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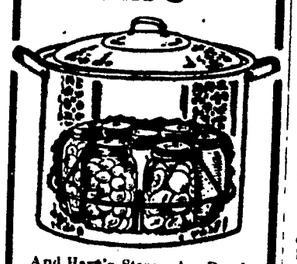

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The Coming Of The MONSTER

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A Story Of The Masterful Monk

By Owen Francis Dudley

THE STORY SO FAR: From the crossroads at dawn the debris of a village can be seen, devastated by war. At the crossroads stands an angel's blazing form. Above a trench the figure of Lucifer becomes discernable in dark outline. How these Christians love one another! A shell bursts near; the angel spreads wide his wings, shielding a wayside Calvary. Lucifer speaks: "They will not whine beneath the Cross, when this is over, nor cringe—in the day of revolt. Supposing men win where God has failed?" The angel folds his wings slowly, and turns: "Did Lucifer win—in the Day of Revolt?"

In Petrograd, on a night in April, 1917, a man and woman enter the restaurant of a hotel. Revolutionary crowds greet Lenin as he passes. The man: "I would spit in his face—the son of Satan!" The woman: "Are you incapable of understanding?" The man: "No. It is because I understand." The entrance doors swing open, and a group of men enter, talking boisterously.

The group of men who had first entered, had taken a table on the far side from the window, and were being served. One of them rose to his feet and tapped sharply with the edge of a plate. It arrested attention and heads turned in his direction. There was a fanatical light in his eyes. Someone shouted, "Karenov!" He acknowledged his name with a bow, and tapped again for quiet.

Then he brandished his glass: "Comrades . . . Lenin!"

The men with him stood: "Lenin!"

They remained with glasses raised, but not yet drinking—looking round the restaurant. Groups here and there rose to their feet with, "Lenin!" The rest looked about at each other. Some stood. The man and woman by the window were arguing in hoarse whispers.

"Stand with me! You are my husband."

"Sit still! You are my wife."

The woman gave him a stare of defiance, rose and beckoned to a waiter. She was supplied with a glass of wine, and raised it, crying, "Lenin!" There was a silence of readiness.

The Karenov had observed something. He was peering across the restaurant at them:

"Your husband is not so brave?"

The man called back:

"I am brave enough not to drink with revolutionaries—to their leader."

He was greeted with applause from those who were seated.

Karenov's retort rang out:

"You will not be so brave in the day of the revolution. The bourgeois will be cringing—when Lenin rules."

There was a vehement demonstration by those standing. The man flung back:

"It is easy for braggarts to talk—when they are mustered together."

There were angry shouts. Karenov had been stung:

"It will not be easy for the bourgeois to prattle—when the proletariat rules."

"Will the proletariat rule—when Lenin is in power?"

"Lenin will lead!"

"Lenin will enslave. Lenin is Godless, a Marxian. Lenin will lead against God. He will lay upon us the creed of Karl Marx. There will be no liberty, no rights. We shall be a herd of animals without souls. Our ."

"Lenin—"

The man refused interruption: "Our religion will be spat on, our churches closed. There will be no morality. You are blind! We are Christians. Shall an atheist lead us?"

A voice called:

"Better than Christ has led us."

"Blasphemer! Have you allowed Him to lead?"

Karenov tapped violently with the plate again:

"The bourgeoi wastes his breath . Comrades . . ."

He waited until there was silence, then raised his glass aloft. All those standing did the same.

"Comrades, drink to Lenin! . . . Drink to the Revolution!"

"And drink to your own damnation!"

Karenov ignored him:

"I will give you the words of Lenin. Comrades, I have heard them at the station: 'Long live the Socialist World Revolution!'"

It brought a tumult of cheering. There was an abrupt silence as they drank. The woman, who had been watching, drank with them too. The man studied her doing so, in a puzzled way, as though something were being borne upon him:

"So you are no longer a Christian?"

The woman put down her glass:

"I am no longer a fool." She stared back at him defiantly: "And I am no longer your wife. I am tired of you."

He regarded her intently for a moment, oblivious of the interest aroused:

"You are unwell?"

"I was never better."

"Has Satan possessed you?"

The woman broke into harsh laughter:

"And who by the devil is Satan?"

The sally was heard throughout the room, and evoked coarse ribaldry:

"He believes in Satan!"

"The woman should have a better man!"

"It will be easy for her to find a Comrade!"

The man succeeded in singling out with his eye the last speaker—standing near the entrance. He left the woman, and made his way, unmolested, between the tables and past some waiters clustered together nervously. Near the doors he halted, and whipped round with his fist. A figure was sent crashing and sprawling amongst bottles and glasses.

The man walked out.

In Paris, on a night of January, 1919, a man wearing the uniform of a French poilu, stood at the corner of a Place, surveying the scene before him.

The great square was brilliantly illuminated. Beneath the blaze of arc lamps people were chattering, laughing, or hustling along. There were French officers in the cars streaming by. To the poilu's right Le Grand Hotel, with ground floor windows glowing yellow to the whiter light without, revealed its diners within. There were two smaller hotels opposite showing dancing to the public gaze. In front, on the further side of the Place, a church, with doors wide open, soared into the dimness of the night above. Figures were ascending the steps and entering for Benediction; through the doors, above the heads of worshippers, the choir altar was visible, glimmering with candles.

There was a grim absorption about the poilu. Except when jostled he appeared oblivious of the passers by. He was awakened, however, by a French officer suddenly confronting him. The poilu clicked his heels and saluted mechanically. The officer was scrutinizing him:

"You were at Verdun. Is that not so?"

The poilu regarded him steadily and then smiled.

"Yes, and I remember you, my officer."

The other took his hand, and held it:

"You were one of my brave men—the men who gave their word, and kept it."

He drew the poilu aside, away from the crowd:

"We will talk . . . No, do not stand to attention. We are just two men now. Forget that I am an officer."

"I would like to talk with you. We used to talk at Verdun. You remember?"

The officer laughed:

"I called you 'the philosopher' yes . . . So you are not yet demobilized. But you will be, soon? Tell me—you are glad that it is all finished?"

The poilu looked doubtful:

"But, is it all finished? I have just been thinking—no, it is not all finished; they are gay too soon."

He indicated the crowd.

"How?" the other asked. "We are no longer in the trenches. We are alive. The peace-makers are assembling."

The poilu's expression was cynical:

"At Versailles, in a palace. The peace-makers will not make peace, my officer."

"And, why not? Tell me. I am interested."

The poilu unburdened himself:

"Were the peace-makers in the trenches? Do they understand? The President Wilson understands, a little. The others—no. They laugh at him, up their sleeves, at his 'fourteen points'—a dreamer! Clemenceau—no; he can see only frontiers on a map. He is a cynic. The President Wilson believes himself to be Jesus Christ. M'sieur Lloyd George—he is a politician. Signor Orlando—Bah! Fireworks! General Smuts—he is a great man; an idealist—they will say yes to his face, and no behind his back . . . they have not vision, in the Hall of Mirrors. They will see only themselves in the Mirrors, at Versailles."

The officer was smiling, appreciatingly:

"They will not end war? I think you are right. Tell me, who will."

"The men who understand."

"And who are the men, my poilu, who understand?"

"They understand—in Russia."

The officer's eyebrows lifted:

"The Bolsheviks?"

"The Bolsheviks will end the war. They will unite the workers against war, everywhere."

The officer studied him for a moment.

"But, you are not a Communist?"

The poilu shrugged his shoulders non-committally:

"There are meetings of the Communists here, in Paris. I go. They speak of what Lenin will do, when the workers rule . . . You are astonished? But, there are French officers there, listening."

The poilu was plainly taken aback:

"That is so?"

The officer warned him:

"We shall agree not to report each other? I do not think we shall agree about Lenin."

The poilu recovered himself, and became earnest.

"There is truth in their speeches. They understand what is wrong: why there are wars. It is the capitalists, the politicians, the priests."

The other became earnest, too:

"A little truth and many lies. The capitalists, the politicians? I do not know. Perhaps. It is the statesmen who make wars. The priests—no. That is stupid and it is malice. Lenin says 'No God, no priests; religion, it is the opium of the people.' He is stupid. Religion is here." The officer tapped his heart. "They cannot kill religion."

The poilu showed surprise:—

"But, you are a Christian—a good Catholic?"

"I was not so, I am, after the war."

"And I no longer believe, after the war."

The officer regarded him.

"I shall call you the 'bad philosopher'."

"How?"

"It is bad philosophy, to hate."

The poilu looked startled.

"My friend, I have seen you, just now. You look at them dancing over there: at the profiteers and their ladies with the white arms in Le Grand Hotel, drinking champagne. You say to yourself, 'How I hate them!' Am I not right?"

The other was coloring, confusedly. The officer repeated:

"I am right?"

The poilu found his tongue:

"They are right to hate."

"No," the officer affirmed. "They will not cure the world with hatred. It is always the same—hate men, hate God. You do not believe, my poilu, because you are learning to hate. It is a bad, philosophy—" He broke off, suddenly aware of being stared at by a school-girl standing on the edge of the pavement. Their eyes met, and she looked away hastily. He had an impression of flaxen hair, and curiously deep blue eyes . . . That is the Devil's way, and it does not make a better world. We do not change the swine by hating.' He noticed, as he indicated the window of Le Grand Hotel, the flaxen-haired school-girl crossing the road. "I do not know politics: but I know men. And I know that it is better men who will make a better world." He touched the poilu on the shoulder: "And I know that le bon Dieu makes better men than the Devil."

The poilu was looking slightly uncomfortable:

"I am not yet a Bolshevik."

The open doors of the church opposite caught the officer's eye. He appeared to meditate.

"Eh? . . . You are not yet a Bolshevik? No, no, of course not. I will show you a better way."

The poilu was looking more uncomfortable:

"You are busy. I will not keep you."

"I am free. I will tell you."

The officer pointed across to the lighted doorway:

"You and I, we will go in there for the Benediction. We will—"

"But I do not believe!" came in alarm.

"Ah, you will believe in a few minutes. After the Benediction, we will find a priest, and we will make our confessions I, because I am a wicked man; you, to make you a better man. Tomorrow morning we will make our Communions together; and we will both be better men, to make a better world. And tomorrow evening we will dine together at Le Grand Hotel, and drink champagne amongst 'the swine'—the French officer and the poilu! That is a good program, is it not?"

He linked his arm in the poilu's.

"But, my officer . "

He led the dismayed poilu through the crowd in the direction of the church.

"Come on, my brave man of Verdun!"

(To be continued)
(N.C.W.C. FEATURES)

Son Officiates At Golden Jubilee Mass For Parents

After fifty years of happy married life, Mr. and Mrs. Philip Kreckel, No. 11 East Lake Front, Summerville, renewed their marriage vows at a celebration in St. Augustine's Church, Monday.

Their son, the Rev. Arthur M. Kreckel of Lena, Ill., officiated at Solemn High Mass. The Rev. Reymond, a nephew, was master of ceremonies and Philip Kreckel, a cousin, presided at the organ. Besides their son, Mr. and Mrs. Kreckel have two daughters, the Misses Gertrude and Florence Kreckel.

HOUSEHOLD HINTS

Do not let children form the habit of telling you what they like and want and of refusing to eat what is placed before them at meals.

Scrambled eggs are cooked best in the upper part of the double boiler which has been well greased. They are not liable to scorch or be cooked too hard as is often the case when fried on a pan.

Lemon juice in the mayonnaise for fruit salads will keep the apples and bananas from discoloring.

300 INVALIDS HEAR SPECIAL MASS; GET PAPAL BLESSING

MILWAUKEE, WIS. — (NC) — Three hundred invalids — cripples, shut-ins, ailing—men, women and children, spent their happiest hour in many years last Wednesday morning.

For many of them it was the first time in a long period they had worshipped their God in a church. And the exclamations, prayerful devotion, and reverent fingering of rosaries bespoke their gratitude.

It was Eucharistic Day of the Apostolate of Suffering, marking the tenth anniversary of the society. The sick were brought to a special solemn Mass in St. Sebastian's Church here in wheel-chairs and litters to worship their Creator, in unison with their more fortunate brethren, at the Holy Sacrifice. They received the papal blessing bestowed upon them by the Most Rev. Samuel A. Stritch, Archbishop of Milwaukee, heard words of comfort and inspiration from His Excellency's lips, assisted at the Mass, which was celebrated by the Most Rev. Aloisius J. Muench, Bishop of Fargo and former rector of St. Francis Seminary here, and received Communion from the hands of the Fargo ordinary.

In ambulances, in the automobiles of parishioners, in taxicabs, and their own wheel chairs they came, these sick. They were told by Archbishop Stritch in his sermon that although they were ailing physically, spiritually they were not sick, but "strong and healthy." They heard him decry what he called the "sick condition of the world today" and plead with them to continue their prayers, for "through prayer, faith, courage we can help in solving the problems of the church and the world."

Uniformed nurses, relatives and Boy Scouts joined in ministering to the sick during their service. There was genuine joy among the invalids, although it was an ordeal for many.

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