

Thorne Guy

A Lost Cause



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PREFACE

A few words are necessary in preface to this story. After *When It Was Dark* made its appearance, the writer received a great number of letters from his readers, and up to the present moment he still continues to receive them.

Out of nearly two hundred communications, a large proportion are concerned not so much with the main issue of the tale, as with controversial matters in the Church of England arising from it.

The definitely Catholic¹ tone of the first book aroused, as might be expected, vigorous protest, and no less vigorous commendation. The five or six Bishops – and many other dignitaries – who preached or lectured about the story avoided the controversial sides of it. But the writer has received innumerable letters from the clergy and others to the following effect.

It was pointed out to him that while the extreme "Protestant" party was constantly employing fiction as a method of propaganda, churchmen were almost unrepresented in this way. The Catholic Faith has been bitterly assailed over and over again in books which are well enough written, and have sufficient general interest to appeal to the man of the world, who is often indifferent to the points debated.

After considerable discussion, the writing of *A Lost Cause* was resolved upon. The author desires to thank those priests who have assisted him with their counsel and experience, and begs leave to explain here something of his aims in publishing the tale.

At no period in modern Church history has the Church been assailed with such malignance, slander, and untruth as at the present. "Protestantism" within the Church is a lost cause, it is dying, and for just this reason the clamour is loudest, the misrepresentation more furious and envenomed. Shrewd opportunists are taking their last chance of emerging from obscurity by an appeal to the ignorance of the general public on Church matters. Looking round us, we see dozens of uneducated and noisy nobodies who have elected themselves into a sort of irregular prelacy and dubbed themselves "Defenders of the Faith," with about as much right as Napoleon crowned himself emperor.

Church people do not take them very seriously. Their voices are like the cries of hedge-birds by the road, on which the stately procession of the Church is passing. But the man in the street is more attentive and he enjoys the colour and movement of iconoclasm. He believes also that the brawlers have right on their side.

But there is an inherent fairness in the man in the street, and, if this story reaches him, he will have his opportunity to hear the Catholic side of the argument.

The author begs to state that no single character in this tale is a "portrait" of any living person, or of any real person whatever. The imaginary folk are designed to be merely typical, their methods are analogous to much that is going on to-day under the pretences of patriotism and love for religious liberty, but that is all.

There will probably be the usual nonsense written, and the braves of "Protestantism" will give the usual war-whoops. Whether this is to be so or not, the author is profoundly indifferent.

He attacks those of the extreme "Protestants" whom he believes to be insincere and who rebel against the Truth for their own ends. He does not say or think that all "Protestants" – even the extremists – are insincere. He has endeavoured to point out that there is as much difference between

¹ The term "Catholic" is here, and throughout the book, used in the sense in which it is employed by a certain division of the Church of England and of the Episcopal Church of America. – The Publishers.

the street-corner "Protestants" and the pious Evangelical Party within the Church as there is between Trinitarians and Unitarians.

The incident in the tale where the Archbishop of Canterbury compels a "Protestant" publicist to give up the Blessed Sacrament, which he has stolen from a church for purposes of propaganda, is founded on fact. It has not before been made public, except in a short letter to the *Church Times* a few months ago, which was written with the design of preparing Church readers for the detailed publication of such a painful incident. The facts, however, have been supplied to the writer to make such use of in the story as he thinks fit. The authors of this disgraceful profanation have, naturally, been silent on the matter. It is not an isolated instance. But it is not to be thought that the imaginary characters concerned in the affair in the story, are intended to represent, or do in any way, the real heroes of this great blow struck for "Protestant" truth.

Finally, the noisiest "Protestants" are hitting the Church as hard as they can. The author has endeavoured to hit back as hard as *he* can – of course, in that spirit of Christian love in which the "Protestants" themselves tell us these controversies are always conducted.

The brawlers have enjoyed an astonishing immunity hitherto, and it is only fair that battle should be joined now. And, however inadequate his forces and generalship, that is the writer's aim. He is, of course, a *franc-tireur*, but he fires his musket on the right side, and with a perfect assurance of the justice of his Cause.

G. T.

CHAPTER I

THE INTERRUPTED EUCHARIST

The Church of St. Elwyn was a building of brick that went up to a great height.

In the crowded district between Hornsey and Wood Green, it was one of the largest buildings, and, though not externally beautiful, acquired dignity and impressiveness from its setting of small villa houses, which made an interminable brick wilderness all round it.

It was nearing the time of the High Celebration on a Sunday morning in summer. Matins had been said in a side chapel, to a scanty congregation, at half-past nine, and now the central act of the day was to take place.

The interior of St. Elwyn's was severe but beautiful, save for one or two minor blemishes here and there.

The eye was caught and carried away down the aisles till it found its focus on the high altar which was set like a throne, above many marble steps, in the curve of the distant apse. The sanctuary was lighted from the sides and so the eye was not disturbed and distracted by hideous windows of stained glass with their clamorous coal-tar colours, but could rest quietly upon the altar with its green and gold, its flowers and central cross.

The organ was hidden away in a side gallery and the pulpit was a stone bracket high in the sweep of the chancel arch, to which it clung like the nest of a bird on a cliff side.

All this was as it should be. In so many English churches the object of the builders appears to have been to destroy all the dignity and beauty possible in a service. The organ and the pulpit are elevated to the importance of shrines, and dominate everything like Gog and Magog in the Guildhall. Everything is done to minimise the place and office of the altar, to exalt the less important functions of worship, and to prevent comfortable consciences from being uneasy in the realisation of the presence of God.

Only one tawdry note could be detected in this beautiful church. The pictures which hung on the walls round the aisles, and represented the stations of the cross, were ill-drawn, and stiff in colour and design. These pictures, which were said by the ignorant and unimaginative to be idolatrous, or at least "Roman" – a little understood but very efficacious term of reproach in the parish – were sufficiently like the hideous stained-glass figures in the Evangelical Church of St. Luke hard by to have satisfied the most pious lover of ugliness. But those folk, who so vehemently preferred the medallion portraits of their respectable ancestors on the walls of a church to any other form of symbol or decoration, did not see this. They spoke bitterly of the pictures as being "high," suggesting to outsiders unfamiliar with the parrot cry of the partisan that they had been kept too long in a warm place.

Since Father Blantyre had been appointed vicar of St. Elwyn's, the congregation had increased until few of the rush-bottomed chairs were empty, and on days of great festivals, people would be found kneeling in the aisles. The opposition party in the parish frequently commented on this custom, which was thought to savour of heathenism or worse. One or two people who had spent holidays in continental towns, and had made excursions into foreign cathedrals in much the same spirit as they went into the chamber of horrors in the wax-work exhibition, had brought back news that this habit was in vogue among "the Catholics." It was felt that real salvation could only be found in a pew, with one's name legibly written on an ivory tablet at the end and the vestry-clerk calling for the rent once a quarter in the decent old-fashioned way. Any one who knelt on the uncushioned stone showed an anxiety to worship and a superstitious abasement quite unworthy of a bluff, honest, British Christian; and his doings must be displeasing to a Deity who, the objectors were persuaded, was – though they did not say so in actual words – a great *English* God.

The single bell that summoned the people to Mass – that word which church-people are becoming less afraid to use in this century – had ceased. The server was lighting the Eucharistic candles with a long taper.

As the people came in, it was noticeable that they proceeded to their places without side-looks at each other, or muttered social greetings. They went to their seats, young and old, men and women, and began to kneel and pray.

No one, apparently, had come there to be seen by his fellows.

Since the Catholic Revival in the English Church, no fact has been more obvious and easily determined than this. It is one which the bitterest opponent of churchmanship has never been able to deny and has never attempted to deny. The most prejudiced observer paying an alternate visit to a church where the Faith is taught and to another which is confessedly "Protestant" cannot fail to observe the difference. At the celebration of the Eucharist in a church of the former type, there is an absolute stillness and reverence. The congregation kneels, it worships.

In the latter, there is an unrest. People do not show marked consciousness of being in the presence of mysteries. Whatever they may think, they do not give the observer the impression that they think God is there. They sit rather than kneel, they notice the clothes of other people, there is a certain sense that they are doing the right thing in "patronising" the church, and the Sunday dinner looms large over all.

The man lit the candles. A moment afterwards Father Blantyre entered with the servers and the service began.

The singing was simple but harmonious. There was nothing especially noticeable in the hymn or the chanting of the Kyries after the commandments.

The priest went into the pulpit, kissed the white stole, and placed it, as a yoke, upon his shoulders. Over his head was a crucifix. He was a small man, dark of hair, and swarthy of complexion. The nose was prominent and aquiline, the eyes bright, with a net-work of fine wrinkles round them, the mouth large and mobile. There was almost a suggestion of the comedian in his face, that is, in its extreme mobility and good-humour. One could imagine him as a merry man in his private life. But mingled with this, one saw at once the lines of an unalterable purpose, and of conviction. Any strong belief stamps itself upon a man's face in an unmistakable way. When that belief is purely holy and good, then we say that the man has the face of a saint.

For a moment or two, Mr. Blantyre looked round the church. The eyes, so puckered at the corners, very much resembled the eyes of a sailor, who is ever gazing out towards a vast horizon and through furious winds. Men who are much occupied with the Unseen and Invisible sometimes have this look, which is the look of a man who is striving to see God.

The subject-matter of the sermon itself was not very remarkable. It was a sermon dealing with the aids to worship that symbol gives, showing how a proper use of material objects may focus the brain upon the reality behind them. During the last week or two, the local paper had been printing some violent attacks upon the services at St. Elwyn's, for there was a by-election in progress and one of the candidates was seizing the opportunity afforded by a "No Popery" cry.

The local writer, the vicar pointed out, was obviously alarmed lest people should worship too much. He spoke of the attacks with sincere good humour and more than once his words provoked a smile. The journalist, with the sublime ignorance of lesser local scribes, had spoken of Queen Elizabeth and expressed a fervent desire that the times of "good Queen Bess" would come again and that the Royal Spinster could descend on the purlieus of Hornsey and sternly order all Romish toys to be removed. Father Blantyre quoted Elizabeth's letter to Sandys:

The queen's majesty considered it not contrary to the Word of God – nay, rather for the advantage of the church – that the image of Christ crucified, – together

with Mary and John, should be placed as heretofore in some conspicuous part of the church, where they may the more readily be seen by all the people.

The last few words of the sermon were preparatory for the mystery that was about to begin, an earnest exhortation to all there to make themselves ready to receive the Lord, who was presently coming among them.

There was nothing in the short discourse that was remarkable, but its delivery was extraordinary. The words were uttered with a great tenderness and solemnity, but quite without any formal note. There was almost a gaiety in them now and then, a spiritual gaiety that was very impressive. Father Blantyre leaned over the rail and talked to his people. The voice, which sank into a whisper at times, and at others rang out with a sharpness that echoed up in the lofty roof, never once lost its suggestion of confidential intimacy with those to whom it spoke. In the entire absence of the usual "preaching" note, the sermon gained immensely in value with this particular audience. Anything academic would have been endured, but it would not have gone home.

While the offertory sentences were being sung, the congregation saw that a small group of people had entered the church, presumably to hear Mass.

One of the churchwardens was able to find seats for the party about half-way down the central aisle. The new-comers were four in number. All of them were men.

It is perhaps strange to speak of one of their number as being the "leader" of the party, but that was the impression he gave to those members of the congregation immediately around him. At the close of the service, moreover, several worshippers agreed with each other that this person had suggested that to them.

He was a shortish, thick-set man of some five and forty years of age. His large, intelligent face was clean-shaved. The eyes were small and very bright, shifting hither and thither in a constant flicker of observation. The mouth was large, and though the lips were thick and loose, there was nevertheless a certain resolution in them. They were frequently curved into a half-smile which had something indescribably sinister and impudent about it. One saw that, in whatever situation he might find himself, this person would not easily be abashed or unready.

He wore a frock-coat of shining broadcloth. The waistcoat was cut low, not as well-dressed people would wear it, showing a large expanse of imitation shirt-front through which a black stud was thrust. A small bow of black ribbon served as necktie. In some nameless way, he suggested a peculiarly unpleasing type of irregular dissenting minister in his appearance, and this was enhanced by the fact that under one arm he carried a large Bible of limp leather, secured by an india-rubber band.

Yet, with all this, the new-comer had a remarkable and even arresting personality. Wherever he went, he would not easily escape notice.

By his side sat a tallish youth with sufficient likeness to him to proclaim a near relationship.

The young fellow's complexion was somewhat muddy, his hair was smooth and mouse-coloured, his mouth resembled his father's, except that it had not the impudent good-humour of the elder man's, and was altogether more furtive and sly.

The two remaining members of the party were men apparently of the prosperous small-tradesman type, pursy, flabby with good living, who had added mutton-chop whiskers to their obvious self-esteem.

To one or two members of the congregation there, the father and son were not unknown. The thick-set, clean-shaved man was Mr. Samuel Hamlyn, the editor and proprietor of a small local journal, – the *Hornham Observer*, – and the youth was his son, who acted as reporter to the paper and signed himself S. Hamlyn, Junior.

Both were well known in local affairs; Hamlyn was a member of the school-board and held one or two kindred positions. His religious sympathies had hitherto been supposed to lie with the numerous dissenting sects in the parish, all of whom had their bills and other announcements printed at his office.

The momentary interest and stir created by the entrance of the party died away almost immediately and Mass continued. Certainly no one in the church realised that in a few short weeks the fat man with the smile would be notorious all over England, and that they were to be present at the very first step in the career of one of the shrewdest of vulgar opportunists the country had ever known.

The seats reserved for the churchwardens were on the opposite side of the aisle, but almost upon a level with those in which the new-comers were seated – perhaps some two rows of chairs behind.

Accordingly Doctor Hibbert, the vicar's warden, had a clear view of the four men just in front.

Hibbert was an upright, soldierly-looking man, who had, in fact, been an army surgeon, and had now bought a practice in the parish. He was a skilful doctor, and a man of considerable mental strength, who had made himself indispensable in the district and was in the way of becoming a wealthy man. His earnest churchmanship had not militated against his success, even among the most extreme Protestants and Dissenters of Hornham. He was known to be a first-class doctor, and he was too strong a man for any one to take a liberty with, and of such superior power and mould to the mass of lower-class people whom he attended that his opinions were respected.

But going about as he did, among every one in the parish, the Doctor knew far more of its internal state than any one else. Nothing is concealed from a medical man in general practice. Confession is compulsory to him; he sees the secrets of men's lives, knows the tarnished story of the "respectable" person, as sometimes the heroism of the outcast. Hibbert had his finger on the public pulse of Hornham in a measure that Father Blantyre himself could hardly achieve.

It was therefore with some little uneasiness and a good deal of conjecture that the doctor had noticed the advent of Hamlyn and his party.

The disturbances to public worship which are so familiar to-day were quite unknown at that time. Hibbert anticipated nothing of what actually occurred, but his eye was watchful nevertheless.

The Mass went on.

The servers knelt on the altar steps in cotta and cassock, the priest moved above them in his stiff, flowered chasuble, robed in the garments of the Passion of our Lord.

The Comfortable Words were said, and the Sursum Corda began.

A deep throbbing sound came from the organ, and, in one great outburst of solemn avowal, the congregation lifted up their hearts to God.

SURSUM CORDA!
HABEMUS AD DOMINUM
GRATIAS AGAMUS DOMINO DEO NOSTRO!

Ever since the days of the Apostles, the Mass had been said thus, the most solemn part of the service had begun with these profound words of adoration. The doctor forgot all else as he worshipped.

Let it be remembered, in the light of what follows, that the vast majority of the people there believed this, were waiting for *this*– they believed that when the priest said the Prayer of Consecration, our Lord Himself had come suddenly among them.

Throughout the rite there was a growing sense and assurance of One coming. Most of them were quite sure of it.

Human hearts, worn with the troubles of the week, sick to death, it may be, of a hard material lot, now bowed in contrition and repentance, or were filled with a certain Hope. Everything in this world was as nothing, because, upon the altar before which the priest was bending so low, they believed that God had come.

In what way, or how, they did not know and could not have explained. Did they *imagine* it week after week as they knelt in church? Most of them *knew* that it was no imagination or delusion that caught at their hearts, that changed the air of the building in a swift moment, that caught up heart and soul and spirit in one great outpouring of love and faith and adoration.

Was *this* a fable, as folks sometimes told them? This which dissolved and broke the chains of bodily sense, banished the world, and enfolded them with its awful sweetness, its immeasurable joy? What else in life had power to do this, power to hurry away clogging, material things as in a mighty spiritual wind, to show them once more the stupendous sacrifice of the Saviour – what else but the indubitable presence of our Lord?

The priest held up the Host.

At that supreme moment, Doctor Hibbert, whose state of mind may be taken as typical of many others there, bent in humble adoration and contrition.

An absolute silence lay over the church; there was not the slightest sound or movement in it.

A chair was pushed harshly over the tiles, there was a heavy shuffling of feet. Such sounds in that holy moment affected some of the worshippers as a physical blow might have done.

But few people looked up. Many of them did not hear the sound, their ears being tuned to harmonies that were not of this world.

The doctor heard the noise with his ears, but for a merciful moment it did not penetrate to his brain. And then with a horrid clangour the visible things of the world came rushing back to him.

He looked up.

The four men just in front of him had risen in their places. The two tradesmen were red in the face and manifestly uneasy. They breathed hard, a breath of ostentatious defiance.

Young Hamlyn was glancing round the church with swift, malevolent movements of his head. His eyes flickered hither and thither until they finally settled on the motionless figure at the altar, the figure with the upstretched arm.

The elder Hamlyn held a paper in his hand, from which he began to read in a loud, unsteady voice:

"I, Samuel Hamlyn, a lawful parishioner of St. Elwyn's parish, Hornham, do hereby rise and protest against the illegal and blasphemous fable of the Mass as performed in this church. And as a member of the Protestant Church of England I give notice —"

Every one had risen to his feet. In a distant corner of the church, a woman began to shriek. A murmur broke into shouts, there was a crash of some heavy body falling.

A horrid tumult seemed broken loose, as if it had been confined till now and had broken its bars with one great effort.

In a second, the four men were surrounded by a pushing crowd of men, beside themselves with horror and anger. Sticks began to quiver in the air, the crash of the chairs as they were overturned was like the dropping rattle of musketry fire.

The hard voice of the brawler had gone up a full tone. In its excitement, it dominated an abominable chorus of shouting.

In half a minute, the doctor and other members of the congregation had Hamlyn and his son gripped by the arms and were hurrying them towards the west door without any answer to their frantic threats and menaces. The other two men followed stolidly.

Nearly every face was turned away from the altar.

The one or two people who had fallen trembling upon their knees when the riot was at its height saw that the vicar was also kneeling in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

A loud metallic *clang* resounded through the church. The door was barred, the brawlers were shut out.

When the maimed, polluted rite was at last concluded, amid deep sobs from men and women alike, Father Blantyre gave the blessing. They saw with deep sympathy that the tears were rolling down his cheeks also.

But the doctor saw, with a sudden quickening of the pulses, that the first finger and the thumb were joined still. It is the custom of the priest, after he has broken the bread, that the finger and thumb are never parted till Mass is said.

They were not parted now.

The fact comforted and cheered the doctor. He had been on battle-fields and had not known the fear and horror he had known to-day.

CHAPTER II

MR. HAMLYN AND SON AT HOME

Mr. Hamlyn lived in Alexandra Road, Hornham. The actual name of his house was "Balmoral," and it was one of seven or eight other residences gathered together under the generic title of "Beatrice Villas."

The father and son turned into the little path which led up to the imitation satin-wood door some twenty minutes after the gate of St. Elwyn's had been barred to them. Their companions, Mr. Burgoyne and Mr. Moffatt, had left them at the corner of the street, very flustered at what they had done, and with a dull remorse flitting about their thick skulls, that they had joined in "Hamlyn's little game." Nor did the repeated assurances of the journalist, that Mr. Herbert – the Liberal candidate – would "see them through it," help them to recover their peace of mind. Visions of police-court proceedings and an unenviable notoriety in the daily papers were very vivid, and they parted with their chief in mingled sorrow and anger.

Mr. Hamlyn let himself and his son into the little hall of his villa. A smell of roast meat gave evidence that dinner would soon be ready. Both men turned into the parlour on the left of the passage. It was a room which showed signs of fugitive rather than regular use. Two or three long boxes bearing the name of a local draper stood upon the round table in the centre. The contents showed that Miss Hamlyn, the agitator's only daughter, had been occupied in the choice of corsets.

The walls of the parlour were covered with a rich mauve and gold paper, which gave a dignity to the cut-glass lustres of the chandelier. The pictures, heavily framed in gold, were spirited representations of scenes from the Old Testament. On the rack of the rosewood piano – which stood open – was a song called "Roses that Bloomed in my Heart."

The chairs, arranged around the wall with commendable regularity, were upholstered in plum-coloured plush. On one of them was a card-box of a vivid green, containing several clean collars of the particular sort Hamlyn Junior wore; on another stood the wooden box where his father's silk hat was kept when not in use on Sundays and other important days.

Mr. Hamlyn took off his frock coat and removed the reversible cuffs that were attached to the sleeves of his flannel shirt by means of an ingeniously contrived clip. He then put on a loose coat of black alpaca. His son, having gone through something of the same process, followed his father to the sitting-room next the little kitchen.

As the parlour was not often used for ceremonial occasions, the Hamlyns not being very hospitable people, it served as an occasional dressing-room also, and saved running up-stairs.

The sitting-room window looked out into the backyard, immediately by the kitchen door, which led into it. As the Hamlyns came in, they were able to see their servant throwing some hot liquid – the water in which the cabbage had been boiled, as a matter of fact – into the grid in the centre of the yard.

The table was already laid for the meal. As, however, it was rather a long table and the Hamlyns were only three in family, – Hamlyn being a widower, – the white cloth was laid only on half of it. One or two volumes of the Heartsease Novelettes and some artificial flowers, with which a hat was to be trimmed by Miss Hamlyn, were thus left undisturbed.

"Dinner didn't ought to be long," Mr. Hamlyn remarked.

"Ope not," said his son shortly. "I'll holler to Maud."

Miss Hamlyn came in soon afterwards, followed by the maid with a joint of roast beef. The editor's daughter was a tall girl with sulky lips, bold eyes, and a profusion of dark hair. This last was now screwed round her forehead in curling-pins.

The two men attacked their dinner in silence. Both of them had tucked a handkerchief round their necks, in order to preserve the Sunday waistcoat from droppings of food, a somewhat wise precaution, as both of them ate very rapidly.

"Maud," said Hamlyn at length, "can you do a bit of typing for me this afternoon?"

"No, then, I can't, Pa," she replied resentfully, "and it's like you to ask it. On the Sabbath, too! I'm going out with Gussie Davies for a walk."

"Touch the 'arp lightly, my dear," he replied, "no need to get your feathers up."

"Well, Pa," she answered, "I'm sure I'm ready to spank the beastly machine for you all the week, you know I am. But Sundays is different."

Hamlyn made no reply. Both he and his son were thinking deeply, and as yet no reference had escaped them as to the doings of the morning. Although the girl knew there was something special afoot, she was not much interested in the details, being at all times a person much occupied with her own affairs.

During the pudding, she had a short and slangy conversation with her brother, and directly the meal was over she went up-stairs to "dress."

The servant removed the plates and dishes, and Hamlyn and his son sat down at the table. The father drew a large portfolio of papers towards him. The son lighted a cheap cigarette.

Both of the Hamlyns spoke fairly correctly in public, though with the usual cockney twang. In the seclusion of Balmoral, neither of them thought it necessary to be very particular about the aspirates which they emphasised so carefully elsewhere.

"When will Mr. Herbert pay up?" said Sam.

"To-morrow. I shall see him in the committee room during the afternoon, and it's five and twenty pound earned as easy as I ever earned anything in my life. It'll come in very 'andy too. There's the rent on the linotype machine just due."

"The money's all right," answered the younger man, "and, of course, we're guaranteed against fines and anything of that sort. But do you think the game's worth the candle? How will opinion in the parish go?"

"Like a house on fire. Wait till you see my leader in Wednesday's issue. Mr. Herbert has put me up to the whole thing. We're carrying out a patriotic Henglish duty. Public sympathy will all be with us. Rome is creeping in among us!"

Sam grinned. "Well, you know best, Father, of course. And we're bound to support Mr. Herbert."

"I've been thinking a great deal," Hamlyn answered slowly. "I've always been an ambitious man and I've always meant to come out on top somehow or other. But I've never had a big chance yet. I think, – I'm not sure, – but I *think* I see that chance waiting now."

His shrewd face was lighted up with a curious excitement. The eyes glowed and the impudent merriment on the lips became more pronounced than before.

"What is it then?"

"Listen quietly to me for a few minutes. The idea came gradual to me. I got on the track six months ago. First of all, it was the ten gross of religious books I had down in the shop. They were of all sorts. Which was the one that went best? Why, it was *The Adventures of Susan Lefever, the Captive Nun*. I sold 'em all out in no time. The next best seller was *The Revelations of Pastor Coucherrousset, the Converted Catholic Priest*. Anything against Rome! Mr. Leatherbarrow, of the New Connection Methodists, preached three times on those books. He had all the congregation fair shaking with indignation against the Scarlet Woman. You see it's like this. People want a cock-shy. They don't much care about what it is, as long as they've got it – see the way they're down on the Sheenies in France. Now a religious cock-shy is the best of all. It gives people a feeling that they're in real earnest, and they can kid themselves and other people that it's more disinterested than politics,

for instance. They've nothing to get by it – except the fun of doing it – and that flatters 'em because they're always on the grab in every other way. See?"

Sam nodded. He was not one of those youths who despise the words of parental wisdom. He was not himself a fool, and so he did not fall into the mistake of underrating his father's capacity and knowledge of life. The small and vulgar triumphs of Hamlyn's career were all appreciated and noted by his son, who had a sincere respect for him.

"Very well, then," Hamlyn continued. "It's a sure draw, all over England, to raise the anti-popery cry. The wholesale trade tell me that the business done in Fox's *Book of Martyrs* is a perfect knock-out year by year, and there's a sure sale for the smaller books about the priests larking with the girls in the confessional and so forth. Anything with 'Secret History' or 'Jesuit' on the title-page 'll sell like the *Evening News* on Derby Day. Now, I've been reading all the publications of the regular Protestant societies during the last few weeks. Plenty of cuts at the Ritualists, lots of little sixpennies bound in cloth to prove as there isn't no such thing as apostolic succession, that wafers is illegal, and the Eastern position rather worse than arson. They're all very well in their way, but they're written by D.D.'s and M.A.'s and such like, who don't care to go too far. I have a list in my portfolio here of the regular Protestant writers – nearly all *class*, my boy. Listen here:

"*Transubstantiation and the Invocation of Saints*. Rev. J. Cummer, Canon Residentiary of Ironpool.

"*Popery the Work of 'the Adversary,' – the Roman Clergy under Satanic Influence*. Rev. R. S. Blanken, LL.D., incumbent of Christ Church, Oxtou.

"*Ritualism in the English Church: A Word of Warning*. Rev. Joshua Cafe, D.D., prebendary of Bath and Wells.

"There's dozens of others like this. They're all very well in their way, but they don't strike the really *popular* note. They've broken the ground and sowed the seed, but they're not going to reap the harvest."

"Who is, then, Father? And what'll it be worth when it is reaped?"

"Us, my boy. As to the worth of it, go on listening to me and you'll see things gradually getting clearer. I want you to see how I've worked it all out. If we *do* strike oil, all I'm telling you now will be valuable. During my local work for the Protestant cause down here, I've been brought in touch with members of the old-established societies and I've taken the length of their foot. They're too dignified altogether. Real live methods don't appeal to them. Financially they don't do badly, but nothing like what they *might* do if they adopted the right methods. All their subscriptions come from the upper classes, and there's a whole goldmine lying at their doors which is quite untouched! *abso-lute-ly* unworked, Sam! The middle classes and the lower classes haven't *begun* to give to the Protestant cause. Why? Because it hasn't been put prominently before them in the way they'll understand. Bang the field-piece! twang the lyre! thump the tub! rattle the tambourine! That's the way. Look at the Salvation Army! The time is ripe for new methods and for a new man who isn't a canon residentiary or a D.D. I've got all the ritualistic statistics. Day by day the Ritualists are trying it on, getting nearer and nearer to Rome. Everything is ready."

"I see all that, Father. All you say is clear enough. What I *don't* see yet is what you mean to do."

"I'm coming to that. For several years now, I've been prominent in Hornham affairs. I'm known as a platform speaker in all the denominations. What do you suppose I did this for six months ago?" he touched the lapel of his coat, looking down on it as he did so.

"Oh!" he said, "I forgot I'd changed into my old jacket. I was alluding to the temperance non-smoking ribbon. It's in my frock-coat. Well, I mentioned it just to point out that I'm known as a man associated with all good causes."

"But only locally, Pa."

"Exactly. That is all I need to start with. Now, to-day I began: 'Mr. Hamlyn, a prominent resident in Hornham and a staunch supporter of the Henglish Protestant Church, has at last felt it his duty

to protest against the illegal practices at St. Elwyn's in as public a manner as possible.' I've struck a new note, see? What I've done to-day has hardly ever been done before. Now, why shouldn't this inaugurate a big public movement all over the country? Why shouldn't offices be taken in the Strand and a new League started, 'Hamlyn's Protestant Crusade' or something of that sort? To begin with, subscriptions are invited for the circulation of real fighting Protestant literature, hot stuff, giving accounts of the illegal and Romish doings all over the country. I know where to get the pamphlets written for a mere song, and startlers, too. Of course, we have all the printing done at the works here in Hornham, – that'll be worth something considerable. Meanwhile, mark what happens. The 'silly season' comes on and the newspapers haven't got much to write about. Our little London concern is established and then we begin touring round to all the Ritualistic churches and protesting against their aims. If I know what I'm talking about, in a fortnight or three weeks one of the biggest booms of the century will begin! Everything we do will be in the papers, rows in the churches, police-court proceedings – everything. Whenever I write a letter of protest to the Bishop of London or the Archbishop of Canterbury it will appear in all the papers. It don't matter what they say as long as they mention the Crusade! Then'll come the moment when we really launch out and become a national Institution. We'll get half a dozen parsons and fifth-rate M.P.'s to form a committee, and some one to be a treasurer: he's easy found. Then I become secretary and you assistant-secretary: we are *salaried* officials, of course, and we start a little magazine as the Society's official organ – to be printed at the works. I've many more ideas for the extension of the plan, – brilliant ideas some of them, too. But I won't go into them now. I've only given you the roughest outline of the scheme as yet. Meanwhile, as a preliminary, I'm going to flimsy out a dozen short reports of to-day's proceedings at St. Elwyn's, and I want you to run up to Fleet Street with them, about five this evening. All the dailies will print it."

He chuckled. "That's the chief beauty of the scheme," he continued; "you get the majority of your advertisements free, and in the best papers, too! It's about the only scheme I ever heard of that could."

He stopped at last and sank back in his chair, exhausted. He had spoken long and with great animation, with all the tricks and mannerisms of rough-and-tumble platform oratory, in which he was a master. The pantomime of his expressive gestures, the indescribable impudence of the smile as he sought to prove some depth of folly in the public, the quick inflections of the voice, gave great force to his words. They sounded convincing to the younger Hamlyn, into whose muddy pallor a deep red flush had gradually come.

"It's a big thing, Pa," he said at length, "a very big thing. I see that, and you're the one to make it go. But there's a lot to be done first. 'Ave we the ready money to start it? Even in a small way, to get it once before the public will cost four or five hundred pounds."

"That's the difficulty, Sam, I admit it. We are pretty low down at present. The business just keeps its head above water, that's all. The money from Mr. Herbert is a help, but it's all gone as soon as we get it. I was thinking that if to-day's little protest makes a stir and we can do ditto round-about during the next week or two, we could get Moffatt and Burgoyne to advance a hundred each, p'r'aps. As a personal loan. Mr. Herbert would be good for fifty now, but as soon as he's elected you'll see he won't bother any more. When we've made the whole thing hum, he'll come to us and offer to be our Parliamentary representative. I'm reserving him for that. He'll be useful to ask questions and help the fizz-up generally. It'll suit him because he'll have a chance of getting his name in the papers, and it's about the only chance he will have of getting prominent in the House. But, as far as the preliminary stages are concerned, my opinion is that he's N.G. The worst of it is that with a scheme of this sort one can't very well put it on the market. That's the one drawback of a religious scheme. There's lots of men who'd see the money in it, but who'd see that if they joined they couldn't touch a cent. There can't be more than one or two salaried officials. No, we must depend upon ourselves entirely. I'm not afraid. It's what Napoleon did, and I'm going to be the Protestant Napoleon! There's a lot

in catchwords – speaking on a side issue – 'The Luther League!' 'Smithfield Soldiers!' or Bunyan's 'Holy War' might be revived."

"No, Pa, that wouldn't do now. 'Holy' is a regular Ritualistic word."

"Well, so it is, Sam. I hadn't thought of it. I'm glad to see that you've got a good grip of the thing."

There was a silence in the mean little room. In the adjacent kitchen, the servant could be heard singing, "Ower lod geris anoice yeng men, ow dear, ow dear naow!" A big green-bellied fly sung and drummed on the window-pane in the afternoon sunlight. Hamlyn, replete with enthusiasm and beef, had taken off his alpaca coat and unloosed his collar. The air was heavy with the odour of food and the acrid smell of Sam's "ten-for-threepence" cigarettes, while a penetrating smell of new calico, proceeding from some of Maud's dressmaking operations, dominated it all.

A church bell, ringing for afternoon service, was heard not far away.

Suddenly Hamlyn struck the table a sounding blow with his fist.

"It is a good thing," he shouted in a wild burst of enthusiasm.

The voice was so full, and confident, that it rang out in the place like a trumpet.

It had the true accent of an enthusiast, of a leader. There was mesmerism in it. Hearing it, one would have said that this man would succeed.

He could influence others, he had energy, resource, and temperamental force. It was true. The man was gifted. He had power, and to whatever end that might be directed it would not lose its efficacy. The conviction of success, its trumpet note, was to become familiar in vast hysterical assemblies. It was to be mistaken for a deep and earnest wish to purify the Church, to scatter the wolves from the environs of the fold. Greed can be sonorous. Tartuffe can always find his Orgon, and to hawk a battle-cry among the ignorant and dull has ever been a profitable game.

"I've a word to say, Pa," the son echoed; "I've an idea where the first cash is to come from."

"Good, my boy. Let's have it."

"What about Miss Pritchett?"

Hamlyn looked reproachfully at his son. "What about the monument!" he answered with a sneer. "She's got the cash, she's got tons of it. But she's a red-hot Ritualist and Romaniser. Ask me another, Sam."

Samuel smiled slyly. "Wait a mo, Pa," he said. "I know a good deal more about Miss Pritchett than you do. I've been walkin' out with Augusta Davis lately. She's a friend of Maud's."

"The companion, you mean? Miss Pritchett's companion? Oh, you've been smelling round in that quarter, have you?"

"And I've learnt a bit. I know all that goes on. Gussie tells me and Maud everything. Miss Pritchett's getting tired of St. Elwyn's. She can't boss the new vicar like she used the old one. As for the Roman business, she doesn't really care for it. She's nothing to amuse herself with except that and her ailments. It's the old cat's vanity, that's all. She likes to be a patroness."

"That's the sort of woman we want," answered Mr. Hamlyn, obviously struck by the word. "There are a lot of rich, single old judies only fit to be patronesses. They're cut out for it. Do you really think anything could be done."

"I do most certainly, Pa. I 'appen to know that Miss Pritchett is getting on very bad terms with Blantyre. He won't stand her meddling. I've one or two ideas in my head to help it along. Gussie'll do anything I tell her."

"Well, Sam, you do all you can. We won't talk about the matter any more now. I've got a lot of strings to pull, and I've got a lot of matters in my mind. We shall get a summons for brawling to-morrow, I expect. I'm done up now, and I'm going to have a nap. Wake me up in an hour if I'm asleep, and I'll get out the flimsies for to-morrow's papers."

Hamlyn possessed that faculty of sleeping at any moment, and of waking when it suited him, that so often goes with any marked executive capacity.

He stretched himself upon the little horsehair sofa and covered his face with his handkerchief.

Samuel picked up one of the "Heartsease" novelettes and tried to read in it. But his brain was alight with the splendour of the new project, and he could not concentrate his thought upon *Joyce Heathcote's Lover*.

It was thus that the seeds of the new movement were sown, in the back parlour at Balmoral, Beatrice Villas, Alexandra Road. Historians tell us that even greater and more epoch-making movements than Mr. Hamlyn's was destined to be, have originated in even less pretentious dwellings.

Many of us have seen the little house in the Brede Kirk Street of the old Dutch town, on which is written, *Haec est parva domus natus qua magnus Erasmus*.

Mr. Hamlyn, Junior, had never heard of Erasmus, but he saw visions of greatness on that afternoon.

CHAPTER III

LORD HUDDERSFIELD AND THE GUESTS AT SCARNING COURT

From April until the beginning of August, Lord Huddersfield generally lived at his house at Scarning, the famous old Tudor mansion on the river, below Pangbourne.

Peers who are something more than merely "in society" are generally known to the public at large by reason of some cause which they benefit, defend, or are associated with. When it is not a cause, it is a business that gives such an one his label for the man in the street.

Lord *So-and-so* is, of course, the great banker or brewer; Lord *This* is the famous picture collector, who has all the Holbeins; Lord *That* is known to be the best amateur actor, billiard player, or breeder of bloodhounds in England. In an age when all celebrities are easily distinguished thus, Lord Huddersfield, was perfectly familiar to everyone as the great organising churchman. The ordinary person would say, "Lord Huddersfield? Oh, yes, the great Ritualistic Johnny," imagining that he had summed up his man with completeness. Yet, saving only to churchmen and their antagonists – a very small proportion of the public to-day – Lord Huddersfield was personally quite unknown. He was hardly ever caricatured in the comic papers or pictured in the more serious illustrated journals. His face was wholly unfamiliar; the details of his private life formed no portion of the gossip papers. To the vast army of English folk, who are utterly indifferent to religious questions, he was nothing more than a name.

He had only once excited a really general flicker of interest. On the occasion of a visit to Italy, like many other distinguished visitors to the capital, he had been received in audience by the Bishop of Rome. As usual, the evening papers had published "rumours."

"Lord Huddersfield and the Pope

Will he become a Catholic?"

had appeared as a scare head-line in one enterprising sheet, and the peer's telegram, stating that he had been one for many years had been hastily printed as a startling revelation – until some charitable person had stepped round to the office and explained the joke to a bewildered Scotch editor, and the paragraph was excised from later editions.

This much for the figure he cut to the outside world. In the English Church, he was looked upon as one of the leading laymen, if not the chief of all of them. He was the proprietor of the great weekly paper known as the *Church Standard*. He was the chairman of many church societies, the friend and patron of all Anglican movements and institutions, and a man whose word carried enormous weight and power.

In private life, his two children and his intimate friends found him true, devout, diligent, winning all hearts by opening his own, where one found a singular freshness and simplicity. He went as little into general society as he could, for all his thoughts and aims were occupied in one endeavour.

On the Monday after the events in Hornham, Agatha Poyntz and her brother James were in the lovely private backwater of Scarning. Their punt was moored to the side of a tiny island, set like a gem in the clear brown water, the red silk cushions of the boat making a vivid splash of colour on the bank. With these two was Miss Poyntz's great friend and confidante, Lucy Blantyre, the only sister of the vicar of St. Elwyn's.

Lucy was a girl of medium height, not at all the willowy modern heroine of pictures and romance. Her hair was of a deep, dead black, coiled on a small Greek head. Her complexion was dark, like that of her brother, the priest, but quite without a certain sallowness that was noticeable in him. It had the dusky paleness, the pearl-like *morbidezza* of some southern types, and, despite the lack of colour, showed a perfect and happy health. The mouth was rather large. Mockery lurked there, and in the dark eyes a lambent and somewhat scornful humour was wont to play.

Agatha Poyntz was a tall and merry girl – "a nut-brown maid" her father called her. Her round, plump face showed a sheer light-heartedness and joy in life that was always refreshing to people who found this life rather a drab and ordinary affair. The care-worn priests and churchmen who were her father's friends, men who were always too painfully aware of the great stream of human tears which is for ever falling through the shadows of the world, were all fond of her freshness and sparkle. And, so the wisest of them thought that since she took nothing seriously, and was quite untouched by the vexing problems in which they were submerged, it was perhaps a good thing that so gay and bright a creature should come into their lives for a space, realising that, after all, God made the butterflies which hovered so daintily over the Scarning water-flowers upon their painted fans.

James Poyntz, Lord Huddersfield's only son, was a very different type. He resembled his dead mother, a daughter of the Duke of St. Just. He was tall, slender, and muscular. His face was clean-shaved, lean, and with a heavy jaw, not the heaviness that signals sensuality and dullness, but purpose and resolution. His eyes were grey, and glittered when he became animated, and his clear, cold voice grew emphatic.

Not long before, he had come down from Oxford, where he had distinguished himself in the history schools, and also by availing himself of the little-used permission to absent himself from chapel and the examination known as "Divinity Moderations," granted to men who have come of age, and who sign a declaration of their absolute and sincere disbelief in the supernatural. It had been a piquant spectacle to the sceptic undergraduates and younger dons, to see the son and heir of Lord Huddersfield openly scornful and protesting against all that his father held so dear, and quietly taking the much severer tests that the University statutes impose upon those who would dispense with the puerile divinity examination.

James Poyntz was on rather bad terms with his father. There was no confidence between them, and perhaps but little love – though that had never been tested. The young man had a sufficient fortune from his mother, and his father was prepared to supplement his income in any way he might wish, being far too sensible and just a man to endeavour to make his son suffer financially for his opinions. But James Poyntz refused money which, as he said, would have been purely superfluous to him, and was occupied in carving a career for himself at the common-law bar, where he was already a not inconspicuous figure among the junior men.

His knowledge of ecclesiastical law was good, and in the wrangles between diocesan chancellors and recalcitrant clergy which were becoming more and more frequent, he was frequently retained. He was a very familiar figure in Dr. Tristram's Consistory Court, and his familiarity with ecclesiastical litigation only increased a contempt for those who professed and called themselves Christians, which was as profound as it was sincere, and as fundamentally the result of ignorance as it was both.

For, brilliant as he was, the young man had not the slightest acquaintance with modern religious thought. He saw everything through the spectacles of temperamental distaste, and still believed that Professor Huxley had dealt the final blow to Christianity in 1876! Lord Huddersfield had often pressed his son to read the question as it at present stood, to see what Gore and the philosophic apologists were saying, or even to note the cautious but inevitable conclusions that prominent scientists like Lord Kelvin and Sir Oliver Lodge were arriving at. But the young man always refused. The ancient indictment of the Gadarene swine represented the last word in the controversy for him, and a brain keen and finely furnished with facts on all other questions, on this was not only content to

be forty years behind the conclusions of theological science, but imagined that it was in the van of contemporary thought.

Of late, Lord Huddersfield had given up the attempt to influence his son's opinions. "It is impossible," he had said, "to explain that the sky is blue to a man who has blindfolded himself all his life, and one cannot build a basis in a vacuum." So, while both men respected each other's attainments on all subjects but religious ones, on these James thought his father a fool, and Lord Huddersfield knew that his son was.

Despite all this difference, the younger man was a frequent and welcome visitor at his father's various houses, and between him and his sister Agatha there was a real and deep affection. Agatha was conventionally indifferent to religious things, James was profoundly antagonistic to them, and thus, if they did not meet quite on common ground, they were never likely to disagree.

And Lucy Blantyre, the third member of that gay young trio on the summer morning, was a combination of both of them. She was very well off in the affairs of this world, as indeed was her brother, Bernard Blantyre of St. Elwyn's. But, while he had early devoted his life and money to the service of God, Lucy had refused to identify herself with his interests. She lived with her aunt, Lady Linquest, a gay old dame of Mayfair, and it was only at rare intervals that she paid a duty visit to her brother. Yet, though she was, from a surface point of view, purely a society girl, popular, and happy in a bright and vivid life, there were temperamental depths in her, unsounded as yet, which showed her sometimes – to her own wonder and discomfort – that she was a true blood-sister to the priest in north-east London. At times, a wave of scorn for the Church possessed her. She saw the worst side of religious externals and poured bitter fun upon their anomalies. This is, of course, a very easy thing to do. Any one can ridicule the unseen and its ministers: it requires no special talent to be rude to God! At other times, the girl saw this very clearly and was ashamed. She had a good brain and despised all that was cheap and vulgar at the bottom; and when her moods of wilfulness had passed, she stood upon the brink of devotion and belief.

Nothing serious animated any of the three. The day was wonderful. In a sky like a hard, hollow sapphire the sun burned like a white-hot disc of platinum. The island was deliciously cool; the murmur of a near river mingled with the bourdon of the bees. The smooth turf on which they lay was starred with chaste and simple flowers.

"Isn't it *perfect* to-day!" Agatha said. "Bee, go away from my face! 'Pleasant it is when the woods are green and the winds are soft and low, to lie amid some sylvan scene' – Lucy, dear, what are you thinking about?"

"I was wondering if we were really reclining in what the poets of last century called 'bosky shade.' Is this bosky, Mr. Poyntz?"

"Decidedly bosky, I should say. But surely both of you can put the island to a better use than merely to illustrate quotations from the poets? It's far too fine for that."

"Oh, do let me have 'bosky'," Lucy replied. "It's such a dear, comic word. I've always loved it. It always seems a fat word to me. I'm sure it's fat and it waddles – in the word world!"

"Then what does Agatha's 'sylvan' do?"

"Oh, sylvan? – well, I should think it was a slim, graceful, and very young-ladyish kind of word. It wears a neat grey tailor-made coat and skirt, and says, 'Papa is of opinion that,' or, 'Mamma has frequently told me.'"

They all laughed, pleased with themselves, the hour, and the charm that perfectly absurd talk has for young and happy people.

"Oh, don't talk of words, Miss Blantyre," Poyntz said, "I'm tired of them. The long vacation draws near, when I want to forget all about them. My words, the words I live by, or for, are beasts."

"Quote, dearest," Agatha said.

"Well, this is the sort of thing I see more often than anything else at present," he replied: "The humble petition of the vicar and churchwardens of St. Somebody sheweth that, it being considered

desirable to make certain alterations and improvements in the church of the said Parish, a meeting in Vestry duly convened for considering the same, was held on the first of June, at which it was resolved that the alterations shown in the plan annexed hereto and there produced, should be carried out, a copy of which resolution is also hereto annexed."

Both the girls cried out to him to stop.

"What musty words, dry and rusty words!" Lucy said. "And, please, what are they all about, and what do they mean?"

"They mean this – some worthy parson has badgered his congregation for money. It is the desire of his soul to have a rood-screen in his chancel, with a gilt and splendid crucifix upon the top. So, armed with a mouthful of words like that, he gets him to a sort of cellar near St. Paul's, where a dear old gentleman, named the Right Worshipful T. H. Tristram, K. C., D.C.L., sits, in a big wig and a red robe. The parson eloquently explains his wishes, and the Right Worshipful tells him to go and be hanged – or polite words to that effect. Then I and other young legal 'gents' get up and talk and argue, and the Right Worshipful listens until he's tired, and then says no again. The parson goes back to his roodless temple and preaches against Erastianism, and I and the other young legal 'gents' pouch a few guineas, and go and play pool at the Oxford and Cambridge Club."

"And then," Agatha went on, – "then father makes a speech and writes a letter to the *Times* and gets fearfully excited and worried for about a week, neglects his meals, passes sleepless nights, and behaves in a perfectly foolish manner generally. Then he goes down to the parish and has a convivial meat tea with the poor parson, and before he goes gives him a cheque for fifty pounds to go and have a holiday with after all the strain!"

"Exactly," said Lucy, "I will take up the parable. I have seen our friend, the parson, in the unutterable north London slum, where my poor dear brother Bernard spends all his time and money. He goes, as you say, for a holiday, to recover from the scene in the cellar near St. Paul's. He goes to Dieppe or Boulogne, where he attends the cathedral three times a day, and tries to fraternise with the priests, who regard him as a layman masquerading in borrowed plumes. In revenge, he goes and makes things uncomfortable for the local English chaplain, who, in most continental towns, is an undersized person with a red nose and an enormous red moustache and a strong flavour of Chadband at home. So 'all's well that ends well.' But, really, what fearful nonsense it all is! Isn't it wonderful that people should waste their energies so!"

"If it amuses them it doesn't matter in the least," Agatha said. "Look how happy it makes poor dear father. And I daresay he does good in his way, don't you know. It's far better than racing or anything like that. Poor dear Hermione Blackbourne was staying here not long ago, and she was telling me what a wretched time they have at home. Lord Saltire hardly ever pays the girls' allowances unless he's won a race, and the poor dears have to study the sporting papers to know if they'll be able to afford new frocks for Goodwood. Father's fads are at least harmless, or, at any rate, no one has to suffer for what he gives away."

"The old type of clergyman seems to have quite died out," Lucy said. "When I was a little girl, the rector at home was a dear old man, who dressed just like an ordinary person, and went otter-hunting three days a week. Yet I'm sure he was just as earnest as any of these new faddy people. We had a delightful old pew, with a fireplace and chairs, and poor dear father used to get his nap. And as for altar lights and copes and incense, I don't suppose dear old Mr. Jenkyns had ever heard of such things. The amount of money that Bernard spends on his church in that way is ridiculous."

"The only good I can see in it," James Poyntz said, "is that it brings a certain colour element into drab and dull lives. The people in your brother's parish, who never see any thing artistic, must gain in that way, I suppose. After all, Miss Blantyre, 'it's an ill wind that blows nobody any good.' All this Church nonsense gives pleasure, however much we may laugh at it. Take myself, for example. I'm intensely amused at all the squabbles that go on between Christians. More evil passions are stirred up and let loose over half a yard of green silk or the precise manner in which half an ounce of flour and

water is baked than the politics of a century excite! It's perfectly true. There's a spirit of bitter hatred in it all that is intensely interesting to the student of character. There are hundreds of thousands of people in England who would burn my poor father in front of St. Paul's to-morrow if they could – good, respectable, honest British folk!"

"Well," Lucy said, with affected gloom, "all this only reminds me of my coming penance. In a day or so now, I must dive into Hornham for my yearly stay with Bernard. I shall emerge quite thin and crushed. I always do. The 'clergy-house,' as they call the vicarage, is a lugubrious place that suggests a rather superior workhouse. When I go, the drawing-room is solemnly opened by the housekeeper. Bernard gives a couple of dinner parties and a garden party to a set of the most extraordinary people you ever saw in your life. I have to be hostess and chatter to weird people, with whom I haven't a single idea in common. Lady Linquest drove down from Park Lane to the garden party last year. I shall never forget it. She gave Bernard such a talking to, told him to 'dress like a gentleman,' and exchange to a nice country parish with some county people close by, and marry. I wish he would, too! He's wasting his life, his money, and his health in that awful place. I don't wonder at aunt's being angry. Why can't he do as she says? He could have high jinks in a nice little country church in one of the home counties just as well as where he is now."

"Beastly life, I should think," James Poyntz said. "Does he live all alone?"

"Oh, the two curates live with him, Father Stephens and Father King – they're all 'fathers,' it seems. These are two intense youths, who dress in cassocks and tippets all day long, and wear their berrettas everywhere. I think it's positively indecent to sit down to a meal dressed like that. But the worst of it is, that there's always some fast day or other, and I feel an awful pig to be having chicken and claret while the other three have oatmeal and apples. But I insisted on proper meals last year, much to the disgust of a gaunt old cat of a housekeeper, whom Bernard thinks the whole world of."

She stopped, laughing at her own volubility, and lay back upon the cushions, staring up at the green-leaf canopy above her head. All these questions seemed very trivial and unreal at that moment, in that pleasant place of sunshine, soft breezes, and the murmur of falling water. She thought of the long, mean, suburban streets of Hornham with humorous dismay. Thank goodness that she was only going to spend a fortnight there, and then would be away in a gay continental watering-place with Lady Linquest. But the few days were imperative. She was fond of her brother and knew how bitterly disappointed he would be if she were to withdraw from her promise to stay at St. Elwyn's. It was a duty which must be done, and it was an unkind fate indeed that had placed her brother in surroundings which were so uncongenial to her, and endowed him with opinions so alien to her own.

James Poyntz had lighted a cigarette. The smoke curled upwards in delicate grey spirals, and he could see his sister's friend through them, surrounded by a shifting frame which cut off the striking and clever face from its immediate surroundings, giving it a vivid and independent individuality. He could survey it more completely so. There was something in Lucy Blantyre that had begun to appeal to the young man with great and greater strength as the days went on. She was close upon beauty, and she had all the charm of a high-spirited and well-bred girl in perfect health, and knowing no trouble in life. But in the life to which he had been born, girls like her were not uncommon. Despite the fiction-mongers who fulminate against the vices of "society," and would have their readers believe that the flower of English girlhood is to be found in the middle class alone, Poyntz knew many gracious girls who were worthy to stand by any man's side throughout life. But in Lucy Blantyre he was beginning to discern something deeper and stronger. He thought that he saw in her a wonderful capacity for companionship, a real talent for wifedom. He could imagine that she would be more to her husband than an ordinary wife, identified with his hopes and career with all her soul's power, one for whom Milton's epithalamium itself would not be unworthy, with its splendid "Hail, wedded love!"

But, though such thoughts had been in and out of his mind for some time, he was hardly in love with her as yet. His temperament was honest and sincere, but cool and judicial also. He was the last man to take any definite step without a full weighing of the chances and results.

But the two had become great friends. Agatha Poyntz had her own thoughts about the matter, and they were very pleasant ones. Nothing would have pleased her more than the marriage of her brother and her friend, and she had made *tête-à-têtes* for them in the adroit, unobtrusive manner that girls know.

In all his conversations with Lucy, Poyntz had found a keen, resilient brain that answered to his thoughts in precisely the way he wished. The tinge of cynicism in her corresponded to the flavour of it in him, and there was sometimes real wit and understanding in her mockery.

She "suited" him – that is how he would have put it – and he was now beginning to ask and examine himself if love were not being born, a love which might make their union a perfect and lasting thing upon his way through life. Of her sentiments towards him he knew no more than that she sincerely liked him and that they were friends.

The regular throbbing pant of a steam launch on the silver Thames outside was heard, and Lucy turned suddenly in Poyntz's direction. She saw that he was looking at her gravely and steadily. A very faint flush came into her cheeks, almost imperceptible indeed, and then she smiled frankly at him.

He smiled also, pleased with himself and her, and with a sense that a new intimacy was suddenly established between them, an odd sense of which he was quite certain.

Agatha looked at the little watch in a leather bracelet on her wrist. "It's nearly lunch time!" she said; "I don't know how you people feel, but the word has a very welcome sound to me. Jim, get up and punt us home. You'll be able to argue with Father Saltus; I've asked him to lunch with us to-day. I didn't know you were coming down."

She spoke of Lord Huddersfield's domestic chaplain, a wise and courtly elderly man, whom they all liked, without in the least realising the part he played in Church affairs, regarding him, indeed, as a harmless student and a pleasant companion, but no more.

In fact, as the light and careless conversation of all of them showed, not one of the three young people had the remotest idea of what they were discussing. And though each one of them had a sense of humour, they were not able to see the humorous side of their airy patronage of the Catholic Church! This Mr. Saltus was known as one of the most profound metaphysicians of the day. The greatest modern brains were influenced by his writings in Christian apologetics; bishops, statesmen, great scientists knew of him as one to whom it was given to show how all thought and all philosophy were daily proving the truth of the Incarnation. His work in the life of the Church was this, and he was Lord Huddersfield's chaplain because that position gave him leisure and freedom for his work, and kept him in touch with the very centre of things.

James Poyntz had arrived from London by an early train, and had joined the girls at once.

In a moment or two, the young man was propelling the long mahogany punt with easy strokes towards the artificial cutting which led to the Seaming boathouse. Then, laughing and talking together, the three strolled over the wonderful lawns, pneumatic to the tread, brilliant as emerald to the eye, towards the old house with its encircling oaks and elms.

The tall red chimneys rose up between the leaves, that triumph of the Tudor style, which alone of all architectural systems has shown how chimneys may aid and complete the beauty of a building. The house rested upon the lawns as if it might float away at any moment, as they passed round an ancient grey dove-cot and some formal box-trees, and came in sight of the beautiful place. James Poyntz gave a quick breath of pleasure as he saw it, the old riverside palace of his ancestors. There were other houses which would one day be his – a great, grim Yorkshire fortress, the gay villa at Nice by the old citadel of Mont-Albano, where the Paglion sings its song of the mountain torrent, the decorous London mansion in Berkeley Square. But of all, he loved the old Tudor house by the river best.

How well Lucy walked! her carriage was a pleasure to watch. Yes! she harmonised with her background, she was in correspondence with her environment, she would be a fit mistress of Scarning in some dim future day.

They sat down to lunch in an ancient, mellow room, panelled in oak, with Tudor roses everywhere. It was beautifully cool and fresh after the glare outside. Father Saltus was a tall and very portly elderly man. His head was large, formed on a grand scale, and his mouth powerful but good-humoured. His eyebrows were very bushy and extremely white, and they overhung eyes which were of a dark grey, deep but not sombre, with much that was latent there.

The meal was progressing merrily when the butler entered and spoke to the footman who had been waiting on them. Then he went up to Agatha. "His Lordship has returned, Miss," he said, "and will be down to lunch in a moment."

Lord Huddersfield had been away for several days. The family house in London was let, as the Baron did not entertain largely since his wife's death. Agatha's season was spent under the wing of the St. Justs, her mother's people. But Lord Huddersfield had chambers in Piccadilly, and no one ever quite knew whether or not he would be at Scarning at any given time.

He entered in a moment, a slim, spectacled man, with a short beard, very quietly dressed, a man who did not, at first glance, in any way suggest the power he wielded or the strenuous personality he was.

He kissed his daughter, shook hands with his son, Lucy, and the chaplain, and sat down. They noticed that he was pale and worried.

"Have any of you seen the papers?" he said in a strong, resonant voice, which came oddly from a man so ordinary and undistinguished in appearance.

"I saw the *Times* this morning, Father," Poyntz said, "but that is all." The girls confessed that they had not touched the pile of journals in the library, and Mr. Saltus said he had been writing letters all the morning and so had not yet been able to see the news.

"I am sorry," said Lord Huddersfield sadly. "I had hoped that you would have seen the thing that has happened. I had hoped that I should not have had to tell you, Miss Blantyre."

His voice was so charged with meaning that Lucy shivered. Her eyes became full of apprehension. "Why me, Lord Huddersfield?" she said, "what has happened?"

Agatha, who was thoroughly frightened, laid a sympathetic hand upon her friend's arm. James, who was gazing anxiously at the girl, suddenly turned to his father.

"I think you had better tell your news right out," he said quietly. "Don't keep Miss Blantyre in suspense, Father; it is mistaken kindness. I am sure that she will be brave."

Every one looked at Lord Huddersfield; the air was tense with expectation. "Your good brother, Miss Blantyre," the peer began – Lucy gave a quick gasp and the colour faded from her lips – "your good brother, yesterday in church, was saying Mass when suddenly some local residents rose in their places and made an open protest, shouting and brawling at the very moment of the Prayer of Consecration!"

Lucy gazed steadfastly at him, waiting. He said nothing more. "Go on, please," she managed to whisper at last.

"They were at once ejected, of course," Lord Huddersfield said.

"And Bernard?"

"Although his state of mind must have been terrible, despite his pain, I learn from a private telegram that he continued the service to the end."

The three young people stared incredulously; only Father Saltus suddenly looked very grave.

"But – why – is that all, Lord Huddersfield?" Lucy said with a gasp of half-relief. "I thought you meant that something dreadful had happened to Bernard."

"Yes," he said, very surprised, "I have told you."

James picked up his knife and fork, and continued his lunch without a word. He was very angry with his father.

Agatha shrugged her shoulders slightly.

"Oh, that wasn't quite fair, Lord Huddersfield," Lucy said tremulously. "You really made me think some awful thing had happened. Only a brawl in church?"

"I am very sorry, my dear," he answered quickly; "I fear I have shown a great want of tact. I did not know. I forgot, that is, that you don't quite see these things as we do. You don't realise what it means."

"Shall I give you some chicken, Father?" Agatha said, looking at a dish of mayonnaise before her. She thought that there had been quite a fuss made about nothing.

Lord Huddersfield sighed. He felt that he was in a thoroughly uncongenial atmosphere, though he was sorry for the alarm he had caused. Once his eye fell in mild wonder upon his guest. How unlike her brother she was, he thought.

There was an awkward silence, which James broke at length.

"I always thought," he said, "that there would be trouble soon. The days for locking clergymen up have passed by, but Protestant feeling is bound to have its outlet."

His quick brain had seized upon the main point at once.

"Well, there will be more work for the lawyers," he continued.

Lord Huddersfield frowned a little. "Of course, I can't expect you to see the thing as I do, James," he said. "To me such a public insult to our Lord is terrible. It almost frightens one. What poor Blantyre must have felt, what every Catholic there must have felt, is most painful to imagine."

"I'm sure Mr. Poyntz has sympathy with any body of people whose most sacred moment has been roughly disturbed," the chaplain said. "Whatever a man's convictions may be, he must feel that. But the thing is over and nothing can put it right. What I fear is, that this is only the beginning of a series of sacrilegious acts which may do the Church incalculable harm."

"The newspaper report, which appeared everywhere but in the *Times*," Lord Huddersfield replied, "stated that it was only the beginning of a campaign. All the reports were identical and apparently supplied to the papers by the same person, probably the brawlers themselves – who appear to be people of no consequence whatever."

"There will be a service of reparation?" asked the chaplain.

"Yes, to-morrow," answered Lord Huddersfield. "I am going down to Hornham and shall be present. We must discuss everything with Blantyre and settle exactly what lines the *Church Standard* will take up."

"Of course, Mr. Blantyre will prosecute?" James said.

"Oh, yes. My telegram told me that the summons had already been issued. The law is quite clear, I suppose, on the point, James?"

"Quite. Brawling in church is a grave offence. But these people will, of course, pose as martyrs. Public opinion will be with them, a nominal fine will be inflicted, and they'll find themselves heroes. I'm afraid the Ritualists are going to have a bad time. In '68, the *Martin v. Mackonochie* judgment was very plain, and in '71 the judicial committee of the Privy Council was plainer still in the case of *Herbert v. Punchas*. Then, after the Public Worship Regulation Act, the *Risdale* judgment clinched the whole thing. That was at the beginning of it all. Now, though prosecutions have been almost discontinued, the few cases that have been heard before the ecclesiastical courts are all the same. So far as I can see, if this pleasant little habit of getting up and brawling protests in church becomes popular, a big fire will be lighted and the advanced men will have to draw in their horns."

Lord Huddersfield smiled. He attempted no argument or explanation. He had thrashed out these questions with his son long ago. Father Saltus spoke instead.

"If this really spreads into a movement, as it may," he said, "ignorant public opinion will be with the protestors for a month or two. But that is all. The man in the street will say that every one has a right to hold whatever religious opinions he pleases, and to convert others to his views – if he can – by the ordinary methods of propagandism. But he will also say that no one has a right to air his opinions by disturbing the devotions of those who don't happen to agree with him. And what is

more, no religious cause was ever advanced by these means. I have no doubt that these people will boast and brag that they are vindicating the cause of law in the Church of England. But if they knew anything of the history of that Protestantism they champion – which, of course, they *don't*, for they know nothing whatever – they would know that the law is the most impotent of all weapons to crush a religious movement."

James nodded. "It is a truism of history," he agreed.

"Exactly. To call in the aid of the law to counteract the spread of any religious doctrine or ceremonial is to adopt the precise means that sent the Oxford martyrs to the stake and lighted the Smithfield fires. From the days when the High Priests called in the law's aid to nip Christianity in the bud, the appeal to the law has never been anything but an appeal to the spirit of intolerance and persecution against the freedom of religious belief and worship."

Agatha rose from the table. "Come along, Lucy dear," she said; "'all's well that ends well,' and your brother's not going to have a bomb thrown at him just yet. You will be in the thick of the disturbance in a few days; meanwhile, make the most of the river and the sunshine! Jim, come and punt us to the Eyot."

She kissed her father and fluttered away singing happily a snatch of an old song, *Green Grow the Rushes O!*

The others followed her. The two elder men were left alone, and for a minute or two neither spoke.

Then Saltus said: "They are all young, they have made no contact with real life yet. God does not always call in early life. To some people, the cross that is set so high over the world is like a great star, – it is not seen until the surrounding sky is darkened and the sun grows dim."

"I am going into the chapel," Lord Huddersfield said, "to be alone for an hour. There must be many prayers going up to-day to God for the wrong these poor ignorant men have done."

"Pray that they may be forgiven. And then, my dear Lord," he continued, "suppose we have a talk over the situation that has been created – if any situation beyond the purely local one *has* been created." A fighting look came into his face. "We shall be wise to be prepared, to have our guns loaded."

"Yes, Father," Lord Huddersfield said rather grimly, "we are not without power and influence, I am happy to think."

CHAPTER IV

LUCY BLANTYRE AT THE CLERGY-HOUSE

Lucy Blantyre left Scarning Court on Thursday morning. James Poyntz travelled up to town with her. She was to go home to Park Lane for an hour or two, make one of the guests at a lunch party with Lady Linquest, and then, in the afternoon, drive down to Hornham.

She was alone in a first-class carriage with James during the whole of the journey to London. The last three days had marked a stage in their intercourse. Both of them were perfectly aware of that. Intimacy between a young man and a girl is very rarely a stationary thing. It progresses in one direction or another. James began to talk much of his ambitions. He told her how he meant to carve his way in the world, the place he meant to take. The Poyntz family was a long-lived one; Lord Huddersfield himself was only middle-aged, and might live another thirty years. James hoped that it would be so.

"I want to win my own way by myself," he said. "I hope the title will not come for many years. It would mean extinction if it came now. You sympathise with that, don't you?"

She was very kind to him. Her answers showed a real interest in his confidences, but more than that. There was acumen and shrewdness in them.

"You know," he said, "I do hate and detest the way the ordinary young man in my position lives. It is so futile and silly. I recognised it even at Oxford. Because of one's father, one was expected to be a silly fool and do no work. Of course, there were some decent fellows, – Dover, the Duke of Dover, was quiet and thought about things. But all my friends were drawn from the social class which people suppose to be just below our own, the upper middle class. It's the backbone of England. Men in it take life seriously."

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