

The Revival of St. Paul's A Story For Easter

By HOWARD FIELDING

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MRS. MORTON HARWOOD was a patroness of St. Paul's church of Bayside—the patroness, indeed; its main peculiarity pillar. In recent years her husband had made a great fortune, and he had bought a country seat at Bayside, which was the fashionable thing to do; and Mrs. Harwood had joined St. Paul's.

It had become more and more the custom for the holders of country seats to come down from the city for the week end, even in winter, but they rarely went to church. It was Mrs. Morton Harwood's belief that they could be made to go to St. Paul's.

In regard to this matter she called upon James Kelvin, the stationer, formerly active in the affairs of the church, but fallen of late into an apathy which seemed to be working like a dry rot throughout the congregation. To Mr. Kelvin the lady suggested the displacement of the present minister, who was very willing to go, and the calling of some one in his stead who would wield the requisite social influence—“some one,” said she, “who can mingle with our wealthy people on terms of equality.”

Mrs. Harwood, by the way, was not quite able as yet to do this herself, but she had one foot over the threshold and could see within. She had reason to believe that the Rev. Philip Lee Winslow, member of one of the most exclusive families in the country, could be secured for St. Paul's. He was at present in charge of a chapel of Grace church in the city.

“He would be an ideal man for us,” said Mrs. Harwood.

Mr. Kelvin had no objection. He agreed to see several other men in the matter, and none of them objected. It might not be quite true to say that they did not care, but it is certain that they did not exhibit the old time interest. However, they mustered a quorum at the necessary meeting, and the Rev. Philip Lee Winslow was called to St. Paul's of Bayside.

Mr. Winslow was a tall, spare young man with a broad chest and the general look of one inured to outdoor exercises. His blue eyes were very bright, partly by contrast with his bronzed skin, and his teeth were white and perfect. Bayside admitted that he was a “fine figure of a man.” His welcome came naturally from Mrs. Harwood and her circle, and his appearance in the pulpit of St. Paul's was signalled by the advent of several large automobiles that never before had been seen waiting outside the church. He was a success in the higher social circles, but singularly enough his own preference seemed to be for the company of the common people and especially for James Kelvin and his family.

Kevin had a very pretty daughter, Annie, nineteen at the time, and two boys some years younger. The Rev. Mr. Winslow liked to spend an hour or two at the Kelvin house on an evening singing with Annie or playing the accompaniments for her songs, and he would sometimes enthrall the boys with tales of his uncle's great stock farm, where there were hundreds of blooded horses, some of them as wild as zebras and not to be ridden by any living man except one that had the special gift.

You could hear the new pastor's praises from any of the Kelvins, and no one spoke ill of him, though some said that he was not overexerting himself for the rejuvenation of the church. The fact is that there was no great change throughout the winter. St. Paul's drifted along in the same apathy as before. When the pastor was asked what he thought of it he would only say: “The situation is very difficult. I am endeavoring to get at the root of the trouble.”

In March there came to Mrs. Harwood's house a distinguished guest. He was a fencer of the first rank, or very near it, who had sung in grand opera during the winter, but was now in retirement because of an altercation with a reporter in which the latter had sustained some slight damage. His name was Kassimir, or thus he was known, and he was a count.

In private life and with those whom he admitted to be his equals he was said to be humane and engaging. Certainly the Harwoods valued him for what they conceived to be his personal qualities and not merely for the luster of his title and his fame as an “attraction” at their house. Thus only can be explained the determination of Mrs. Harwood that Count Kassimir should sing in St. Paul's at Easter.

The count had been gaining flesh faster than he liked and had taken to horseback exercise for its reduction. Mounted upon a splendid thoroughbred from the Harwood stables, he would tear through the streets of Bayside without the smallest regard for those who might be in his way. He had been an army officer, and his natural arrogance was enhanced by the thousand brutalities of European military service.

Now, to a simple citizen like James Kelvin Count Kassimir was an objectionable character in general and a fugitive from justice in particular, for the assaulted reporter had obtained a warrant, not valid in Bayside, which is across the state line. The idea of Kassimir's singing in St. Paul's church was very painful; but, on the other hand, there was Mrs. Harwood to be considered. Mrs. Harwood had come forward in the midst of the church's misfortunes, which had been many. First the old wooden edifice, which had stood forty years, had burned flat, built on another plot, had run foul of a flaw in the title, which had cost much money to straighten out, and finally a quicksand, discovered too late under a corner of the foundation, had entailed a disheartening expense. Mrs. Harwood had given some money and had loaned the balance, and she had had her way ever since, wherefore Mr. Kelvin went to his pastor with a troubled brow.

“As to this—Count Kassimir,” said he, “what is your opinion?” Winslow was silent for full twenty seconds, and then he answered gravely: “I think the Lord has sent him.” “He will sing at Easter?” “Not if I am pastor of St. Paul's at that time. Don't ask me to say more just now.”

It was rumored about the town next day that Winslow had refused to let Kassimir sing in the church and that Mrs. Harwood was determined upon it. The rumor was confirmed. All Bayside discussed it. Mrs. Harwood rallied her forces, influencing a great many. Winslow said, “Not while I am pastor of St. Paul's.”

Everybody wondered what would happen, and naturally when something did happen it was made the subject of considerable exaggeration. It was the afternoon of the Thursday before Easter. The church was open and some ladies of the congregation were arranging floral decorations. Mrs. Harwood had desired to have a decorator from the city and had offered to pay the charges, but Mr. Winslow had insisted upon home talent.

Now, the simple fact is that Count Kassimir was taking one of his rides, and, desiring to see Mrs. Harwood, whom he believed to be at the church, he went there to find her. It was reported, however, that he went to call Mr. Winslow to account for having made statements derogatory to his character.

It was one of the count's delights to stop a running horse in the shortest possible space. He would dash up to a place as if with no intention of halting and then halt. He came whirling into the semicircular roadway that led from the street to the church door with an astonishing clatter of hoofs and with results very surprising to himself. At that moment one of the Kelvin boys, superintended by Annie, was wheeling a barrow laden with potted plants along a narrow strip of boards that had been laid upon the mud. The rushing steed came up unseen behind the boy, who dodged for his life, upsetting the barrow, from which a great mass of pots and flowers rolled under the horse's feet.

The animal shied like a zigzag flash of lightning, and Count Kassimir kept straight on through the air, landing on all fours without serious damage. He was up in an instant, but the horse had vanished around a corner of the church. In this direction, however, there was no exit, and the animal was not quite scared enough to dash himself against a stone wall. He stopped, and Kassimir caught him and began to beat him unmercifully.

At this there was an outcry, and Mr. Winslow, with others, came running from the church. The clergyman understood the situation at a glance. He laid an iron hand on Kassimir's arm. “The horse is somewhat excited,” said he. “It is better that I should return him to Mrs. Harwood.” Kassimir made a very violent retort, and the next instant was stretched flat upon his back. The onlookers are not sure to this day whether Winslow or the horse did it. The minister never would tell. One thing, however, Bill saw plainly—that the horse was absolutely crazy and that to mount him seemed mere suicide. Nevertheless the pastor of St. Paul's got into the saddle as if it were no trouble at all and after permitting the animal to execute some amazing evolutions quite unchecked rode away at a very moderate pace. Kassimir walked to the Harwoods', the better part of two miles.

“You mean—” “To think,” he burst forth at last, “that you came here as a fashionable minister! Why, I hardly thought I'd ever come to know you.” The young pastor took off his hat and looked upward for a moment to the sky. “Do you know me?” he asked suddenly. “Do you know me thoroughly and like me well—well enough to let me steal the jewel from your house if I can and carry it to mine?” “You mean—” “Annie.” Kevin drew a deep breath. “Well,” said he, “I'd be a long time waiting for a better man.”

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Mrs. Harwood came to the church in the late afternoon in high dudgeon and demanded an apology for the mistreatment of her guest. Mr. Winslow was extremely courteous and apologetic, but he would not express any regret for what he had done.

“The man was abusing the horse,” he said. “I was obliged to interfere, and I did so as gently as possible.” None of the Harwoods, none of the villa set, attended the Easter service in St. Paul's, but the congregation was the largest that had gathered in the church within two years.

On the Tuesday following Mr. Winslow called at the Kelvin house in the evening.

“I have received word from Mrs. Morton Harwood,” said he, “that she has withdrawn from St. Paul's, at least for as long as I remain pastor. In these circumstances I think it best that there should be a meeting called for the purpose of expressing our sincere sense of obligation to Mrs. Harwood for her many benefactions to the church and our regret at her withdrawal and also for the purpose of raising immediately the money to repay her advances.”

Kevin was staggered. “Can we do it?” he gasped. “Mr. Kelvin,” said the pastor, “we must. This church is dying of dependence. I have studied the situation thoroughly, and that is what is the matter. When you lost heart for a moment after a series of misfortunes the task that should have been shared by all was whittled out of the way by an act of ill considered munificence. Understand me, I will not hear one word against Mrs. Harwood. She meant well. But I insist that America is not the place for this sort of thing. It is a place where people act for themselves and bear their own burdens. So must we live here in this land or perish, souls first and bodies afterward. We hear too much of great gifts. The whole community is becoming an object of charity. We stand with waiting palms like lackeys. But my face shall be against this in the small circle where I have influence. Let us get together, we who own this church, and pay for it. Now, at this good time of year, this season of spiritual rebirth, will you join with me and draw your friends after you to make our church live again?”

The two men clasped hands in silence. At the meeting, which was called at the pastor's request, there were but two notable men who were missed. One of them was known to be ill, and the other was his physician.

“I am sitting with Brother Barnes,” wrote the latter in a note which was read at the meeting, “as the only sure way of keeping him in bed, where he belongs. Otherwise he would certainly be with you. Upon the money question, put us down as follows.” And the sums named were liberal. Within an hour the amount required was subscribed. Whenever Mrs. Harwood's name was mentioned it was with respect and gratitude. She had borne the burden for a time. It was now the turn of others.

Winslow walked home with Kelvin when all was over. The stationer was in high spirits, and he chuckled like one who has heard a good joke. “To think,” he burst forth at last, “that you came here as a fashionable minister! Why, I hardly thought I'd ever come to know you.”

The young pastor took off his hat and looked upward for a moment to the sky. “Do you know me?” he asked suddenly. “Do you know me thoroughly and like me well—well enough to let me steal the jewel from your house if I can and carry it to mine?” “You mean—” “Annie.”

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Table of names and amounts for District No. 22, including B. Sullivan, C. Haag, E. Shute, J. Maxon, J. T. Grace, A. Grassar, W. H. Weiglauer, P. Sullivan, B. Putz, R. Haag, A. Danielson, Robins Bros, M.H. Trullinger, M. Bahndt, Chas. Gien, A. Engle, W. W. Elkins, C. Engle, G. Hunigate, Ira Boyer, J. J. Kraus, Matt Baa, Ben Wolfier, Jr., William Rhodes, W. Dibble, Carl Potwin, G. Goetz, John Goetz, Ray Fish, Fred Bachert, R. Bachert, Joe Wiesele, Joe Willett, Ed Judy, Jas. McBride, C. E. Walton, Wm. Preston, J. O. Vernon, R. C. Ingram, M. Bisanz, Chas. E. Oglesby, E. King, Milton Armstrong, Mr. Ballington, Dave Shepherd, Geo. E. Oglesby, S. B. Berg, A. D. Gribble, N. E. Cole, A. Koehler.

Table of names and amounts for District No. 23, including F. Hart, J. K. Hart, Harold Roop, W. Watson, W. F. Smith, A. S. Thompson, C. E. Miller, Oliver King, Elmer King, Roy Yoder, E. L. Kenagy, C. G. Hoffmann, A. J. Lais, Giger Bros, A. Elliott, C. E. Miller, Albert Elliott, John Sturwe, E. L. Kenagy, Giger Bros, Phil Wiegand, Chas. Catto, Elmer Deetz, Jack Melki, Leo Askin, J. J. Wurfle, C. E. Miller, R. D. Miller, C. E. Hilton, H. H. Deetz, John Rogie, Roy Garrett, G. E. Wyland, Abe Jones, C. E. Stuts, Harry Garrett.

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Table of names and amounts for District No. 25, including Wilson & Cooke, Pope & Co.

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Table of names and amounts for District No. 27, including A. L. Larkins, Richard Johnson, D. N. Trullinger, E. Foust, J. L. Evans, D. L. Trullinger, Wilson & Cooke, X. Stromgreen, J. Purts, Ed Grace, L. Grace.

Table of names and amounts for District No. 28, including A. L. Larkins, Richard Johnson, D. N. Trullinger, E. Foust, J. L. Evans, D. L. Trullinger, Wilson & Cooke, X. Stromgreen, J. Purts, Ed Grace, L. Grace.

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Table of names and amounts for District No. 31, including R. T. Seely, C. Sumner, Wm. Nussbaum, J. Iderhof, G. Saum, A. Athy, H. Ellinger, J. Bushbaum, J. Schatz, R. Schatz, C. Tiedman, M. Cline, Wm. Schatz, F. Moser, H. Frobes, F. Weddel, Mr. Lawrey, C. W. Larson, G. Fallmezer, R. Thompson, R. Gasser, Sharp Bros, W. Shaver, Koman & Kohler.

Table of names and amounts for District No. 32, including R. T. Seely, C. Sumner, Wm. Nussbaum, J. Iderhof, G. Saum, A. Athy, H. Ellinger, J. Bushbaum, J. Schatz, R. Schatz, C. Tiedman, M. Cline, Wm. Schatz, F. Moser, H. Frobes, F. Weddel, Mr. Lawrey, C. W. Larson, G. Fallmezer, R. Thompson, R. Gasser, Sharp Bros, W. Shaver, Koman & Kohler.

Table of names and amounts for District No. 33, including R. T. Seely, C. Sumner, Wm. Nussbaum, J. Iderhof, G. Saum, A. Athy, H. Ellinger, J. Bushbaum, J. Schatz, R. Schatz, C. Tiedman, M. Cline, Wm. Schatz, F. Moser, H. Frobes, F. Weddel, Mr. Lawrey, C. W. Larson, G. Fallmezer, R. Thompson, R. Gasser, Sharp Bros, W. Shaver, Koman & Kohler.

Table of names and amounts for District No. 34, including R. T. Seely, C. Sumner, Wm. Nussbaum, J. Iderhof, G. Saum, A. Athy, H. Ellinger, J. Bushbaum, J. Schatz, R. Schatz, C. Tiedman, M. Cline, Wm. Schatz, F. Moser, H. Frobes, F. Weddel, Mr. Lawrey, C. W. Larson, G. Fallmezer, R. Thompson, R. Gasser, Sharp Bros, W. Shaver, Koman & Kohler.

Table of names and amounts for District No. 35, including R. T. Seely, C. Sumner, Wm. Nussbaum, J. Iderhof, G. Saum, A. Athy, H. Ellinger, J. Bushbaum, J. Schatz, R. Schatz, C. Tiedman, M. Cline, Wm. Schatz, F. Moser, H. Frobes, F. Weddel, Mr. Lawrey, C. W. Larson, G. Fallmezer, R. Thompson, R. Gasser, Sharp Bros, W. Shaver, Koman & Kohler.

Table of names and amounts for District No. 36, including R. T. Seely, C. Sumner, Wm. Nussbaum, J. Iderhof, G. Saum, A. Athy, H. Ellinger, J. Bushbaum, J. Schatz, R. Schatz, C. Tiedman, M. Cline, Wm. Schatz, F. Moser, H. Frobes, F. Weddel, Mr. Lawrey, C. W. Larson, G. Fallmezer, R. Thompson, R. Gasser, Sharp Bros, W. Shaver, Koman & Kohler.

Table of names and amounts for District No. 37, including R. T. Seely, C. Sumner, Wm. Nussbaum, J. Iderhof, G. Saum, A. Athy, H. Ellinger, J. Bushbaum, J. Schatz, R. Schatz, C. Tiedman, M. Cline, Wm. Schatz, F. Moser, H. Frobes, F. Weddel, Mr. Lawrey, C. W. Larson, G. Fallmezer, R. Thompson, R. Gasser, Sharp Bros, W. Shaver, Koman & Kohler.

Table of names and amounts for District No. 38, including R. T. Seely, C. Sumner, Wm. Nussbaum, J. Iderhof, G. Saum, A. Athy, H. Ellinger, J. Bushbaum, J. Schatz, R. Schatz, C. Tiedman, M. Cline, Wm. Schatz, F. Moser, H. Frobes, F. Weddel, Mr. Lawrey, C. W. Larson, G. Fallmezer, R. Thompson, R. Gasser, Sharp Bros, W. Shaver, Koman & Kohler.

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