CHAPTER THE SECOND - THE WEAR AND TEAR OF EPISCOPACY

(1)

IT was only in the last few years that the bishop had experienced these nervous and mental crises. He was a belated doubter. Whatever questionings had marked his intellectual adolescence had either been very slight or had been too adequately answered to leave any serious scars upon his convictions.

And even now he felt that he was afflicted physically rather than mentally, that some protective padding of nerve-sheath or brain-case had worn thin and weak, and left him a prey to strange disturbances, rather than that any new process of thought was eating into his mind. These doubts in his mind were still not really doubts; they were rather alien and, for the first time, uncontrolled movements of his intelligence.
He had had a sheltered upbringing; he was the well-connected son of a comfortable rectory, the only son and sole survivor of a family of three; he had been carefully instructed and he had been a willing learner; it had been easy and natural to take many things for granted.
It had been very easy and pleasant for him to take the world as he found it and God as he found Him. Indeed for all his years up to manhood he had been able to take life exactly as in his infancy he took his carefully warmed and prepared bottle--unquestioningly and beneficially.

And indeed that has been the way with most bishops since bishops began.

It is a busy continuous process that turns boys into bishops, and it will stand few jars or discords. The student of ecclesiastical biography will find that an early vocation has in every age been almost universal among them; few are there among these lives that do not display the incipient bishop from the tenderest years. Bishop How of Wakefield composed hymns before he was eleven, and Archbishop Benson when scarcely older possessed a little oratory in which he conducted services and--a pleasant touch of the more secular boy--which he protected from a too inquisitive sister by means of a booby trap. It is rare that those marked for episcopal dignities go so far into the outer world as Archbishop Lang of York, who began as a barrister. This early predestination has always been the common episcopal experience. Archbishop Benson's early attempts at religious services remind one both of St. Thomas a Becket, the "boy bishop," and those early ceremonies of St. Athanasius which were observed and inquired upon by the good bishop Alexander. (For though still a tender infant, St. Athanasius with perfect correctness and validity was baptizing a number of his innocent playmates, and the bishop who "had paused to contemplate the sports of the child remained to confirm the zeal of the missionary.") And as with the bishop of the past, so with the bishop of the future; the Rev. H. J. Campbell, in his story of his soul's pilgrimage, has given us a pleasant picture of himself as a child stealing out into the woods to build himself a little altar.

Such minds as these, settled as it were from the outset, are either incapable of real scepticism or become sceptical only after catastrophic changes. They understand the sceptical mind with difficulty, and their beliefs are regarded by the sceptical mind with incredulity. They have determined their forms of belief before their years of discretion, and once those forms are determined they are not very easily changed. Within the shell it has adopted the intelligence may be active and lively enough, may indeed be extraordinarily active and lively, but only within the shell.

There is an entire difference in the mental quality of those who are converts to a faith and those who are brought up in it. The former know it from outside as well as from within. They know not only that it is, but also that it is not. The latter have a confidence in their creed that is one with their apprehension of sky or air or gravitation. It is a primary mental structure, and they not only do not doubt but they doubt the good faith of those who do. They think that the Atheist and Agnostic really believe but are impelled by a mysterious obstinacy to deny. So it had been with the Bishop of Princhester; not of cunning or design but in simple good faith he had accepted all the inherited assurances of his native rectory, and held by Church, Crown, Empire, decorum, respectability, solvency--and compulsory Greek at the Little Go--as his father had done before him. If in his undergraduate days he had said a thing or two in the modern vein, affected the socialism of William Morris and learnt some Swinburne by heart, it was out of a conscious wildness. He did not wish to be a prig. He had taken a far

more genuine interest in the artistry of ritual.

Through all the time of his incumbency of the church of the Holy Innocents, St. John's Wood, and of his career as the bishop suffragan of Pinner, he had never faltered from his profound confidence in those standards of his home. He had been kind, popular, and endlessly active. His undergraduate socialism had expanded simply and sincerely into a theory of administrative philanthropy. He knew the Webbs. He was as successful with working-class audiences as with fashionable congregations. His home life with Lady Ella (she was the daughter of the fifth Earl of Birkenholme) and his five little girls was simple, beautiful, and happy as few homes are in these days of confusion. Until he became Bishop of Princhester--he followed Hood, the first bishop, as the reign of his Majesty King Edward the Peacemaker drew to its close--no anticipation of his coming distress fell across his path.

(2)

He came to Princhester an innocent and trustful man. The home life at the old rectory of Otteringham was still his standard of truth and reality. London had not disillusioned him. It was a strange waste of people, it made him feel like a missionary in infidel parts, but it was a kindly waste. It was neither antagonistic nor malicious. He had always felt there that if he searched his Londoner to the bottom, he would find the completest recognition of the old rectory and all its data and

implications.

But Princhester was different.

Princhester made one think that recently there had been a second and much more serious Fall.

Princhester was industrial and unashamed. It was a countryside savagely invaded by forges and mine shafts and gaunt black things. It was scarred and impeded and discoloured. Even before that invasion, when the heather was not in flower it must have been a black country. Its people were dour uncandid individuals, who slanted their heads and knitted their brows to look at you. Occasionally one saw woods brown and blistered by the gases from chemical works. Here and there remained old rectories, closely reminiscent of the dear old home at Otteringham, jostled and elbowed and overshadowed by horrible iron cylinders belching smoke and flame. The fine old abbey church of Princhester, which was the cathedral of the new diocese, looked when first he saw it like a lady Abbess who had taken to drink and slept in a coal truck. She minced apologetically upon the market-place; the parvenu Town Hall patronized and protected her as if she were a poor relation....

The old aristocracy of the countryside was unpicturesquely decayed. The branch of the Walshinghams, Lady Ella's cousins, who lived near Pringle, was poor, proud and ignoble. And extremely unpopular. The rich people of the country were self-made and inclined to nonconformity, the

working-people were not strictly speaking a "poor," they were highly paid, badly housed, and deeply resentful. They went in vast droves to football matches, and did not care a rap if it rained. The prevailing wind was sarcastic. To come here from London was to come from atmospheric blue-greys to ashen-greys, from smoke and soft smut to grime and black grimness.

The bishop had been charmed by the historical associations of Princhester when first the see was put before his mind. His realization of his diocese was a profound shock.

Only one hint had he had of what was coming. He had met during his season of congratulations Lord Gatling dining unusually at the Athenaeum. Lord Gatling and he did not talk frequently, but on this occasion the great racing peer came over to him. "You will feel like a cherub in a stokehole," Lord Gatling had said....

"They used to heave lumps of slag at old Hood's gaiters," said Lord Gatling.

"In London a bishop's a lord and a lark and nobody minds him," said Lord Gatling, "but Princhester is different. It isn't used to bishops....
Well,--I hope you'll get to like 'em."

(3)

Trouble began with a fearful row about the position of the bishop's palace. Hood had always evaded this question, and a number of strong-willed self-made men of wealth and influence, full of local patriotism and that competitive spirit which has made England what it is, already intensely irritated by Hood's prevarications, were resolved to pin his successor to an immediate decision. Of this the new bishop was unaware. Mindful of a bishop's constant need to travel, he was disposed to seek a home within easy reach of Pringle Junction, from which nearly every point in the diocese could be simply and easily reached. This fell in with Lady Ella's liking for the rare rural quiet of the Kibe valley and the neighbourhood of her cousins the Walshinghams. Unhappily it did not fall in with the inflexible resolution of each and every one of the six leading towns of the see to put up, own, obtrude, boast, and swagger about the biggest and showiest thing in episcopal palaces in all industrial England, and the new bishop had already taken a short lease and gone some way towards the acquisition of Ganford House, two miles from Pringle, before he realized the strength and fury of these local ambitions.

At first the magnates and influences seemed to be fighting only among themselves, and he was so ill-advised as to broach the Ganford House project as a compromise that would glorify no one unfairly, and leave the erection of an episcopal palace for some future date when he perhaps would have the good fortune to have passed to "where beyond these voices there is peace," forgetting altogether among other oversights

the importance of architects and builders in local affairs. His proposal seemed for a time to concentrate the rich passions of the whole countryside upon himself and his wife.

Because they did not leave Lady Ella alone. The Walshinghams were already unpopular in their county on account of a poverty and shyness that made them seem "stuck up" to successful captains of industry only too ready with the hand of friendship, the iron grip indeed of friendship, consciously hospitable and eager for admission and endorsements. And Princhester in particular was under the sway of that enterprising weekly, The White Blackbird, which was illustrated by, which indeed monopolized the gifts of, that brilliant young caricaturist "The Snicker."

It had seemed natural for Lady Ella to acquiesce in the proposals of the leading Princhester photographer. She had always helped where she could in her husband's public work, and she had been popular upon her own merits in Wealdstone. The portrait was abominable enough in itself; it dwelt on her chin, doubled her age, and denied her gentleness, but it was a mere starting-point for the subtle extravagance of The Snicker's poisonous gift.... The thing came upon the bishop suddenly from the book-stall at Pringle Junction.

He kept it carefully from Lady Ella.... It was only later that he found that a copy of The White Blackbird had been sent to her, and that she was keeping the horror from him. It was in her vein that she should

reproach herself for being a vulnerable side to him.

Even when the bishop capitulated in favour of Princhester, that decision only opened a fresh trouble for him. Princhester wanted the palace to be a palace; it wanted to combine all the best points of Lambeth and Fulham with the marble splendours of a good modern bank. The bishop's architectural tastes, on the other hand, were rationalistic. He was all for building a useful palace in undertones, with a green slate roof and long horizontal lines. What he wanted more than anything else was a quite remote wing with a lot of bright little bedrooms and a sitting-room and so on, complete in itself, examination hall and everything, with a long intricate connecting passage and several doors, to prevent the ordination candidates straying all over the place and getting into the talk and the tea. But the diocese wanted a proud archway--and turrets, and did not care a rap if the ordination candidates slept about on the carpets in the bishop's bedroom. Ordination candidates were quite outside the sphere of its imagination.

And he disappointed Princhester with his equipage. Princhester had a feeling that it deserved more for coming over to the church from nonconformity as it was doing. It wanted a bishop in a mitre and a gilt coach. It wanted a pastoral crook. It wanted something to go with its mace and its mayor. And (obsessed by The Snicker) it wanted less of Lady Ella. The cruelty and unreason of these attacks upon his wife distressed the bishop beyond measure, and baffled him hopelessly. He could not see any means of checking them nor of defending or justifying her against

them.

The palace was awaiting its tenant, but the controversies and bitternesses were still swinging and swaying and developing when King George was being crowned. Close upon that event came a wave of social discontent, the great railway strike, a curious sense of social and political instability, and the first beginnings of the bishop's ill health.

(4)

There came a day of exceptional fatigue and significance.

The industrial trouble was a very real distress to the bishop. He had a firm belief that it is a function of the church to act as mediator between employer and employed. It was a common saying of his that the aim of socialism--the right sort of socialism--was to Christianize employment. Regardless of suspicion on either hand, regardless of very distinct hints that he should "mind his own business," he exerted himself in a search for methods of reconciliation. He sought out every one who seemed likely to be influential on either side, and did his utmost to discover the conditions of a settlement. As far as possible and with the help of a not very efficient chaplain he tried to combine such interviews with his more normal visiting.

At times, and this was particularly the case on this day, he seemed to be discovering nothing but the incurable perversity and militancy of human nature. It was a day under an east wind, when a steely-blue sky full of colourless light filled a stiff-necked world with whitish high lights and inky shadows. These bright harsh days of barometric high pressure in England rouse and thwart every expectation of the happiness of spring. And as the bishop drove through the afternoon in a hired fly along a rutted road of slag between fields that were bitterly wired against the Sunday trespasser, he fell into a despondent meditation upon the political and social outlook.

His thoughts were of a sort not uncommon in those days. The world was strangely restless. Since the passing of Victoria the Great there had been an accumulating uneasiness in the national life. It was as if some compact and dignified paper-weight had been lifted from people's ideas, and as if at once they had begun to blow about anyhow. Not that Queen Victoria had really been a paper-weight or any weight at all, but it happened that she died as an epoch closed, an epoch of tremendous stabilities. Her son, already elderly, had followed as the selvedge follows the piece, he had passed and left the new age stripped bare. In nearly every department of economic and social life now there was upheaval, and it was an upheaval very different in character from the radicalism and liberalism of the Victorian days. There were not only doubt and denial, but now there were also impatience and unreason. People argued less and acted quicker. There was a pride in rebellion for its own sake, an indiscipline and disposition to sporadic violence that

made it extremely hard to negotiate any reconciliations or compromises. Behind every extremist it seemed stood a further extremist prepared to go one better....

The bishop had spent most of the morning with one of the big employers, a tall dark man, lean and nervous, and obviously tired and worried by the struggle. He did not conceal his opinion that the church was meddling with matters quite outside its sphere. Never had it been conveyed to the bishop before how remote a rich and established Englishman could consider the church from reality.

"You've got no hold on them," he said. "It isn't your sphere."

And again: "They'll listen to you--if you speak well. But they don't believe you know anything about it, and they don't trust your good intentions. They won't mind a bit what you say unless you drop something they can use against us."

The bishop tried a few phrases. He thought there might be something in co-operation, in profit-sharing, in some more permanent relationship between the business and the employee.

"There isn't," said the employer compactly. "It's just the malice of being inferior against the man in control. It's just the spirit of insubordination and boredom with duty. This trouble's as old as the Devil."

"But that is exactly the business of the church," said the bishop brightly, "to reconcile men to their duty."

"By chanting the Athanasian creed at 'em, I suppose," said the big employer, betraying the sneer he had been hiding hitherto.

"This thing is a fight," said the big employer, carrying on before the bishop could reply. "Religion had better get out of the streets until this thing is over. The men won't listen to reason. They don't mean to. They're bit by Syndicalism. They're setting out, I tell you, to be unreasonable and impossible. It isn't an argument; it's a fight. They don't want to make friends with the employer. They want to make an end to the employer. Whatever we give them they'll take and press us for more. Directly we make terms with the leaders the men go behind it.... It's a raid on the whole system. They don't mean to work the system--anyhow. I'm the capitalist, and the capitalist has to go. I'm to be bundled out of my works, and some--some "--he seemed to be rejecting unsuitable words--"confounded politician put in. Much good it would do them. But before that happens I'm going to fight. You would."

The bishop walked to the window and stood staring at the brilliant spring bulbs in the big employer's garden, and at a long vista of newly-mown lawn under great shapely trees just budding into green.

"I can't admit," he said, "that these troubles lie outside the sphere of

the church."

The employer came and stood beside him. He felt he was being a little hard on the bishop, but he could not see any way of making things easier.

"One doesn't want Sacred Things," he tried, "in a scrap like this.

"We've got to mend things or end things," continued the big employer. "Nothing goes on for ever. Things can't last as they are going on now...."

Then he went on abruptly to something that for a time he had been keeping back.

"Of course just at present the church may do a confounded lot of harm. Some of you clerical gentlemen are rather too fond of talking socialism and even preaching socialism. Don't think I want to be overcritical. I admit there's no end of things to be said for a proper sort of socialism, Ruskin, and all that. We're all Socialists nowadays. Ideals--excellent. But--it gets misunderstood. It gives the men a sense of moral support. It makes them fancy that they are It. Encourages them to forget duties and set up preposterous claims. Class war and all that sort of thing. You gentlemen of the clergy don't quite realize that socialism may begin with Ruskin and end with Karl Marx. And that from the Class War to the Commune is just one step."

(5)

From this conversation the bishop had made his way to the vicarage of Mogham Banks. The vicar of Mogham Banks was a sacerdotal socialist of the most advanced type, with the reputation of being closely in touch with the labour extremists. He was a man addicted to banners, prohibited ornaments, special services at unusual hours, and processions in the streets. His taste in chasubles was loud, he gardened in a cassock and, it was said, he slept in his biretta; he certainly slept in a hair shirt, and he littered his church with flowers, candles, side altars, confessional boxes, requests for prayers for the departed, and the like. There had already been two Kensitite demonstrations at his services, and altogether he was a source of considerable anxiety to the bishop. The bishop did his best not to know too exactly what was going on at Mogham Banks. Sooner or later he felt he would be forced to do something--and the longer he could put that off the better. But the Rev. Morrice Deans had promised to get together three or four prominent labour leaders for tea and a frank talk, and the opportunity was one not to be missed. So the bishop, after a hasty and not too digestible lunch in the refreshment room at Pringle, was now in a fly that smelt of straw and suggested infectious hospital patients, on his way through the industry-scarred countryside to this second conversation.

The countryside had never seemed so scarred to him as it did that day.

It was probably the bright hard spring sunshine that emphasized the contrast between that dear England of hedges and homes and the south-west wind in which his imagination lived, and the crude presences of a mechanical age. Never before had the cuttings and heapings, the smashing down of trees, the obtrusion of corrugated iron and tar, the belchings of smoke and the haste, seemed so harsh and disregardful of all the bishop's world. Across the fields a line of gaunt iron standards, abominably designed, carried an electric cable to some unknown end. The curve of the hill made them seem a little out of the straight, as if they hurried and bent forward furtively.

"Where are they going?" asked the bishop, leaning forward to look out of the window of the fly, and then: "Where is it all going?"

And presently the road was under repair, and was being done at a great pace with a huge steam-roller, mechanically smashed granite, and kettles of stinking stuff, asphalt or something of that sort, that looked and smelt like Milton's hell. Beyond, a gaunt hoarding advertised extensively the Princhester Music Hall, a mean beastly place that corrupted boys and girls; and also it clamoured of tyres and potted meats....

The afternoon's conference gave him no reassuring answer to his question, "Where is it all going?"

The afternoon's conference did no more than intensify the new and strange sense of alienation from the world that the morning's talk had evoked.

The three labour extremists that Morrice Deans had assembled obviously liked the bishop and found him picturesque, and were not above a certain snobbish gratification at the purple-trimmed company they were in, but it was clear that they regarded his intervention in the great dispute as if it were a feeble waving from the bank across the waters of a great river.

"There's an incurable misunderstanding between the modern employer and the modern employed," the chief labour spokesman said, speaking in a broad accent that completely hid from him and the bishop and every one the fact that he was by far the best-read man of the party. "Disraeli called them the Two Nations, but that was long ago. Now it's a case of two species. Machinery has made them into different species. The employer lives away from his work-people, marries a wife foreign, out of a county family or suchlike, trains his children from their very birth in a different manner. Why, the growth curve is different for the two species. They haven't even a common speech between them. One looks east and the other looks west. How can you expect them to agree? Of course they won't agree. We've got to fight it out. They say we're their slaves for ever. Have you ever read Lady Bell's 'At the Works'? A well-intentioned woman, but she gives the whole thing away. We say, No! It's our sort and not your sort. We'll do without you. We'll get a

little more education and then we'll do without you. We're pressing for all we can get, and when we've got that we'll take breath and press for more. We're the Morlocks. Coming up. It isn't our fault that we've differentiated."

"But you haven't understood the drift of Christianity," said the bishop. "It's just to assert that men are One community and not two."

"There's not much of that in the Creeds," said a second labour leader who was a rationalist. "There's not much of that in the services of the church."

The vicar spoke before his bishop, and indeed he had plenty of time to speak before his bishop. "Because you will not set yourselves to understand the symbolism of her ritual," he said.

"If the church chooses to speak in riddles," said the rationalist.

"Symbols," said Morrice Deans, "need not be riddles," and for a time the talk eddied about this minor issue and the chief labour spokesman and the bishop looked at one another. The vicar instanced and explained certain apparently insignificant observances, his antagonist was contemptuously polite to these explanations. "That's all very pratty," he said....

The bishop wished that fine points of ceremonial might have been left

out of the discussion.

Something much bigger than that was laying hold of his intelligence, the realization of a world extravagantly out of hand. The sky, the wind, the telegraph poles, had been jabbing in the harsh lesson of these men's voices, that the church, as people say, "wasn't in it." And that at the same time the church held the one remedy for all this ugliness and contention in its teaching of the universal fatherhood of God and the universal brotherhood of men. Only for some reason he hadn't the phrases and he hadn't the voice to assert this over their wrangling and their stiff resolution. He wanted to think the whole business out thoroughly, for the moment he had nothing to say, and there was the labour leader opposite waiting smilingly to hear what he had to say so soon as the bout between the vicar and the rationalist was over.

(6)

That morning in the long galleries of the bishop's imagination a fresh painting had been added. It was a big wall painting rather in the manner of Puvis de Chavannes. And the central figure had been the bishop of Princhester himself. He had been standing upon the steps of the great door of the cathedral that looks upon the marketplace where the tram-lines meet, and he had been dressed very magnificently and rather after the older use. He had been wearing a tunicle and dalmatic under a chasuble, a pectoral cross, purple gloves, sandals and buskins, a mitre

and his presentation ring. In his hand he had borne his pastoral staff. And the clustering pillars and arches of the great doorway were painted with a loving flat particularity that omitted nothing but the sooty tinge of the later discolourations.

On his right hand had stood a group of employers very richly dressed in the fashion of the fifteenth century, and on the left a rather more numerous group of less decorative artisans. With them their wives and children had been shown, all greatly impressed by the canonicals. Every one had been extremely respectful.

He had been reconciling the people and blessing them and calling them his "sheep" and his "little children."

But all this was so different.

Neither party resembled sheep or little children in the least degree. .

The labour leader became impatient with the ritualistic controversy; he set his tea-cup aside out of danger and leant across the corner of the table to the bishop and spoke in a sawing undertone. "You see," he said, "the church does not talk our language. I doubt if it understands our language. I doubt if we understand clearly where we are ourselves. These things have to be fought out and hammered out. It's a big dusty dirty noisy job. It may be a bloody job before it's through. You can't suddenly call a halt in the middle of the scrap and have a sort of

millennium just because you want it....

"Of course if the church had a plan," he said, "if it had a proposal to make, if it had anything more than a few pious palliatives to suggest, that might be different. But has it?"

The bishop had a bankrupt feeling. On the spur of the moment he could say no more than: "It offers its mediation."

(7)

Full as he was with the preoccupation of these things and so a little slow and inattentive in his movements, the bishop had his usual luck at Pringle Junction and just missed the 7.27 for Princhester. He might perhaps have got it by running through the subway and pushing past people, but bishops must not run through subways and push past people. His mind swore at the mischance, even if his lips refrained.

He was hungry and, tired; he would not get to the palace now until long after nine; dinner would be over and Lady Ella would naturally suppose he had dined early with the Rev. Morrice Deans. Very probably there would be nothing ready for him at all.

He tried to think he was exercising self-control, but indeed all his sub-conscious self was busy in a manner that would not have disgraced

Tertullian with the eternal welfare of those city fathers whose obstinacy had fixed the palace at Princhester. He walked up and down the platform, gripping his hands very tightly behind him, and maintaining a serene upcast countenance by a steadfast effort. It seemed a small matter to him that the placards of the local evening papers should proclaim "Lloyd George's Reconciliation Meeting at Wombash Broken up by Suffragettes." For a year now he had observed a strict rule against buying the products of the local press, and he saw no reason for varying this protective regulation.

His mind was full of angry helplessness.

Was he to blame, was the church to blame, for its powerlessness in these social disputes? Could an abler man with a readier eloquence have done more?

He envied the cleverness of Cardinal Manning. Manning would have got right into the front of this affair. He would have accumulated credit for his church and himself....

But would he have done much?...

The bishop wandered along the platform to its end, and stood contemplating the convergent ways that gather together beyond the station and plunge into the hillside and the wilderness of sidings and trucks, signal-boxes, huts, coal-pits, electric standards, goods sheds,

turntables, and engine-houses, that ends in a bluish bricked-up cliff against the hill. A train rushed with a roar and clatter into the throat of the great tunnel and was immediately silenced; its rear lights twinkled and vanished, and then out of that huge black throat came wisps of white steam and curled slowly upward like lazy snakes until they caught the slanting sunshine. For the first time the day betrayed a softness and touched this scene of black energy to gold. All late afternoons are beautiful, whatever the day has been--if only there is a gleam of sun. And now a kind of mechanical greatness took the place of mere black disorder in the bishop's perception of his see. It was harsh, it was vast and strong, it was no lamb he had to rule but a dragon. Would it ever be given to him to overcome his dragon, to lead it home, and bless it?

He stood at the very end of the platform, with his gaitered legs wide apart and his hands folded behind him, staring beyond all visible things.

Should he do something very bold and striking? Should he invite both men and masters to the cathedral, and preach tremendous sermons to them upon these living issues?

Short sermons, of course.

But stating the church's attitude with a new and convincing vigour.

He had a vision of the great aisle strangely full and alive and astir. The organ notes still echoed in the fretted vaulting, as the preacher made his way from the chancel to the pulpit. The congregation was tense with expectation, and for some reason his mind dwelt for a long time upon the figure of the preacher ascending the steps of the pulpit. Outside the day was dark and stormy, so that the stained-glass windows looked absolutely dead. For a little while the preacher prayed. Then in the attentive silence the tenor of the preacher would begin, a thin jet of sound, a ray of light in the darkness, speaking to all these men as they had never been spoken to before....

Surely so one might call a halt to all these harsh conflicts. So one might lay hands afresh upon these stubborn minds, one might win them round to look at Christ the Master and Servant....

That, he thought, would be a good phrase: "Christ the Master and Servant."....

"Members of one Body," that should be his text.... At last it was finished. The big congregation, which had kept so still, sighed and stirred. The task of reconciliation was as good as done. "And now to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost...."

Outside the day had become suddenly bright, the threatening storm had drifted away, and great shafts of coloured light from the pictured windows were smiting like arrows amidst his hearers....

This idea of a great sermon upon capital and labour did so powerfully grip the bishop's imagination that he came near to losing the 8.27 train also.

He discovered it when it was already in the station. He had to walk down the platform very quickly. He did not run, but his gaiters, he felt, twinkled more than a bishop's should.

(8)

Directly he met his wife he realized that he had to hear something important and unpleasant.

She stood waiting for him in the inner hall, looking very grave and still. The light fell upon her pale face and her dark hair and her long white silken dress, making her seem more delicate and unworldly than usual and making the bishop feel grimy and sordid.

"I must have a wash," he said, though before he had thought of nothing but food. "I have had nothing to eat since tea-time--and that was mostly talk."

Lady Ella considered. "There are cold things.... You shall have a tray in the study. Not in the dining-room. Eleanor is there. I want to tell

you something. But go upstairs first and wash your poor tired face."

"Nothing serious, I hope?" he asked, struck by an unusual quality in her voice.

"I will tell you," she evaded, and after a moment of mutual scrutiny he went past her upstairs.

Since they had come to Princhester Lady Ella had changed very markedly. She seemed to her husband to have gained in dignity; she was stiller and more restrained; a certain faint arrogance, a touch of the "ruling class" manner had dwindled almost to the vanishing point. There had been a time when she had inclined to an authoritative hauteur, when she had seemed likely to develop into one of those aggressive and interfering old ladies who play so overwhelming a part in British public affairs. She had been known to initiate adverse judgments, to exercise the snub, to cut and humiliate. Princhester had done much to purge her of such tendencies. Princhester had made her think abundantly, and had put a new and subtler quality into her beauty. It had taken away the least little disposition to rustle as she moved, and it had softened her voice.

Now, when presently she stood in the study, she showed a new circumspection in her treatment of her husband. She surveyed the tray before him.

"You ought not to drink that Burgundy," she said. "I can see you

are dog-tired. It was uncorked yesterday, and anyhow it is not very digestible. This cold meat is bad enough. You ought to have one of those quarter bottles of champagne you got for my last convalescence. There's more than a dozen left over."

The bishop felt that this was a pretty return of his own kindly thoughts "after many days," and soon Dunk, his valet-butler, was pouring out the precious and refreshing glassful....

"And now, dear?" said the bishop, feeling already much better.

Lady Ella had come round to the marble fireplace. The mantel-piece was a handsome work by a Princhester artist in the Gill style--with contemplative ascetics as supporters.

"I am worried about Eleanor," said Lady Ella.

"She is in the dining-room now," she said, "having some dinner. She came in about a quarter past eight, half way through dinner."

"Where had she been?" asked the bishop.

"Her dress was torn--in two places. Her wrist had been twisted and a little sprained."

"My dear!"

"Her face--Grubby! And she had been crying."

"But, my dear, what had happened to her? You don't mean--?"

Husband and wife stared at one another aghast. Neither of them said the horrid word that flamed between them.

"Merciful heaven!" said the bishop, and assumed an attitude of despair.

"I didn't know she knew any of them. But it seems it is the second Walshingham girl--Phoebe. It's impossible to trace a girl's thoughts and friends. She persuaded her to go."

"But did she understand?"

"That's the serious thing," said Lady Ella.

She seemed to consider whether he could bear the blow.

"She understands all sorts of things. She argues.... I am quite unable to argue with her."

"About this vote business?"

"About all sorts of things. Things I didn't imagine she had heard of.

I knew she had been reading books. But I never imagined that she could have understood...."

The bishop laid down his knife and fork.

"One may read in books, one may even talk of things, without fully understanding," he said.

Lady Ella tried to entertain this comforting thought. "It isn't like that," she said at last. "She talks like a grown-up person. This--this escapade is just an accident. But things have gone further than that. She seems to think--that she is not being educated properly here, that she ought to go to a College. As if we were keeping things from her...."

The bishop reconsidered his plate.

"But what things?" he said.

"She says we get all round her," said Lady Ella, and left the implications of that phrase to unfold.

(9)

For a time the bishop said very little.

Lady Ella had found it necessary to make her first announcement standing behind him upon the hearthrug, but now she sat upon the arm of the great armchair as close to him as possible, and spoke in a more familiar tone.

The thing, she said, had come to her as a complete surprise. Everything had seemed so safe. Eleanor had been thoughtful, it was true, but it had never occurred to her mother that she had really been thinking--about such things as she had been thinking about. She had ranged in the library, and displayed a disposition to read the weekly papers and the monthly reviews. But never a sign of discontent.

"But I don't understand," said the bishop. "Why is she discontented? What is there that she wants different?"

"Exactly," said Lady Ella.

"She has got this idea that life here is secluded in some way," she expanded. "She used words like 'secluded' and 'artificial' and--what was it?--'cloistered.' And she said--"

Lady Ella paused with an effect of exact retrospection.

"'Out there,' she said, 'things are alive. Real things are happening.' It is almost as if she did not fully believe--"

Lady Ella paused again.

The bishop sat with his arm over the back of his chair, and his face downcast.

"The ferment of youth," he said at last. "The ferment of youth. Who has given her these ideas?"

Lady Ella did not know. She could have thought a school like St. Aubyns would have been safe, but nowadays nothing was safe. It was clear the girls who went there talked as girls a generation ago did not talk.
Their people at home encouraged them to talk and profess opinions about everything. It seemed that Phoebe Walshingham and Lady Kitty Kingdom were the leaders in these premature mental excursions. Phoebe aired religious doubts.

"But little Phoebe!" said the bishop.

"Kitty," said Lady Ella, "has written a novel."

"Already!"

"With elopements in it--and all sorts of things. She's had it typed.
You'd think Mary Crosshampton would know better than to let her daughter go flourishing the family imagination about in that way."

"Eleanor told you?"

"By way of showing that they think of--things in general."

The bishop reflected. "She wants to go to College."

"They want to go in a set."

"I wonder if college can be much worse than school.... She's eighteen--? But I will talk to her...."

(10)

All our children are changelings. They are perpetually fresh strangers. Every day they vanish and a new person masquerades as yesterday's child until some unexpected development betrays the cheat.

The bishop had still to learn this perennial newness of the young. He learnt it in half an hour at the end of a fatiguing day.

He went into the dining-room. He went in as carelessly as possible and smoking a cigarette. He had an honourable dread of being portentous in his family; almost ostentatiously he laid the bishop aside. Eleanor had finished her meal, and was sitting in the arm-chair by the fire with one hand holding her sprained wrist.

"Well," he said, and strolled to the hearthrug. He had had an odd idea that he would find her still dirty, torn, and tearful, as her mother had described her, a little girl in a scrape. But she had changed into her best white evening frock and put up her hair, and became in the firelight more of a lady, a very young lady but still a lady, than she had ever been to him before. She was dark like her mother, but not of the same willowy type; she had more of her father's sturdy build, and she had developed her shoulders at hockey and tennis. The firelight brought out the gracious reposeful lines of a body that ripened in adolescence. And though there was a vibration of resolution in her voice she spoke like one who is under her own control.

"Mother has told you that I have disgraced myself," she began.

"No," said the bishop, weighing it. "No. But you seem to have been indiscreet, little Norah."

"I got excited," she said. "They began turning out the other women--roughly. I was indignant."

"You didn't go to interrupt?" he asked.

She considered. "No," she said. "But I went."

He liked her disposition to get it right. "On that side," he assisted.

"It isn't the same thing as really meaning, Daddy," she said.

"And then things happened?"

"Yes," she said to the fire.

A pause followed. If they had been in a law-court, her barrister would have said, "That is my case, my lord." The bishop prepared to open the next stage in the proceedings.

"I think, Norah, you shouldn't have been there at all," he said.

"Mother says that."

"A man in my position is apt to be judged by his family. You commit more than yourself when you commit an indiscretion. Apart from that, it wasn't the place for a girl to be at. You are not a child now. We give you freedom--more freedom than most girls get--because we think you will use it wisely. You knew--enough to know that there was likely to be trouble."

The girl looked into the fire and spoke very carefully. "I don't think that I oughtn't to know the things that are going on."

The bishop studied her face for an instant. It struck him that they had reached something very fundamental as between parent and child. His

modernity showed itself in the temperance of his reply.

"Don't you think, my dear, that on the whole your mother and I, who have lived longer and know more, are more likely to know when it is best that you should begin to know--this or that?"

The girl knitted her brows and seemed to be reading her answer out of the depths of the coals. She was on the verge of speaking, altered her mind and tried a different beginning.

"I think that every one must do their thinking--his thinking--for--oneself," she said awkwardly.

"You mean you can't trust--?"

"It isn't trusting. But one knows best for oneself when one is hungry."

"And you find yourself hungry?"

"I want to find out for myself what all this trouble about votes and things means."

"And we starve you--intellectually?"

"You know I don't think that. But you are busy...."

"Aren't you being perhaps a little impatient, Eleanor? After all--you are barely eighteen.... We have given you all sorts of liberties."

Her silence admitted it. "But still," she said after a long pause, "there are other girls, younger than I am, in these things. They talk about--oh, all sorts of things. Freely...."

"You've been awfully good to me," she said irrelevantly. "And of course this meeting was all pure accident."

Father and daughter remained silent for awhile, seeking a better grip.

"What exactly do you want, Eleanor?" he asked.

She looked up at him. "Generally?" she asked.

"Your mother has the impression that you are discontented."

"Discontented is a horrid word."

"Well--unsatisfied."

She remained still for a time. She felt the moment had come to make her demand.

"I would like to go to Newnham or Somerville--and work. I feel--so

horribly ignorant. Of all sorts of things. If I were a son I should go--"

"Ye--es," said the bishop and reflected.

He had gone rather far in the direction of the Woman Suffrage people; he had advocated equality of standard in all sorts of matters, and the memory of these utterances hampered him.

"You could read here," he tried.

"If I were a son, you wouldn't say that."

His reply was vague. "But in this home," he said, "we have a certain atmosphere."

He left her to imply her differences in sensibility and response from the hardier male.

Her hesitation marked the full gravity of her reply. "It's just that," she said. "One feels--" She considered it further. "As if we were living in a kind of magic world--not really real. Out there--" she glanced over her shoulder at the drawn blind that hid the night. "One meets with different sorts of minds and different--atmospheres. All this is very beautiful. I've had the most wonderful home. But there's a sort of feeling as though it couldn't really go on, as though all these strikes

and doubts and questionings--"

She stopped short at questionings, for the thing was said.

The bishop took her meaning gallantly and honestly.

"The church of Christ, little Norah, is built upon a rock."

She made no answer. She moved her head very slightly so that he could not see her face, and remained sitting rather stiffly and awkwardly with her eyes upon the fire.

Her silence was the third and greatest blow the bishop received that day....

It seemed very long indeed before either of them spoke. At last he said: "We must talk about these things again, Norah, when we are less tired and have more time.... You have been reading books.... When Caxton set up his printing-press he thrust a new power between church and disciple and father and child.... And I am tired. We must talk it over a little later."

The girl stood up. She took her father's hands. "Dear, dear Daddy," she said, "I am so sorry to be a bother. I am so sorry I went to that meeting.... You look tired out."

"We must talk--properly," said the bishop, patting one hand, then discovering from her wincing face that it was the sprained one. "Your poor wrist," he said.

"It's so hard to talk, but I want to talk to you, Daddy. It isn't that I have hidden things...."

She kissed him, and the bishop had the odd fancy that she kissed him as though she was sorry for him....

It occurred to him that really there could be no time like the present for discussing these "questionings" of hers, and then his fatigue and shyness had the better of him again.

(11)

The papers got hold of Eleanor's share in the suffragette disturbance. The White Blackbird said things about her.

It did not attack her. It did worse. It admired her ...impudently.

It spoke of her once as "Norah," and once as "the Scrope Flapper."

Its headline proclaimed: "Plucky Flappers Hold Up L. G."