Stairs of Sand

By Anna M. Regan

CHAPTER 21

Oh, Sara, I never really lived a minute since I buried him. I've always felt so lonely, so disappointed. While he lived I never had a care in the world. I must go out now and see if Lisbeth is doing as I told her. We're making soft soap today and she's apt to spoil it if you don't watch her.

Sara sat at the table and dreamed oh, A verse of an old poem that Neil Cramer often sang came to her mind.

But there's one sure way of loving which is fair,
If you give and take alike, and share and share;
Never grudge each other's work or play, or laughter,
That's a love will last through all your life—and after,
Oh, there's just one way to love!"

Miss Shattick suggested having a picnic supper on Saturday afternoon at the mill pond. It would be so pleasant to have Mill and Cy and Jim with Sara and Bessie.

Cy's office building was finished. Everything was in readiness to open the store there the following Monday. Sara planned to spend a week getting things started with Bessie. On Monday of the week following she planned to leave for her home in Glenville.

She was sitting at the foot of a steep rise in the ground, her knees drawn up almost to her chin, and her hands clasped around them, while her eyes rested dreamily on the woods which stretched away from the grassy meadow in which lay the old mill pond.

Once again she visioned Janet Royce as she stood near the mill pond, her flaming personality expressing more about herself to Sara, than the words she spoke. Then her eyes went to the dear friends below her. Her Aunt, so likeable—Bessie almost like a sister—Cy and Mill honest, dependable, just the type of spring from the early settlers of this land.

Her gaze traveled to Jim Davis and her eyes became misty. It must be love—this glowing thing in her heart for him. She would have to decide that questions before she left for home.

Her eyes went again to the towering trees beyond, seeming to reach a blue sky flecked with floating clouds, fleecy and white. As they passed, their shadows flitted silently across the grass beneath, almost at Sara's very feet.

Davis crossed the grass plot and threw himself full length at her side, his chin on his hands, pipe in mouth. He looked up at her, a flicker of amusement in his eyes.

"You didn't call me by mouth," he suggested, "but I felt your subconscious call."

"I didn't know I called you at all," she smiled. "I was thinking over our little group here, and filing them away in my office cabinet." She gestured towards the other members of the party a little distance away. Supper was over and everybody was lounging comfortably on the grass, smoking and chatting.

"Why, instead of picnicking here with all you nice people I should be putting that—"again she gestured, this time towards the vista of water and woods in front of her—"on to canvas."

A slight shadow crossed Davis' face.

"Can't you ever put aside your work and forget it?"

"Not quite in the same way. You see, the moment an artist looks over a scene like this, he wants to catch it, then and there. While you, if some incident strikes you, suggesting an idea for your story, you can make a note of it and file it away for future use."

David nodded.

"You're rather an understanding person," he said quietly. "What you say is quite true." Then abruptly, after a pause: "When do you leave for home?"

"A week from next Monday, I think," she answered, a trifle absently, her eyes still absorbing the beauty which surrounded her.

"Very well," he replied philosophically. "I will go as far as Boston with you if you will permit me to. I will see my mother too."

His impassivity piqued her a little. It is one thing to say you do not know whether you love a man, but it is quite another if that someone accepts your decision with imperturbed calm. It's more than feminine human nature can be expected to support.

"You don't seem to mind much," she was pricked into saying.

"Don't I?" His deep-set eyes met hers and she turned her face quickly aside. There was no misreading the story they told. It almost her made her feel uncertain of herself and she felt thankful when Mrs. Shattick's voice came across to them.

"If you two young-uns think I'm going to let you sit peacefully there for the rest of the evening, you're making a big mistake. After all you've eaten"—with a nod toward several empty baskets—"a walk will do you good. There's a good view from a hill at the end of the woods. You can even catch a glimpse of the sea from there."

Sara scrambled to her feet. She was glad of an interruption to her tete-a-tete with Davis, and gladly strolled along with Cy Pratt. It was fully half a mile to the top of the hill they were to climb. Sara enjoyed Cy's original humour and they reached the top before the rest of the party.

Later when they were all sitting on Mrs. Shattick's porch, the balmy warmth of the evening called forth from some one the suggestion that they should stroll down to the bay. A few steps sufficed to convince Sara, however, that a soreness of one foot, evidently a blistered heel, made any further walking possible. She was with Bessie at the time, and she offered to go back to the house with her.

"Oh, please don't," Sara protested. "I shall be quite happy by myself, resting in one of the comfortable chairs on the porch."

She turned back and, snuggling down into a comfortable chair, sat quietly musing upon her surroundings. Beauty, such as lay all about her, affected her strongly. The dignified old house, with that sense of atmosphere about it which age alone can bestow, the sober, old trees etched blackly against the blue of the night sky; the tranquil silence of the evening, broken only by an occasional sleepy twitter of bird voices—all combined to give her that odd little ache of pleasure in her heart which only just escapes being pain.

Her thoughts swung to Davis.

Sometimes she felt oddly afraid—afraid of something she didn't understand. For all the worldly wisdom which the experiences of her somewhat unsheltered existence had brough to her, much earlier than falls to the lot of most women, she was still at heart only a girl, wrapped up in her dreams, and unconscious of the strange claims love makes.

But it seems as though, when the wonder and miracle of love is approaching, some instinct hidden deep within her, subconsciously warns every woman. It is as though she hears a football coming toward her along and unknown path of life.

In such vague fashion Sara was aware of a sense of tumult and confusion which she could not explain to herself. When the sound of voices heralded the return of the rest of the party, she rose eagerly and went to meet them.

CHAPTER 22

September was over, and October had brought a sudden, sharp crispness into the air. A small fire crackled away on the hearth in Mrs. Shattick's homey room, and beside it Muggins was industriously licking his coat into a superlative state of sleekness. Every now and then he paused in this praiseworthy occupation to regard Sara with solemn, unblinking eyes. Sara felt restless and fidgety this morning, now crossing the room to the window, now coming back to the fireside to read two letters she had received the day previous, one from Lois, the other from Neil and Hilda.

As it was Sunday, Bessie and her Aunt had gone to church. Earlier she had gone to the little Catholic Chapel where she was getting to feel that she was taking a certain part in the beautiful, solemn services. She seemed to feel so close to God there, so willing to put her troubles all in His hands.

Both of her sister's letters were chatty and very affectionate. Lois said she had noticed her father looking at her lately in a way that made her think he was puzzled about something. He still called her Sara, however. Aunt Emmy, she said, was talking of retiring, as she called it, just doing all the washings she could in her own home. She claimed that Wush had enough clothes to last him as long as he lived, so why shouldn't she stay at home and play lady? Sara laughed heartily at that. She always could laugh at Aunt Emmy.

Sara heard a slight tap on the door and hurrying across to open it, found Jim Davis just pushing it open.

"As your door was on the latch, I didn't know whether I was expected to walk in or not."

"The doors here will always be on the latch for you—with a charming smile—"and I hope you'll come here often after I have gone."

"You know it won't be the same, don't you? I'd like to finish my book in two weeks and go up to Maine for two weeks to hunt and fish."

"Alone?"

"Certainly not," he told her. "Another fellow that works on the Post wants me to go with him."

"Why that would be fine, Jim," she told him, "to get out in the woods. That's what I'll do when I get home."

"I'll see Merwell while I'm home and tell him I'll go so he can make reservations and get everything ready for the trip. I've engaged Blount a driver for all this afternoon so we can visit all the places around you want to bid farewell to."

STAIRS OF SAND—GAL TWO

"You can always think of the nicest things to do, Jim." Sara's smile was intriguing—"How I will miss you. We've had such a wonderful time together."

"We can go on together if you say so."

"My heart does seem to lean that way, I must say. Doesn't our train leave the station here at twelve ten tomorrow. I'll have to send my trunk down in the morning. I've concluded getting home is the best part of a trip. Present company is always excepted of course."

"Yes, I'll accept your explanation, my dearest," he said.

Quite a number of the many friends Sara had made were at the station to bid her farewell, and extend to her many good wishes for her future.

"You've crept so deep into my heart," her aunt whispered, as she clasped her in her arms. "You'll come back soon though and bring Delight, won't you? If she outlives Jake she must come to me."

"We'll see how it all works out," returned Sara. "It's been just wonderful that I had the long happy visit with you." The train started slowly and Jim urged her up the steps and into the car. She moved and smiled through misty eyes as long as she could see the loving faces she was leaving. She never forgot this trip to Boston. Scenery and the people around them received scant attention. So completely wrapped up were they in each other that the trainman's call "Boston" came as a surprise.

October's rain is more disconcerting than the rain of winter. Perhaps it is because it is so much more unexpected. It has a way of coming up, ghost-like, clouding the sunshine of a late, glowing afternoon. It has a way of turning a contented, sunny city into a place of wrath and chaos. Sometimes it is almost like a whip-lashing traffic, lashing people, lashing the city itself. A whip that flickers sharply over lifted faces—that strikes across eyes, blinding them impish, with changing lights.

(To Be Continued)

Aquinas Paper Staff is Named For the New Year

Aquinas Institute publishes an excellent school paper, the Maroon and White. The staff for this paper, editorial and business, has just been named for 1932, as follows:

The members are: Editor-in-chief, Archibald Harris; assistant editors, Frederick Meyer and Leo Dolan; feature editor, John O'Meara; social editor, Hugh Tate; sports editor, Edward Puppert; club editor, Bernard Drexel; scholastic editor, Frances Knitter; humor editor, Frances Knitter; humor editor, Frank Gottry; alumni editor, Ralph Testa; current books editor, Richard Quinn; drama editor, James Beldon.

The business staff consists of Raymond Blum, circulation manager; Joseph Weber in charge of finances. The Rev. Joseph Morgan is faculty advisor.

St. Patrick's Cathedral Radio Hour

(Continued from Page One)

Jerusalem's princes are all agog. The populace has gone mad. What! popularity has turned their heads. Who are these men? What peculiar power or charm do they possess? Are they not unlettered fisherman? Summon them before the Sanhedrim—Imprison them!—Hark! Gamaliel speaks: "I say to you, refrain from these men and let them alone; for if this council or this work be of men, it will come to naught: but if it be of God, you cannot overthrow it, lest perhaps you be found even to fight against God." Ah! Gamaliel, what wisdom crowns your brow. Let your confrere's scourge, let them charge silence, but have you no part with them. Refrain from speech! Impossible! The spirit has breathed, and where it breatheth, it will. Men, these whom you have scourged—this but enkindles zest. You cannot kill the spirit. "We ought to obey God, rather than men"—Passions of men; the tyranny of human power, the venom of heresy may all combine "but the gates of hell shall never prevail against her."

The Blood of Sacrifice

Is my vision correct? My quill begins to gory flow. What matters that to a scribe of the dead? Ah! my records must remain evermore. Now I see. The clouds, yes, even the heavens which surround me have assumed a crimson hue. Earth is purpled by the stain of blood. Is it the blood of sacrifice which was offered before? No, they cannot be, since they are gone. Is it Calvary enacted anew? Ah, Calvary how many deeds will be offered in thy name! What relationships will be claimed through thy precious remembrance? How many true memorial sacrifices will ascend unto the realms where the spirits of the dead rest at peace? What mystical separations will take place of the Lamb sacrificed of your heights? What Eucharistic announcements of death of the Christ among your Christians until He shall return in glory at the consummation of time to judge the world? Crimsoned, may the sands of earth be with the blood of the just, as were the rocks neath thy symbol but "In hoc signo vinces"—"In this sign shalt thou conquer"—will be emblazoned in golden relief over the wreckage of time and the annals of mortal glory.

My eyes are blurred. I witness indistinctly. Can it be possible that within such a short time such a stupendous change has taken place? Ah! I recall He who once saw blood. His own warm life's blood slowly ebb away, from the pillory to the gibbet, hath said "that so I must suffer and then enter into glory." What more can I expect from mortals whose image they bear? Suffer! A shudder wracks my frame. Look! a young man, they call him Stephen, the deacon, kneels in his own blood. The fury of hell has broken forth. He has been dragged before the High Priest. He has spoken too well in behalf of the cause. He hath blasphemed, so they aver. They are cut to the heart. They gnash their white teeth. They hear him quietly cry out, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." They cry out aloud. They stop their ears. With one accord they run violently upon him. They stone him. Their garments are at his feet as a testimony. "Lord Jesus receive my spirit." "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." He is asleep in God—the first martyr of the New Law.

Saul of Tarsus

A young Pharisee, Saul of Tarsus, was his chief persecutor. His commission reads "Death to the Christians at Damascus." He is on his way. Suddenly he is dazzled by a heavenly light. His horse rears. He is blind. A voice: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" "Go" comes the call to Ananias "into the street that is called Strait, and seek in the house of Judas, one called Saul of Tarsus." Behold he prayeth. "I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." The vessel of election to the Gentiles! In him shall the Gentiles be saved.

I watch the fleeting panorama. Gone are the glad Hosannas. Gone are the chosen tribes. Nations Gone are the chosen tribes. Nations are merged into one. Lines of demarcation have disappeared. Jew and Gentile exist no more. See how these Christians love one another. Oh! death where is thy sting! They go forth now by the thousands, holding aloft the olive-branch of peace. Peace, not by the sword, but by the cross. Fear no longer exists. They are rejuvenated by the Spirit of the Prince of Peace and they march a triumphant army into the lands near and far. Judea, Samaria, Galilee and Syria re-echo with their jubilant call. Nazarenes! they no longer respond to the name: Christians they are. Antioch stops not their victorious stride. "Christ and Him crucified" they sing and preach in forum and mart, in palace and hovel, on hill and in dale, to rich and poor, to France, to Southern Russia, from Britain to Asia Minor, in Athens and Corinth; on and on the wave of Christianity rolls, until even the mighty bulwarks of pagan Rome are threatened, over-ridden and fall.

Scarlet, the Record

Scarlet now is the paged record I write. On to Rome comes the cry to me on high. Jerusalem and Antioch had had their day. Council and Sea had held their sway, but the migration was on and where would it rest other than in the Empire of the mighty Caesars? "On to Rome" cried Peter. "On to Rome" cried Paul. "Hast thou appealed to Caesar?" demands Festus. "To Caesar shalt thou go."

Peter and Paul in Rome! Jerusalem and the Temple destroyed! Its inhabitants dispersed among the nations. The triumphal memorial arch of Titus standing in Rome as a challenge to whomsoever would desecrate the gods! The gauntlet has been flung in defiance; who is strong enough to pick it and carry on?

The stage is set. The curtain swings back. I pen the finale in blood of the deepest dye. A Goliath and a David, Paganism and Christianity, face each other. The dark clouds gather. The battle has been begun. Who would dare risk the outcome? Might and right stand face to face. They parry. They strike. Blood, blood, and more blood cries the giant, and blood is his pay. For there flows enough to float the Roman galleons of the day. But blood dismays not the calm David.

One by one the monsters appears in the shoes of Goliath. See Nero, crazed by the pride of ambition perpetuate his name in a new Rome. Burn the city; charge it against the Christians, let their blood purple the sands of the arena. Throw them to the ferocious beasts, torture them with wanton cruelty, yes, even a Peter to the cross and a Paul to the block. See Domitian arise in his strength. Watch him extend the fury of Rome to its provinces. John the Evangelist takes his stand. "To the cauldron of boiling oil," they cry, but they reckon not with power divine. He is saved. Exile him to Patmos.

On to the Beasts

Trajan takes up where they leave off. On to the beasts. Hound them. Keep them from secret associations. Marcus Aurelius next, worse than his three predecessors. The gods must be served. Take the test. Death or idolatry. By the thousands was fury spent.

The giant still lives. He waxes stronger. David seems but a child in his hands. Septimius Severus time for the orgies. Orientalism must have its fling. Woe to those who worship not the Sun God. The tragedy of blood can be tracked even to the African shore.

Peace, yes, for a time to whet the appetite for more. Forward strides Maximin, the sixth, to shake the Empire. Seek the priest and so will the faith. The earth is no longer safe. Where will they flee? Blood blood everywhere; whence can there be an avenue of escape?

Ah! the burial places of the dead. Down through volcanic deposits they go, ingenious search the legions of Rome. Soldiers everywhere. Is it possible to escape? The tread of feet is heard above. The clarking stallions pound furiously by. Breathe not so loud. Perhaps they may hear. Follow close to my side. Darkness, such as must have been first over the face of the earth. Ah! I, spirit of the Christian dead, am now at home. Graves to the right of you, graves to the left of you. Is this not, perhaps your resting place at last? Fear not, they have no hands to touch. They are the dead. They sleep in the Lord.

Ah! a light in the offing. Escape is impossible. It is light from an opening in the earth. No! move cautiously. The pungent odor from tapers. Hark! a song. Can it be possible others are here with us? It must be voices from the dead. Do I dream? No, I am at the edge of a mighty opening. I look. Do my eyes deceive me? Christians like myself down here in the bowels of earth. Can at home here. I am admitted to their ranks. "Ichthus" is the password.

The Altar Above a Tomb

The altar is there but it is above a tomb. The young angelic face before it is a priest. The bread is in his hands. He blesses, breaks and stoops low. I kneel. "For this is my Body." A pause, the cup of wine. He blesses. He bends. "For this is

(Continued on Page Seven)

Nazareth Girls Conduct Drive In Charity Work

Committees of College Students Take Active Part in Preparing Christmas Baskets and in Collecting Clothes for Needy

Committees for active charity work have been organized among the students at Nazareth College according to announcement just made by Miss Mary Neary, president of the Student Government Organization. Nazareth girls took an active part in making up and delivering Christmas baskets to needy families, in conjunction with the Rochester Catholic Charities.

Miss Mary Leary was appointed chairman and she was assisted by an arrangements committee, and transportation committee. The transportation committee headed by Miss Josephine Koch follows: The Misses Helen Whalen, Marion O'Neil, Mary Thaney, Bernadette Rice, Mabel Pedue, Madeline McGuire, Margaret Wagaman and Elinor Roche.

The arrangements committee was composed of the Misses Mildred Parks, Constance Mary Hehner, Betty Jones, Esther Gallagher, Mildred Dornherr, Dorothy Groves, Virginia Winkler, Marietta Romano, Kathleen Mancica, Dorothy Fitzpatrick, Anne Daly, Kathleen Whitfield, Dorothy Schifferli, Lucia Keller, Mary Doyle and Virginia Rice.

The Nazareth students are also conducting a spirited drive for clothes and toys for needy men, women and children of this vicinity. The drive is sponsored by the College and the officers, the Misses Mary Leary, Mary Morin, Rosemary Schifferli, Eleanor Black, Rita Kier and Agnes Rosenfeld.

Paris To Build Sixty Churches To Help Idle Men

Paris, Dec. 24—Cardinal Verdier, Archbishop of Paris announced Friday plans had agreed to start work on sixty churches and chapels in the suburbs of Paris in an effort to relieve unemployment. Originally this program was to have been stretched out over five or ten years. But there are so many thousands of idle men that the cardinal decided to start work now.

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