

"REMEMBER ME"

(A True Story of Our Province During the Fever Plague at Memphis)

IT was not that they needed volunteers. Every one wanted to go. The same spirit of sacrifice breathed, which years ago had started to its feet the whole convent of Salamanca, when a lone Friar returning told how all but he and another had died on the way to the distant mission. To go meant certain death, for none ever returned from the plague-stricken city. But it was an heroic death—one worthy of Dominic's sons. It meant even more. It was passport to Heaven, and who could relinquish his hope of that prize. So long they kept kneeling together, praying the Holy of God to select whom He would; yet each added a plea for himself. The night was already far on its course and the candles that burned on the altar shone radiant as seraphim eyes gazing mysteries upon the figures bowed there. At length the prior arose and invoked God to choose the Matthias among them. The lot was cast. The halo fell on the whitened brow of one grown old in grace, and he stood in his glory like a saint awaiting departure. But quick as a moment something lay sobbing there at his feet.

"Father," it broke forth in the voice of an angel, "Father, the days of thy labors are ended. Thy crown is won and thy years stand recorded in Heaven. Oh, stay thou here, and let me who have not a merit die in thy stead."

The old priest looked down and loved the young man, but he longed for the sacrifice, too. Which should he choose? His heart was a tempest of love, and mighty emotion surged strong in his mightier bosom.

"But I no other chance am given—so sure a way—and so direct to Heaven!" escaped his trembling lips. "But that God know I love thee as myself—" he stopped. It was difficult to say the rest. Had he not prayed the grace for years? He held it now. To him it was more precious than wealth of worlds. Could love, even a Christ-love, give up that, too, and make the holocaust complete? "I will," the great soul struggled in his breast, and the whole man shook with the violence of control. "Go thou to Christ instead," continued love, "Remember me!"

Two weeks had scarcely prayed their convent life away. The Friars stood in choir as before—save one. The youngest of them all came there no more. The older members missed the youthful voice that sang so clearly praises to his God. Had he been there that matin hour he would have been singing the homily for the morrow. But at the lectern another sang: "Amen, amen, I say to you, unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground die—" The door flew open. A rider spurred and booted rushed abruptly in. "'Tis done," he gasped. "He is no more!" Then you could have heard an angel whisper it grew so still.

Another saint had gone to glory; another crown was won. But did not his presence linger still and make the choir thrill with a celestial peace. It found expression in the cantor's soul. "Te Deum," he intoned, and never did chant ascend with such inspiring majesty as God was

praised that night. The messenger could only wonder at the joy. Perhaps his rude soul little knew the glory of that sacrifice. But the white-haired priest, who stood in his accustomed stall, knew well. It was the answer to his prayer, "Remember me."

Long has the saintly old father been dust. He is happy now with the youth he loved. Both wear a crown of sacrifice; the one for his love, the other for his charity. But their memory still lives in the hearts of men. For not very many years ago to that once stricken city a blasphemer came to slander Christ and His martyr band. Had the people forgotten the deeds of love? Far be it from them to forget! The mayor took the scoffer for a drive through the prosperity and its life out to the city of the dead. They drove up to a green turfed mound that was planted around with mouldering graves. The carriage stopped and the magistrate pointed to the spot. "Here they lie whom you would malign—heroes who freely gave their lives to nurture our fathers in fever times." Then they rode on. But a few minutes later found the mayor on the station platform watching the train pull out. The wretch was aboard and the parting words were still ringing loudly in his scoundrel heart: "Begone! Dare never to return!" Thus did a grateful people defend their just, and another grace from Heaven was wrought through the echo of "Remember Me!"

—**Brother Arnold, O. P.**

SAINT DOMINIC'S LEGACY

"Silver and gold, I have none, but what I have I give thee" (Acts iii, 6).

When, Father great, thy holy race was run,
And battles for His Name and souls were done:
Then knelt thy little band to beg of thee:
As children dread the setting of the sun,
Who fear when shadows and the night are come:
As arms to shield, some blessed gift to thee,
Thou spoke and gave in full of all thy wealth,
Things precious, coined of Christ's own charity.
Riches of heaven to thy own heart won,
To pass untarnished, whole, from son to son.
Sweet yoke and burden light, each heart hast felt
Fraternal love, to guard humility
Endowed of wantless poverty each one:
This triune gift thy sacred legacy.

—**Brother Alphonsus, O. P.**