Stairs of Sand

By Anna M. Regan

CHAPTER 22 (Continued)

Sara, standing in a doorway of a Boston railroad station, shaded her eyes with her hand. Her train from Topham had just pulled in. Jim was going to take her to his home for dinner as her New York train did not leave until eleven-thirty. He excused himself and told her he would meet her near the front entrance after he telephoned his mother.

As she looked around her she saw taxis waiting in the tumult of the rain-swept, crowded street. Not that Sara often took taxis—she never felt she could afford such luxury. But this day was different from other days. Of course Jim would take a taxi to go to his mother's although he had said it was not far. Ruefully, from the shadow of her lifted hand, she surveyed her shoes. Thin, kid pumps—they were prettily shaped. Yet a pitiless rain would practically melt from them all semblance of smartness. As for her hat—she shuddered to think of how the downpour would blur its brave brim-line. To say nothing of her gaily printed silk frock.

The doorway of the station was crowded with jostling, talking people. From somewhere, back of Sara, a girl laughed shrilly. While two other women, their hats protected, after a fashion, by spreading out newspapers, started bravely into the downpour. Men, intent on getting suburban busses turned up their coat-collars and defied the weather, darting like sparrows along the flooded streets. Here and there some women walked forth brazenly, fortified by the armor of rubbers and umbrella—there are people who always, no matter how unexpected the storm, have rubbers and umbrellas! But for the most part the crowd—pushing against each other in an impersonal eagerness—waited, for any sort of rescue that might come. Waited, straining their eyes through the rain and a tangle of traffic, for the ultimate taxi.

She saw a burly, rain-soaked man disputing with a dripping, sodden female as to which had first right to a taxi at hand. The driver grinned down from his high place and said nothing. But the man was not so silent.

"It's a dollar tip for you," he said quickly to the driver. "It's more'n you'll get from her!"

The woman's anger was acute. "Oh, you're mean," she managed to gasp. "Oh—"

It was at this moment Jim Davis emerged from the station, took Sara's arm, motioned to a taxi and in a minute had her stowed into the back seat.

"Turn over toward the avenue," he told the driver crisply, "and I'll tell you where to go from there." And then to Sara, "you and I seem destined to travel together through storms, bad ones at that."

"Did you talk with your Mother?"

"Yes, she surely was pleased to hear my voice, too. She said to bring you over as fast as I could get you there. The rain will hold up traffic a lot, though."

The car had swung over to the Avenue. The long, glittering Avenue with its white, already lighted lamps, that made silver paths on the darkly shining asphalt. The car had reached the avenue and the taxi driver was again asking a question.

"Where to now?" he bellowed.

"Just drive uptown," Jim called back, "Right on up the avenue."

They had left the bright part of the avenue. They had gone through the shopping district, past the great houses that spoke so loudly of wealth. They were coming to the place where the fringes of prosperity lay against the hem of shabbiness. But neither the girl nor the man beside her was noticing. The whole world for them was bounded by four walls of a taxicab—

"Sweetheart," Jim was saying, "you promised to give me your answer tonight—"

"Yes—"

And then suddenly the two of them were thrown forward with a jerk that was sickening. Thrown forward so abruptly that they clutched at each other with the instinctive grasp of small children. So abruptly that they didn't realize for a moment that the taxicab had stopped, that there had been two startled screams. It wasn't until the white faced chauffeur dragged open the front window that they were conscious of tragedy. It wasn't until he spoke. For—

"Honest to God," groaned the taxi driver, "I didn't touch them! They slipped in front of the cab. I never even touched them—"

He didn't finish. He was climbing down into the street. So, for that matter, was Jim. So was Sara. The three of them hurried around to the front of the taxi. The pavement was so slippery, no wonder they had fallen, the two little boys, hand in hand.

They looked like nothing but a crumpled heap of rags, lying there under the grey blanket of the rain. Even with the lights of the cab shining on their small bodies, one hardly felt that there were bodies there. They were so small and limp. Only the broken paper bag beside them made the moment real and poignant. The broken bag from which had spilled such a small half loaf of bread, a carrot, an onion, a potato and a small soup bone, the makings of a kind of soup. Though the men hurried, it was Sara who reached them first—before even the police officer from the corner could get there, before the crowd from the curb could close in, it was Sara who sank down in the street, careless of what the puddles might do to a printed silk frock, and lifted two little tow-heads into her lap.

"They're so small," breathed Sara, "mere babies—but the boy who seemed to be the older, himself answered the half-spoken question, by opening blue eyes and speaking.

"Oh, lady, see if Benny's hurt. He's my brother and I promised Mother before she went away to take good care of him. Benny, are you able to move?"

"I don't feel hurted at all," the chubby little Benny answered. "We only slided."

"We've got to hurry and get home," the older boy insisted. "Daddy is waiting to make supper you see . . ."

Jim was waiting in the street beside Sara. The rain dripped from his chin. The taxi driver was twisting his hat in his hand. The crowd was muttering and motor horns all about were blaring angrily at the thought of a traffic block.

The policeman arrived panting.

"Knocking down two children," he began, "you big—"

But before the taxi driver could speak, the older boy came to his rescue.

"It wasn't his fault, Mr. Policeman. We ought to have gone to the corner to cross. But we were in such a hurry to get home to Daddy with the things for supper. I slipped and pulled Benny down. He never even touched us."

Uncertainly the policeman looked from one to the other. The crowd swayed back a little—after all, a man who had committed no offense can neither be arrested or mobbed.

It was Jim who settled the matter. To the driver he said:

"You take one of the boys and put him in the cab and I'll take the other. Get in back with them, Sara. Here," to the policeman, "is my card. If anything comes up you can reach me at this address."

In the manner of one who knows relief—on a wet night your sane policeman avoids trouble and the writing of a slip of summons—the officer stepped back. While Sara, climbing into the cab held out her arms to receive the little shabby figures the men had hoisted in beside her. Then Jim entered the front seat beside the driver. . .

Somewhere a whistle sounded, and the traffic was in motion again.

"Do you live far from here?" Sara asked.

"We'll show you—taint far," the children told her. Holding the small figures against her, she was sharply conscious of the meanness of what their home would be, just as she was conscious of the utter poverty of the children's ragged clothes and broken shoes. The smallest boy commenced to cry.

(To Be Continued)

Activities of Diocesian Council of the N. C. C. W.

An evening card party of the Rochester Deanery Council of the National Council of Catholic Women will be held at the Fourth Degree room, third floor, Columbus Civic Center, on January 6th at 8:15 o'clock.

Mrs. John F. Lamphier, the chairman, announces the following committees:

Reception committee: Mrs. Louis A. Whalen, Miss Cecilia M. Yawman, Miss Alice Kirk, Mrs Theresa Ganster, Mrs. Richard Fitzharris, Miss Margaret Wickham, Mrs. Emily O'Donnell, Miss Eva Schreiner, Miss Louise Meyers, Miss Kate Connelly, Mrs. M. H. Keogh, Mrs. John McParlin, Miss Kathleen D'Oller, Mrs. James C. O'Brien, Mrs. F. J. G. Connor, Mrs. Beckman C. Little, Mrs. E. J. Lucas, Mrs. Arthur C. Freer, Mrs. J. G. Hickey.

General committee: Mrs. Austin King, Mrs. Leo Fraver, Mrs. Elizabeth LaForce, Miss Marian Ergat, Miss Elizabeth Kress, Mrs F. D Hall, Mrs. Elizabeth Dean, Mrs. Walter McKittrick, Mrs. William Rossenbach, Miss Elizabeth Roby, Miss Schilling, Mrs. Agatha Luther, Mrs W. D. Conley, Mrs. Barbara Wahl, Mrs. Margaret Kalb, Miss Margaret Whelehan, Mrs. Edw. Hartel, Miss Florence Mills, Miss Jennie Hennessey, Mrs. Catharine Schwarz, Mrs. Frank J. Collins, Mrs. Charles Ward, Mrs. Richard Ford, Mrs. W. Douglas Ward, Mrs. Louis Langie, Miss Margaret Frawley, Miss Mary Jennings, Miss Elizabeth Madden, Mrs. Edw. J. Rooney.

Cards: Miss Miriam Papineau, Miss Anne Brennan.

Tickets: Miss Katherine Doorbecker, Miss Mary Buelte.

Tickets may be had from any of the committee, or at the Rochester Diocesan Council office, 1020 Columbus Civic Center.

The chairman, Mrs. Lamphier, is taking full charge of the prizes. She wishes to emphasize the fact that both men and women are invited to the party.

This is the first social affair of the Rochester Deanery Council, and it promises to be a great success.

The Monthly Message from headquarters of the National Council of Catholic Women at Washington, D. C., includes a list of the new affiliations received since the National Convention in Washington early in October. Rochester leads all the others in the number of new affiliations received since the convention.

Medical Mission Manual

From the press of the Catholic Medical Mission Board, 8 and 10 West 17th Street, New York City, has been issued a very interesting and practical manual for medical mission workers who make bandages, dressings and other hospital and dispensary equipment for the missions.

The object of this manual is to familiarize interested persons with the making and uses of surgical dressings, garments and equipment for the Catholic Medical Mission Board, with an eye to standardization and economy of materials. As each dressing or garment is described by name, with dimensions given, and illustrated when possible, a trained instructor for their making is not necessary, through very desirable.

The book is copiously illustrated with very practical illustrations, showing how to make the various bandages, dressings, hospital garments and other equipment. Practical lists are also given for making up standard sets of equipment for such uses as sundry and comfort supplies for the sick, baby layettes, garments for refugee and convalescent children and grown-ups, equipment for a patient, hospital garments and supplies, etc. The need in missions for this sort of work is immense, and hundreds of letters, coming in from all parts of the mission world to the headquarters of the Catholic Medical Mission Board, in New York, bears witness of the immense good done by the millions of yards of dressings and bandages sent out from the Catholic Medical Mission headquarters.

The price of the manual is 25 cents, postpaid, and may be ordered from the Catholic Medical Mission Board, 10 West 17th Street, New York, N. Y.

Stock Salesmen Defraud Priests

Several complaints have been registered with the Better Business Bureau of Rochester, and the police department, regarding the activities of a stock selling organization formerly with offices in New York City.

Their specialty seemed to be selling bonds of questionable value to Catholic priests, and members of their parishes who could be prevailed upon to buy stocks or bonds through the recommendation of the priest. The last case reported to the Bureau involved two victims from Holley, New York, in which the loss was $2,300 as a result of failure to investigate before investing.

Old Time New Year's

IT SEEMS strange to remember that before the Civil war there was no real conversation among casual acquaintances. Men and young women of promise spent the several hours playing silly games and New Year's calling was hailed with delight as the time for making new friends and incidentally, but highly important, for making matches."

There was little for girls to do outside the home and as a matter of course, they were supported. Mothers saw the point and persuaded the fathers to furnish means that they and the girls could visit the few stores in quest of suitable adorning for the great event.

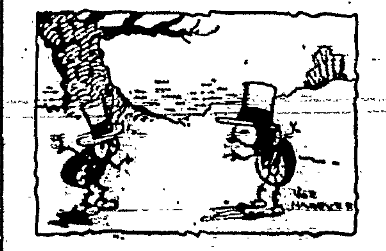
A half dozen girls here and there met at houses most convenient for the group and the young men of the town clubbed and hired what were then known as hacks and there were private tandems which lent a dashing effect. The happy day having arrived, what bliss there was in discussing the beaux and belles and the tinsel "fixings"! The party dresses of that day were of Swiss muslin with a double skirt, and also of a material called tarlatans, of varying degrees of quality, often displaying long trains trimmed with satin ribbon and braids. Whether the material was white or some of the reds, pinks or blues, they were lovely creations.

"What a Pretty, Friendly Custom That Was!"

The men were busy making a living and the day's pleasure often emptied their pocketbooks, but it was considered well worth while. Now and then a pair of shoulder straps loomed among the callers and filled to the climax a day long to be remembered. These recurring gayeties naturally gave the country village something to talk about and there was a demand for better raiment for men and women.

Information concerning it was well met by Peterson's and Godey's magazines with colored plates and fine suggestions, which had never before been shown and on which the imagination might rely.—Indianapolis News.

JUST LIKE US



"Make any New Year resolutions!"
"No—what's the use? I'd only break 'em again!"

Sacred to Janus

A legendary Roman King, Numa, it is said, established the first of January as the beginning of the year and made the day sacred to Janus, a mythological deity who was represented with two faces, one that of an old man peering into the past, the other that of a youth facing gleamingly the future.

My Kingfisher

Friends are not always human,
Love is queer at its best.
Some bestow their affection
On what others deem a pest.

Oh, reader, will you tell me,
What did my kingfisher do?
He'd dive with a ripple
For a minnow or two.

Then he'd flit o'er the gorge,
With a never tiring zest,
Where a rocky ledge looms,
To his mate on the nest.

With peace in my heart,
I'd follow his flight.
There's room for us all,
If we'd turn on the light.

And see his comic kids,
Their antics and his swish,
He'd string them on a wire,
And teach them how to fish.

For years I longed his sight,
I'd time his come, and go.
No lover of Jack Frost,
Tagging the sun to and fro.

No more I'll watch for him,
His crested head lies low.
A martyr to his fishing skill,
And man's greed here below.

Note: My kingfisher should not be classed as a poacher by the game law. He does not use a net.

—Michael Wouffe O'Scanlan.

(Copyright, 1931)

NEW YEAR LULLABY

MERRILY the bells are ringing,
Sleep, my baby, sweetly sleep;
Glad the message they are bringing,
While my vigil here I keep.
Low and sweet the song I'm singing,
In the flickering candle light;
While the New Year bells are ringing,
Sleep, my baby, sleep tonight.

Cheerily the bells are ringing,
Sleep, my baby, smiling sleep;
Joyous bells, their notes are flinging,
Over plain and woodland deep.
Prayers and praise are upward winging,
Stars are shining clear and bright,
While the New Year bells are ringing,
Sleep, my baby, sleep tonight.

Obituary

Mrs. Agnes Kennedy, a sister of the late Rev. Thomas F. Kennedy, and widow of John H. Anderson, died recently at the home of her daughter, Mrs. E. C. Stahlbrodt, No. 129 Seville Drive, Stop 5, Summerville Boulevard. She leaves two daughters, Mrs. E. C. Stahlbrodt and Mrs. Norman F. Green; a son, John T. Anderson of Albany, three sisters, Miss Mary A. Kennedy and Mrs Rose K. Crowley of Rochester, and Mrs M. E. Ryan of Elkhart, Ill.; two brothers, John J. Kennedy and Louis A. Kennedy; also one grandchild, Robert N. Green.

The funeral of Mrs. Anderson, was conducted Saturday morning, Dec. 19, in St. Margaret Mary's Church, St. Paul Boulevard, where requiem high Mass was celebrated by the Rev. Charles J. Bruton, pastor, assisted by the Rev. Charles Muckle and the Rev. Father Feeney.

The last absolution was given by the Rt. Rev. John Francis O'Hern, Bishop of Rochester, assisted by the Rt. Rev. Msgr. William M. Hart, V. G., pastor of Corpus Christi Church and the Rev. Charles R. Reynolds, vice chancellor of the Rochester diocese.

The different Catholic sisterhoods of the city and the welfare organizations, to which Mrs. Anderson belonged, were represented at the services. The choir sang the ritualistic music.

Burial was made in St. Patrick's Cemetery, Geneva, where final blessing was given by Father Bruton, assisted by the Rev. John Healey. The bearers were Daniel T. McClean, Peter J. Jones, Michael Kennedy, Lawrence McDonald, Edward A. Stahlbrodt and Mr. Green.

COLOR CONTRAST

By CHERIE NICHOLAS

Note the smart diagonal fastening of the stunning blouse which is posed over one of the new straight-of-line skirts which are so fashionable. The ensemble combines two novelty woolen weaves, the material for the skirt being in black with a blouse in the popular spanish tile which always contrasts effectively with brown or black. The scarf and the cuff edgings are of black boucle. The square buttons are in black and red. The black felt hat is edged with krimmer. Very smart are the black patent leather oxfords which are worn with this striking outfit, likewise the patent leather bag which milady carries. Ornamental stitching done in ecru enhances the shoes.

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