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For Lent

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The Revised New Testament
The Way of The Cross

TRANT'S CATHOLIC STORE

96 Clinton Ave. N. 115 Franklin St.
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Novice In Harlem

(Continued from Page 15)
 I shuffled and dealt and the game started. It started but it never seemed to end. An hour

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then two passed. We dealt and shuffled and played and shuffled and dealt and played some more.

THE RADIO played on and on. There was the steady, hollow smack of the ping pong ball there was the swish of dancing feet. And there I was playing five hundred rummy.

I could have hugged Miss O'Donnell when she came and tapped me on the shoulder and told me it was supper time. This was the first sane suggestion I had heard that afternoon. Food for the inner man. I was all set for a big meal.

We left the clubroom and went into tenement house, down a dark foul-smelling hallway, up one flight of stairs, just as dark and smelly.

"This is Madonna Flat," said Miss O'Donnell opening a door. "The home of the Girl Staff Workers."

I don't know what I had expected... but it certainly wasn't what I saw. There was the kitchen... and in it the Baroness armed with can openers... Opening cans that all apparently went into the same large pot. Any ideas that I had of a tasty meal, vanished when I saw her, with a magnificent gesture, pour sauerkraut, tomatoes and corn into a steaming pot on the stove.

"By jove," she said, looking up at me. "This is going to be good."

BEING ravenously hungry I might have agreed with her if at that moment she hadn't dropped two cold breaded veal cutlets into the soup. But feeling weak in the pit of my stomach, I withdrew hastily and bumped into Miss O'Donnell on my way out.

She smiled sweetly and said, "Yes, soup is our staple diet. It's really very good."

I looked at her pityingly and wondered if her taste was naturally perverted. "Soup? A staple diet?" I was aghast.

"And this," said Miss O'Donnell, leading the way down the hall. "Is our Common Room. All the Staff eat here."

Whatever potentialities a Common Room might have... this one seemed undeveloped. It was a little room and a paint job in buff had left much to be desired.

A long board table was its predominant feature, and there was nothing imposing about the array of silver on it either. No knives, no forks... just a soup and teaspoon at each place. The rest of the table decoration consisted of a heap of brown bread and salt and pepper shakers. This was certainly no place for a Bourgeois minded person... or a gourmet, either. Of this I was positive, because I was Bourgeois myself... and somewhat of a gourmet in the bargain.

But the little room was filled with people. White and Colored people. Young and old people. They were all talking and laughing. The white and Colored laughing together... it was strange.

The Baroness came in carrying the huge steaming pot.

"Soup's on," she shouted, rapping on the kettle for attention. "Everyone sit yourself down some place, please."

WE DID, and I found myself squeezed in between two rather weighty women. The one on my right leaned over toward me and whispered confidentially, "I'm a left-handed souper, so don't be surprised if my elbow pokes you in the ribs."

I laughed for the first time that day.

"The soup got burned," the Baroness said cheerfully, "but offer it up for the people in Europe." And with the sweeping gestures that seemed so much a part of her, she ladled out the soup. Then everyone said Grace.

But there was nothing graceful about that soup and I doubt if the people in war-torn Europe would have considered it any bargain. I couldn't eat that horrible burned mixture, and I toyed with my spoon and probably looked "as unhappy as I felt."

"You'll get used to it," said the Colored girl across the table. "I didn't like it either when I first came here."

"I'm not going to stay long enough to get used to it," I muttered. But the Colored girl had just smiled in a knowing... and slightly maddening fashion.

CONTINUED NEXT WEEK

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