.

"And if society is to be healed now," we use the words of our predecessor—"in no way can it be healed save by a return to Christian institutions." For Christianity alone can apply an efficacious remedy for the excessive solicitude for material things, which is the origin of all evils. When men are fascinated and completely absorbed in the things of the world, if alone can draw away their attention and raise it to Heaven. And who will deny that this remedy is not urgently needed by society?

Most men are affected almost exclusively by temporal upheavals, disasters and ruins. Yet if we view things with Christian eyes, and we should, what are they all

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## Dansville Pastor Was Ordained To The Priesthood 33 Years Ago In June, Rev. Leo G. Hofschneider

Dansville, June 19.—Thursday of last week was the 33d anniversary of the ordination of the Rev. Leo G. Hofschneider into the priesthood, 22 years of which time he has been in Dansville, pastor of St. Mary's Church, June 11, 1898. Father Hofschneider was ordained from St. Bernard's Seminary in Rochester, and the morning of his 33d anniversary, June 11, 1931, found him again in the home of his alma mater with his brother priests in the final moments of the week's retreat of the clergy of the Diocese.

With the exception of informal congratulations of priests, parishioners and friends, the tendering of spiritual bouquets and personal gifts there was no outward observance of the auspicious occasion, as the pastor's thought was for the spiritual well-being of his parishioners and the union of their souls and the school children with God in the wonderful feast of the Eucharist, the feast of the Most Holy and the feast of the Most Holy. The feast of the Most Holy and the feast of the Most Holy. The feast of the Most Holy and the feast of the Most Holy.

"Thirty-three years lifting the chalice— Ah! 'tis life in this death-darkened land! Thy cup may be weak, but the sacrament Dear Priest, that granted thy hand Is as fresh and as strong in its virtue As in the many years ago— Thy young hands were washed with its meaning And thy vestments of white were put on."

"My sinners are just like the shadows That follow the sun and his power To tell to the eyes that will read them— They rise and they fall, but they never All hidden from me and his power We look, but we see but his power But God sees the depth of his love."

In comparison with the rule of souls? Nevertheless, it may be said with all truth that nowadays the conditions of social and economic life are such that vast multitudes of men can only with great difficulty pay attention to that one thing necessary, namely, their eternal salvation.

Constituted pastor and protector of these innumerable souls by the Prince of Pastors, who bestowed them by His blood, we can only by restrain our tears when we reflect upon the dangers which threaten them. Our pastoral office, moreover, reminds us to search constantly, with patient solicitude, for means of saving their souls, appealing to the unwearying zeal of others who are bound to this cause by justice and charity.

For what will it profit men that a more prudent distribution and use of riches make it possible for them to gain the whole world, if thereby they enter the fires of their own souls? What will it profit to teach them sound principles in economics, if they permit themselves to be so swept away by selfishness, by unbridled and greedy desires, that they violate the Commandments of the Lord, they do all things contrary."

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