

IN HIS STEPS.

"What Would Jesus Do?"

By Charles M. Sheldon.

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SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

This story began in the "News" of Oct. 7.—The Rev. Henry Maxwell, minister of a fashionable congregation, suddenly becomes impressed with the holiness of the life he and his people are leading, and with a number of his leading members, he makes a vow to conduct his life on the principle of what Jesus would do under similar circumstances. The sacrifice each is compelled to make to regulate his or her modern day existence to the rule of "What would Jesus do?" forms the theme of the story. Among those who follow the minister are Rachel Winslow, the soprano of his choir, Virginia Page, a wealthy heiress, Edward Norman, publisher of an "up-to-date" newspaper, Alexander Powers, a railroad superintendent, and others whose lives are powerfully affected by their determination to walk "In His Steps."

(CONTINUED.)

CHAPTER X.

"These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth."

When Dr. Bruce and the bishop entered the Sterling mansion, everything in the usually well appointed household was in the greatest confusion and terror. The great rooms down stairs were empty, but overhead were hurried footsteps and confused noises. One of the servants ran down the grand staircase with a look of horror on her face just as the bishop and Dr. Bruce were starting to go up.

"Miss Felicia is with Mrs. Sterling," the servant stammered in answer to a question and then burst into a hysterical cry and ran through the drawing room and out of doors.

At the top of the staircase the two men were met by Felicia. She walked up to Dr. Bruce at once and put both hands in his. The bishop laid his hand on her head, and the three stood there a moment in perfect silence. The bishop had known Felicia since she was a child. He was the first to break silence.

"The God of all mercy be with you, Felicia, in this dark hour. Your mother—"

The bishop hesitated. Out of the buried past he had during his hurried passage from his friend's house to this house of death irresistibly drawn the one tender romance of his young manhood. Not even Bruce knew that. But there had been a time when the bishop had offered the income of a singularly undivided affection upon the altar of his youth to the beautiful Camilla Rolfe, and she had chosen between him and the millionaire. The bishop carried no bitterness with his memory, but it was still a memory.

For answer to the bishop's unfinished query Felicia turned and went back into her mother's room. She had not said a word yet, but both men were

struck with her wonderful calm. She returned to the hall door and beckoned to them, and the two ministers, with a feeling that they were about to behold something very unusual, entered.

Rose lay with her arms outstretched on the bed; Clara, the nurse, sat with her head covered, sobbing in spasms of terror, and Mrs. Sterling, with "the light that never was on land or sea" luminous on her face, lay there so still that even the bishop was deceived at first. Then as the great truth broke upon him and Dr. Bruce he staggered, and the sharp agony of the old wound shot through him. It passed and left him standing there in that chamber of death with the eternal calmness and strength that the children of God have a right to possess, and right well he used that calmness and strength in the days that followed.

The next moment the house below was in a tumult. Almost at the same time the doctor, who had been sent for at once, but lived some distance away, came in, together with police officers who had been summoned by the frightened servants. With them were four or five newspaper correspondents and several neighbors. Dr. Bruce and the bishop met this miscellaneous crowd at the head of the stairs and succeeded in excluding all except those whose presence was necessary. With these the two friends learned all the facts ever known about "the Sterling tragedy," as the papers in their sensational accounts next day called it.

Mr. Sterling had gone into his room that evening about 3 o'clock, and that was the last seen of him until in half an hour a shot was heard and a servant who was in the hall ran into the room and found the owner of the house dead on the floor, killed by his own hand. Felicia at the time was sitting by her mother. Rose was reading in the library. She ran upstairs, saw her father as he was being lifted upon the couch by the servants and then ran screaming into her mother's room, where she "ung her" herself down in the foot of the bed, a swoon. Mrs. Sterling had at first fainted at the shock, then rallied with wonderful swiftness and sent a messenger to call Dr. Bruce. She had then insisted on seeing her husband. In spite of Felicia, she had compelled Clara and the housemaid, terrified and trembling, to support her while she crossed the hall and entered the room where her husband lay. She had looked upon him with a tearless face had gone back into her own room, was laid on the bed, and as Dr. Bruce and the bishop entered the house she, with a prayer of forgiveness for herself and her husband on her quivering lips, had died, with Felicia bending over her and Rose still lying senseless at her feet.

So great and swift had been the entrance of grim death into that palace of luxury that Sunday night, but the full cause of his coming was not known until the facts in regard to Mr. Sterling's business affairs were finally disclosed.

Then it was learned that for some time he had been facing financial ruin owing to certain speculations that had in a month's time swept his supposed wealth into complete destruction. With the cunning and desperation of a man who battles for his very life, when he

saw his money, which was all the life he ever valued, slipping from him he had put off the evil day to the last moment. Sunday afternoon, however, he had received news that proved to him beyond a doubt the fact of his utter ruin. The very house that he called his, the chairs in which he sat, his carriage, the dishes from which he ate, had all been bought by money for which he himself had never really done an honest stroke of pure labor.

It had all rested on a tissue of deceit and speculation that had no foundation in real values. He knew the fact better than any one else, but he had hoped with the hope that such men always have, that the same methods that brought him the money would also prevent its loss. He had been deceived in this as many others have been. As soon as the truth that he was practically a beggar had dawned upon him he saw no escape from suicide. It was the irresistible result of such a life as he had lived. He had made money his god. As soon as that god had gone out of his little world there was nothing more to worship, and when a man's object of worship is gone he has no more to live for. Thus died the great millionaire.

Charles R. Sterling and, verily, he died as the fool dieth, for what is the gain or the loss of money compared with the unsearchable riches of eternal life, which are far beyond the reach of worldly speculation, loss or change? Mrs. Sterling's death was the result of shock. She had not been taken into her husband's confidence for years, but she knew that the source of his wealth was precarious. Her life for several years had been a death in life. The Rolfe always gave the impression that they could endure more disaster unmoved than any one else. Mrs. Sterling illustrated the old family tradition when she was carried into the room where her husband lay, but the feeble tonement could not hold the spirit, and it gave up the ghost, torn and weakened by long years of suffering and disappointment.

The effect of this triple blow, the death of father and mother and the loss of property, was instantly apparent in the sisters. The horror of events stupefied Rose for weeks. She lay unmoved by sympathy or any effort to rally. She did not seem to realize yet that the money which had been so large a part of her very existence was gone. Even when she was told that she and Felicia must leave the house and be dependent upon relatives and friends she did not seem to understand what it meant.

Felicia, however, was fully conscious of the facts. She knew just what had happened and why. She was talking over her future plans with her cousin Rachel a few days after the funeral. Mrs. Winslow and Rachel had left Raymond and come to Chicago at once as soon as the terrible news had reached them, and with other friends of the family they were planning for the future of Rose and Felicia.

"Felicia, you and Rose must come to Raymond with us. That is settled. Mother will not bear of any other plan at present," Rachel had said, while her beautiful face glowed with love for her cousin, a love that had deepened day by day and was intensified by the knowledge that they both belonged to the new discipleship.

"Unless I could find something to do here," answered Felicia. She looked wistfully at Rachel, and Rachel said gently:

"What could you do, dear?"

"Nothing. I was never taught to do anything except a little music, and I do not know enough about it to teach it or earn my living by it. I have learned to cook a little," Felicia answered, with a slight smile.

"Then you can cook for us. Mother is always having trouble with her kitchen," said Rachel, understanding well enough that Felicia was thinking of the fact that she was now dependent for her very food and shelter upon the kindness of family friends.

It is true, the girls received a little something out of the wreck of their father's fortune, but with a speculator's

mad folly he had managed to involve both his wife's and children's portions in the common ruin.

"Can I? Can I?" Felicia replied to Rachel's proposition, as if it were to be considered seriously. "I am ready to do anything honorable to make my living and that of Rosa. Poor Rosa! She will never be able to get over the shock of our trouble."

"We will arrange the details when we get to Raymond," Rachel said, smiling through her tears at Felicia's eager willingness to care for herself.

So in a few weeks Rose and Felicia found themselves a part of the Winslow family in Raymond. It was a bitter experience for Rose, but there was nothing else for her to do, and she accepted the inevitable, brooding over the great change in her life and in many ways adding to the burden of Felicia and her cousin Rachel.

Felicia at once found herself in an atmosphere of discipleship that was like heaven to her in its revelation of companionship. It is true that Mrs. Winslow was not in sympathy with the course that Rachel was taking, but the remarkable events since the pledge had been taken were too powerful in their results not to impress even such a woman as Mrs. Winslow. With Rachel Felicia found a perfect fellowship. She at once found a part to take in the new life in the household at her aunt's and in a short time demonstrated her ability as a cook so clearly that Virginia suggested that she take charge of the cooking class at the Rectangle.

Felicia entered upon this work with the keenest pleasure. For the first time in her life she had the delight of doing something of value for the happiness of others. Her resolve to do everything after asking, "What would Jesus do?" touched her deepest nature. She began to develop and strengthen wonderfully.

Even Mrs. Winslow was obliged to acknowledge the great usefulness and beauty of Felicia's character. The aunt looked with astonishment upon her niece, this city bred girl, reared in the greatest luxury, the daughter of a millionaire, now walking around in her kitchen, her arms covered with flour and occasionally a streak of it on her nose—for Felicia at first had a habit of rubbing her nose vigorously when she was trying to remember some recipe—mixing various dishes, with the greatest interest in their results, washing up pans and kettles and doing the ordinary work of a servant in the Winslow Rectangle settlement. At first Mrs. Winslow remonstrated.

"Felicia, it is not your place to be out here doing this common work. I cannot allow it."

"Why, aunt? Didn't you like the muffins I made this morning?" Felicia would ask meekly, but with a hidden smile, knowing her aunt's weakness for that kind of muffin.

"They were beautiful, Felicia, but it does not seem right for you to be doing such work for us."

"Why not? What else can I do?" Her aunt looked at her thoughtfully, noting her remarkable beauty of face and expression.

"You do not always intend to do this kind of work, Felicia?"

"Maybe I shall. I have had a dream of opening an ideal cookshop in Chicago, or some large city and going around to the poor families in some slum district like the Rectangle, teaching the mothers how to prepare food properly. I remember hearing Dr. Bruce say once that he believed one of the great miseries of comparative poverty consisted in poor food. He even went so far as to say that he thought some kinds of crime could be traced to soggy biscuits and tough beefsteak. I'm confident I would be able to make a living for Rose and myself and at the same time to help others."

Felicia brooded over this dream until it became a reality. Meanwhile she grew into the affections of the Raymond people and the Rectangle folks, among whom she was known as "the angel cook." Underneath the structure

of the beautiful character she was growing always rested her promise made in Nazareth Avenue church.

"What would Jesus do?" She prayed and hoped and worked and planned her life by the answer to that question.

It was the inspiration of her conduct and the answer to all her ambition.

Three months had gone by since the Sunday morning when Dr. Bruce came into his pulpit with the message of the new discipleship. Never before had the Rev. Calvin Bruce realized how deep the feelings of his members flowed. He humbly confessed that the appeal he had made met with an unexpected response from men and women who, like Felicia, were hungry for something in their lives that the conventional type of church membership and fellowship had failed to give them.

But Dr. Bruce was not yet satisfied for himself. We cannot tell what his feeling was or what led to the movement he finally made, to the great astonishment of all who knew him, better than by relating a conversation between him and the bishop at this time in the history of the pledge in Nazareth Avenue church. The two friends were, as before, in Dr. Bruce's house, seated in his study.

"You know what I have come in this evening for?" the bishop was saying after the friends had been talking some time about the results of the pledge with Nazareth Avenue people.

Dr. Bruce looked over at the bishop and shook his head.

"I have come to confess," went on the bishop, "that I have not yet kept my promise to walk in His steps in the way that I believe I shall be obliged to if I satisfy my thought of what it means to walk in His steps."

Dr. Bruce had risen and was pacing his study. The bishop remained in the deep easy chair, with his hands clasped, but his eye burned with the glow that always belonged to him before he made some great resolve.

"Edward"—Dr. Bruce spoke abruptly—"I have not yet been able to satisfy myself, either, in obeying my promise, but I have at last decided on my course. In order to follow it, I shall be obliged to resign from Nazareth Avenue church."

"I knew you would," replied the bishop quietly, "and I came in this evening to say that I shall be obliged to do the same with my charge."

Dr. Bruce turned and walked up to his friend. They were both laboring under repressed excitement.

"Is it necessary in your case?" asked Dr. Bruce.

"Yes. Let me state my reasons. Probably they are the same as yours. In fact, I am sure they are."

The bishop paused a moment, then went on with increasing feeling:

"Calvin, you know how many years I have been doing the work of my position, and you know something of the responsibility and the care of it. I do not mean to say that my life has been free from burden bearing or sorrow, but I have certainly led what the poor and desperate of this sinful city would call a very comfortable—yes, a very luxurious—life. I have a beautiful house to live in, the most expensive food, clothing and physical pleasures. I have been able to go abroad at least a dozen times and have enjoyed for years the beautiful companionship of art and letters and music and all the rest of the very best. I have never known what it meant to be without money or its equivalent, and I have been unable to silence the question of late. 'What have I suffered for the sake of Christ?' Paul was told what great things he must suffer for the sake of his Lord. Maxwell's position at Raymond is well taken when he insists that to walk in the steps of Christ means to suffer. Where has my suffering come in? The petty trials and annoyances of my clerical life are not worth mentioning as sorrows or suffering. Compared with Paul or any of the Christian martyrs or early disciples, I have lived a luxurious, sinful life, full of ease and pleasure. I cannot endure this any longer. I have that within me which of late rises in overwhelming condemnation of such a fol-

FINE PORTRAIT OF VICE PRESIDENT HOBART.



lowing of Jesus. I have not been walking in His steps. Under the present system of church and social life I see no escape from this condemnation except to give the rest of my life personally to the actual physical and soul needs of the wretched people in the worst part of this city."

The bishop had risen now and walked over to the window. The street in front of the house was as light as day, and he looked out at the crowds passing, then turned, and, with a passionate utterance that showed how deep the volcanic fire in him burned, he exclaimed: "Calvin, this is a terrible city in which we live. Its misery, its sin, its selfishness, appall my heart, and I have struggled for years with the sickening dread of the time when I should be forced to leave the pleasant luxury of my official position to put my life into contact with the modern paganism of this century. The awful condition of the girls in the great department stores, the brutal selfishness of the insolent society, fashion and wealth that ignores all the sorrows of the city, the fearful curse of the drink and gambling hell, the wall of the unemployed, the hatred of the church by countless men who see in the church only great piles of costly stone and upholstered furniture and the minister as a luxurious idler, all the vast tumult of this vast torrent of humanity with its false and its true ideas, its exaggeration of evils in the church and its bitterness and shame that are

the result of many complex causes—this as a total fact, in its contrast with the easy, comfortable life I have led, fills me more and more with a sense of mingled terror and self accusation. I have heard the words of Jesus many times lately, 'Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these least, my brethren, ye did it unto me.' And when have I personally visited the prisoner or the desperate or the sinful in any way that has actually caused me suffering? Rather I have followed the conventional, soft habits of my position and have lived in the society of the rich, refined, aristocratic members of my congregation. Where has the suffering come in? What have I suffered for Jesus' sake? Do you know, Calvin, the bishop turned abruptly toward his friend—"I have been tempted of late to lash myself with a scourge. If I had lived in Martin Luther's time, I would have bared my back to a self-inflicted torture."

Dr. Bruce was very pale. Never had he seen the bishop or heard him who under the influence of such a passion. There was a sudden silence in the room. The bishop had sat down again and bowed his head. Dr. Bruce spoke at last:

"Edward, I do not need to say that you have expressed my feelings also. I have been in a similar position for years. My life has been one of comparative luxury. I do not, of course, need to say that I have not had trials and

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