

The Reunion.

THE vacation time had arrived and the students were preparing to depart for their homes.

In one of the rooms of the college were assembled three students. These were three of the graduates and to them the closing day did not mean a respite from study ; it meant, rather, that they were now men and must go out into the world and take upon their own shoulders the responsibility of such. They had been friends all through their college life and the thought that occupied each of their minds was that now they must part.

"Well," said James Harding, "we have arrived at the parting of the ways and as you two have been my best friends here, the thought of a separation is an unwelcome one. But I hope that we may often cross each other's path in years to come.

"The future," said George Shirley, "is in the hands of God ; but I also hope that we may meet often during life."

"You are right, George," replied Allan Henley, "the future is in the hands of God, and we have no means of reckoning what it may have in store for us. But the thought occurred to me that, even though we cannot see into the future, it would be no harm to make a provision for it, trusting to God for its fulfilment. Since there is a chance that our walks in life may call us far apart, let us name a date, when, God sparing us, we may meet and renew our friendship and see how each of us has prospered."

"A fine suggestion," exclaimed James. "Suppose that on this date ten years hence we meet at the Atlantic Hotel here in Waldron, at seven o'clock and each one tell his story. Are you all agreed?"

"Agreed !" replied George and Allan.

Thus the friends about to cross the threshold from youthful carefree hours into manhood, made a promise which was to bring them together under very different circumstances.

A momentary shudder seized Fr. Shirley, the zealous missionary, as he looked forward to the long, dreary drive to the mining camp at Blackridge, Col. But the thought of saving the poor miner's soul overcame all consideration for his own comfort. Although the storm had not yet ceased and the travelling was extremely difficult, he succeeded in reaching his destination in the short space of two hours. Entering the camp, he perceived lying in a bunk the injured man badly mutilated but still conscious. The last rites of religion were soon administered. The good priest after learning the details of the accident, prepared to leave, and casting a last glance at the unfortunate man, remarked, "Poor fellow! What a pity those mining companies do not take steps to guard against such unnecessary accidents."

As he returned to the mission, Fr. Shirley had time to ponder over the events of the evening. He felt a vague impression that he had met the miner before, but, of course, missionaries meet many whom they cannot remember. This thought haunted the priest as he attended to the manifold duties of his mission; so much so, that being in the vicinity of the camp some six weeks later, he decided to call and inquire after the injured man. He was told that Bob Hanson, for such was the miner's name, had partly recovered and was at that time in the nearby town of Fiske, where, it was whispered, he was taking action against the company.

The President of the Western Mining Corporation frowned as he threw aside the despatch from the Western Branch Office. "Another case for Harding," he exclaimed; and straightway proceeded to acquaint his solicitor of the task before him. An employee, Bob Hanson, had sued the company for \$20,000 damages because of injuries received from a defective derrick in Mine No. 11. Harding was instructed to proceed at once to Fiske in the interests of the company.

"This is certainly disappointing," said the lawyer, as he neared the end of his tiresome journey. "To think that I had looked forward all these years to meeting the boys at Waldron, as we had agreed, but perhaps, I may be able to get back before—." He was

suddenly aroused from his thoughts by the trainman's announcement, "Fiske, next stop!"

Harding repaired at once to the company's office, and there learned all the details of the case. It was, indeed, a difficult one but the energetic lawyer with his usual despatch began to arm himself for the defence.

The day of the hearing found Harding as well prepared as circumstances would permit. As the case proceeded, everything pointed to a victory for the corporation until the foreman of Mine No. 11 had concluded his evidence for the defence and was being cross-examined by the opposing counsel.

"Can you swear that there was no defect in one of the derricks at your mine?"

"N-n-no," hesitatingly replied the foreman.

"Were you informed by the engineer on March 26th that the derrick was defective, and were you instructed to have it repaired immediately?"

These questions had a staggering effect on the witness; reluctantly, he answered both questions in the affirmative.

"Did you obey this order?" went on the counsel.

Another unwilling "No" was the response.

(It was lucky that Bob heard the conversation between the foreman and the engineer on the day previous to the accident.) This proved the turning point in the case. The following day the proceedings were brought to a close and judgment granted in favor of the plaintiff.

Bob Hanson had realized the justice of his claim but knowing the strength of the Western Mining Corporation, and hearing of the ability of their lawyer, he had scarcely hoped for success. Now that he received the damages, "What use would he make of the money?" he asked himself. "Would he continue on his downward way?"

Since the accident, he had been thinking of his aimless past and already he had half formed the resolution to begin life anew. "Twenty thousand dollars, what a fortune!" thought Bob. "This would not only repay father for the money I squandered but would also give me a good start in some profession."

Harding, with the love of success common to lawyers, was disappointed at the abrupt turn affairs had taken; yet, there was something about this Hanson which awakened his interest. And so as he prepared to return East, he often found himself thinking of the miner. He concluded the business hurriedly with the thought: "There is yet time to be in Waldron by May 27th. I wonder if the boys will be there."

But a telegram received from the Company's Headquarters upset all his plans. It was a message asking him to remain at Fiske until further notice.

"How unfortunate! That dispels all hope of my keeping the appointment with George and Allan. However, I shall wire them on that day explaining my absence."

Thus it was that James Harding resigned himself to circumstances, over which he had no control and awaited particulars from the Mining Corporation. For the next few days, he was ill at ease and might be seen wandering about the shabby little mining town, uninterested in his surroundings. It was not until Saturday morning, that he received further orders from the company to go at once to the town of Newton where immediate business awaited him.

In compliance with these instructions, he set out on the 4.30 train. As he puffed at his cigar in the smoker, his attention was attracted to a man in the car who proved to be none other than Bob Hanson, the miner. His new clothes and neatly trimmed beard gave him a more respectable appearance than he had hitherto possessed. But the effects of the accident were still prominent.

The train was not long in reaching Newton and upon its arrival, Harding was immediately conducted to the town's only hotel. Everything pointed to a lonely evening, and it was with a downcast countenance that he seated himself at the supper table. He was surprised to find at the same table Bob Hanson for he had not noticed him get off the train. But a greater surprise was still in store for him. As he was about to open a conversation with the miner a priest entered the hotel door and passing into the hallway was hospitably

received by the proprietor of the house. The lawyer's interest was aroused on hearing the hotel-keeper address the new-comer as Father Shirley.

"Shirley! Could it be possible—but no, George Shirley and Allan Henley are now in Waldron, Vt. disappointed on account of my unavoidable absence." His doubts were soon set at rest, for the priest having doffed his coat and hat came in to supper.

"For God's sake!" burst from Harding's lips. "It is you." And he grasped the hand of his college chum.

"What! Never Harding!" exclaimed the priest.

Greetings were heartily exchanged and afterwards seated in the poorly furnished dining-room, each told how he came to be there. Already we have accounted for Harding's presence. Father Shirley told briefly how he had made complete arrangements to be at Waldron on this date and how his plans had been frustrated. The clergyman, in whose charge he had intended to leave his missions, had been unexpectedly called away. This made it necessary for him to remain and attend to the spiritual wants of his flock.

"But what about Allan? I wonder will he be able to keep the appointment."

"Yes, he will be able to keep the appointment"—it was the miner who spoke and the startled friends now recognized the face which had haunted them during the past weeks as that of Allan Henley. The two overcome with emotion for a time stood speechless.

"How strange are the ways of God!" said the good Father at last; and as all three seated themselves at the table the clock struck seven.

"Right you are, Father; for our college dream has come true in everything except the place of meeting."

Harding then proposed that each relate the incidents of his life since their parting at college. The stories of the priest and the lawyer were the ordinary ones of successful professional men—Harding had become a capable lawyer, Shirley a zealous priest. But it was different with Henley. With feelings of shame, he recounted the vicissitudes of his checkered career—

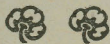
how in disgrace he had left his father's home, changed his name and broken and dissipated, betook himself to the mining camp—how after a few years of this rough life, he had forgotten his better self and was only recalled to higher ideals by the accident which we have already mentioned. He also told them how he had recognized Harding at the time of the law-suit but ashamed to reveal his identity, had not made himself known. But as the date for the reunion drew nigh a strange impulse moved him to seek out and follow Harding and inasmuch as he could, keep the pledge which was the only link binding him to the past. He concluded by saying :

“The inclination had grown in me to return at some future time ‘to my father’s house.’ and wipe out the disgrace which I thoughtlessly brought upon my family.”

This inclination, strengthened by the encouragement of his two friends, soon took the form of a resolution and as all prepared to retire for the night, Father Shirley remarked :

“How sweet is the realization of the dreams of youth !”

P. McM. '21.



Self-trust is the essence of heroism.—Emerson.

He knows little who will tell his wife all he knows.—Thos. Fuller.

Death is the gate of life.—Bailey.

In doing what we ought we deserve no praise because it is our duty.—St. Augustine.

Les deux Noëls.

C'était le soir du 24 décembre 191... , quelque part en France, sur la ligne de feu. C'était donc la nuit de Noël, nuit qui évoque tant de poésie et de souvenirs ; mais la nuit de Noël au front n'est pas celle que nous concevons ordinairement.

L'obscurité était à peine amoindrie par une mince couche de neige couvrant le sol bouleversé et durci. Partout où la vue pouvait pénétrer, se révélait une plaine triste, sans autre accident que des grands squelettes aux branches déchiquetées, oscillant au souffle du vent glacé. A contempler une telle scène de désolation, personne ne se serait jamais douté qu'il y eût un seul être vivant dans ces lieux ; et cependant, dans ce secteur, des milliers d'hommes, tapis sous terre, s'épiaient mutuellement, et n'attendaient qu'un signal pour s'entretuer. Mais, en cette nuit solennelle, il semblait que les hommes eussent fait trêve, et qu'ils fussent disposés à écouter Celui qui vient prêcher la paix aux hommes de bonne volonté.

D'un côté, la ligne boche se devinait dans l'ombre, sournoise, mais bien gardée. A cent verges en deça, c'était la tranchée alliée, avec ses abris ménagés à dix pieds sous terre. C'est dans une de ces taupinières que nous pénétrons, et que nous y trouvons, rassemblés autour d'un coffre, sur lequel brûle une bougie vacillante, quatre jeunes gaillards, vêtus de l'uniforme britannique, mais parlant le langage de France : ce sont des soldats d'une brigade canadienne-française.

Pendant qu'un de leurs compagnons, au milieu du silence morne de la nuit, se tient au poste d'écoute, l'oeil et l'oreille au guet, veillant à la sûreté de tous, dans la tranchée, nos gars s'adonnent aux multiples réflexions que leur suggère leur situation. Ils se rappellent l'un à l'autre les Noëls passés, alors que le monde vivait en paix, et que chacun était content du sien. Ils devisent tranquillement, songeant au pays natal, parlant bas pour ne pas éveiller le plus jeune d'entre eux, Jean-Pierre ; beau gars de vingt ans, qui vient de s'endormir, la tête appuyée sur sa capote enroulée.

"...Nul doute, fait observer le boute-en-train du groupe, qu'il rêve maintenant à Jeannette...!!!" On rit, mais en même temps on est ému, car ces héros aussi ont des êtres aimés qu'ils ont laissés là-bas. Jean-Pierre n'est-il pas justifiable de penser à son amie, lui, le pauvre orphelin recueilli dans son bas