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MALCOM KIRK.

A Tale of Moral Heroism in Overcoming the World.

BY CHARLES M. SHELDON,

Author of "In His Steps," "Crucifixion of Philip Strong," "Robert Hardy's Seven Days."

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Illustrations by Herman Heyer.

CHAPTER I.

The senior class in the theological seminary at Hermon had just had its picture taken by the photographer, and the members were still grouped about the steps of the chapel.

"There's one thing the photographer forgot," said a short, red faced man who sat in the middle of the group. "He didn't think to say, 'Look pleasant, now, if you please.'"

"He didn't need to. We all look so, anyhow." The man who spoke sat immediately behind the first speaker and had his hands on the other's shoulders.

"I'm sure we don't feel very pleased. I mean, we are not pleased to think this is almost the last time we shall be together as a class," said a tall, delicate, pale faced man who was standing up at the top of the steps with his back against the door.

He spoke in a quiet, low voice, and there was a hush after he spoke. There is as much sentiment among theological students as among any average number of professional men. In some directions there is more than among the like number of law or medical students.

After a moment of silence some one began to ask questions about the future prospects of the class. The red faced, jolly looking young man in the center was going to take a church in northern Vermont. The man just behind him had received a call as assistant pastor of an institutional church in Philadelphia. The delicate featured student up by the chapel door was going to teach school a year and find a church as soon as he had paid off his college debts.

Every member of the class had spoken of his prospects except one. This one sat on the extreme edge of the group, as if he had purposely chosen to be as inconspicuous as possible in the picture. A stranger carelessly walking by would have instantly judged him to be the homeliest, least interesting man in the class. He had dull brown hair, very heavy and stiff, pale blue eyes, a rather large mouth, the lips of which, however, were firm and full of character, high cheek bones and an unusually high forehead. His arms and legs were very long, and his general attitude, as he sat on the edge of the steps, was almost strikingly awkward.

"Here's Kirk; hasn't said a word yet," cried the little man who had first spoken. "What are you going to do, Kirk?"

Every member of the class turned and looked at the figure sitting on the edge of the group. It was noticeable that while several of the class smiled at the question, "What are you going to do?" there was no disrespect in the smile, and an every man's face was a look of real interest, amounting to an excited curiosity.

Malcom Kirk smiled slightly as he looked up. He did not look at any member of the class in particular, but seemed to include them all in a friendly interest that was affectionate and gentle.

"I don't know. I am waiting for a call. I've had one and accepted it, but I need another before I can go to work."

Everybody stared. The man up by the chapel door had a look in his eye as if he understood what Kirk meant, but no one else seemed to catch his meaning.

I went up to Manchester to preach. I laid my notes down on the desk, and there was a strong breeze blowing across the pulpit, which stood directly between two open windows, and while the anthem was being sung half my sermon blew out of one of the windows.

"The congregation was spared just so much, then, wasn't it?" said a man down on the bottom step.

"Accidents will happen to any one," said Kirk quietly. "But mine are not accidents; they're habits of life. I can overcome them, though. The churches don't know that; so I don't blame them for not giving me a call."

"Well, I think it's a shame, as I said," the assistant pastor of the institutional church repeated. "The churches think more of the way a man dresses and behaves in the pulpit than they do of what he says. And they criticize everything from his prayers to the polish of his boots."

There was silence again. The class had been over all that many times before, and they were practically a unit in their opinion of what the churches seemed to demand in a successful candidate for a call.

Finally some one recurred to the class picture again.

"I don't believe Kirk's in this picture at all. He sat too far out. The photographer kept telling him to move in farther. But I believe he moved out again just at the last minute."

"I only moved one of my feet out," said Kirk solemnly. "I thought one of them was solemnly. I didn't want to have to pay extra for more than my share of the photograph."

"But we want the whole of you in the picture, Kirk," said the man next to him, laying an affectionate hand on Kirk's arm. The entire class turned again toward the awkward, shambling figure and seemed to repeat the gesture of the one classmate. Then the talk drifted back again to the future plans of the members and to serious and humorous reminiscences of the three years' course until one after another went away and the class group was broken up into little knots of two and three as the men walked to their rooms or lingered under the great elms, arm in arm.

Kirk and the companion who had laid his hand on his friend's arm remained a little while on the steps.

"What will you do, Kirk?"

"I think I shall offer myself to the Home Missionary society and ask them to send me to the hardest place they can find out west somewhere."

"But how about your scholarship, your—your ability?" The other man hesitated for the right word.

Kirk colored slightly, the first indication he had shown of a sensitiveness in that direction.

"I can use anything I know anywhere. Preach I must, even if I have

of a dreamer—dark eyes, waving dark hair, handsome features, thin, delicate, curved lips and the hands of an artist. His clothes were made of the finest material and bore the stamp of that unconscious gentlemanly feeling which always goes with a man who has all his life been used to expensive details. As he sat there listening to Malcom Kirk this morning Francis Raleigh was attracted by the voice of the speaker. He had listened to the others with a conventional interest that did not mean anything to him. He started the moment that Kirk spoke the first word and fastened his look upon him until he was through. He then resumed his previous attitude of mild indifference to the programme.

and was surprised when she thought it over afterward. His homely hair, his shyness, his remarkable awkwardness, had amused her. She had laughed a little with her father about something that happened at the table. But she could not help listening to him today with added interest as he went on. Was it the voice? There was something very winning in it. There was none of the Yankee, New England nasal tone about it. It was full and deep and suggested an organ pipe exactly tuned.

Like Francis Raleigh, she seemed to lose all vital interest in the morning's programme when Kirk finished. While the next speaker was on the platform she turned her head to look over the

He had read the names of the winners in Hebrew and New Testament scholarship and the successful man in the general work of the entire course. He paused now at the end of the list and then read the last name, looking down at the graduating class as he did so.

"The German scholarship is awarded to Malcom Kirk of the graduating class."

There had been a slight rustling of applause as the different names were read, but when Kirk's name was spoken the class applauded vigorously, and the clapping extended over the chapel very heartily. Kirk sat bolt upright and blushed very red, and William, who was sitting by him, exclaimed in a loud whisper: "Good! That means \$700 and a year abroad."

Kirk said nothing. There was no question he was pleased. His lips trembled, and he shuffled his feet under the pew, and his great hands opened and shut nervously. When his turn came to go up on the platform to speak, he felt as if his natural awkwardness and shyness had been doubled by the attention directed to him by the winning of the best scholarship in the gift of the seminary.

The minute he began to speak all this shyness disappeared. It was true Kirk loved to face an audience. He loved people, and after the first moment of conscious fright was passed he eagerly entered the true speaker's position and enjoyed both the audience and his own effort in addressing it.

His subject was "The Business of Preaching." What was it? How did it differ from oratory? What was the object of preaching? What were the materials of preaching? And so on. He spoke straight on, with his heart in what he said. It was in the thought of more than one minister in the audience that this man who had won the German scholarship had a remarkably good voice. More than one pastor felt like envying the peculiar tone of that voice. It had a carrying quality that commanded attention and held it. And nearly every man on the seminary faculty was wondering why Kirk had received no call from any church. There was no question as to his ability. He had both brains and heart. It is true his face and figure were not in his favor. He was not of the orthodox ministerial cut. His clothes were not a very good fit. But were the churches looking for a fashion plate for an ornamental feature behind the pulpit?

In the audience that morning there were also two other persons who paid close attention to Kirk while he was speaking. One of these was a young man nearly Kirk's age, with a face and manner that spoke of the most sensitive, refined breeding. It was the face of a dreamer—dark eyes, waving dark hair, handsome features, thin, delicate, curved lips and the hands of an artist. His clothes were made of the finest material and bore the stamp of that unconscious gentlemanly feeling which always goes with a man who has all his life been used to expensive details.

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The other person who followed Kirk's speech with especial interest was a young woman who sat in that part of the church reserved for the trustees of the seminary and their families. It is said that the young women who work in the nitroglycerin and dynamite establishment at Ardeer, Scotland, have the most perfect complexions in the world, owing to the nature of the peculiar materials they handle and breathe. It is very certain that Dorothy Gilbert had never lived or worked in any more explosive atmosphere than that of her own intense energy, but her face would fairly have rivaled that of any Scotch lass in Ardeer. There was a striking resemblance in many ways to Francis Raleigh's beauty. It might have been due to the similarity in training and in tastes. The New England type of independent, morally calm, but thoroughly interested activity was well represented in Dorothy Gilbert. Her father sat beside her, a dignified, carefully dressed man of 55, iron gray hair and mustache, a successful book publisher, with a beautiful home in Hermon and business in Boston. Dorothy was the only child at home. She had graduated a year before at Northampton and was now taking a special course in music, going to the city three days in the week.

She did not attempt to reason with herself about the interest she felt in Malcom Kirk's appearance. Theologues in general were mildly stupid creatures to her. She had been born and brought up in Hermon and classed the theologues as a part of the fauna and flora of the town, but her interest had never gone any further than that. She had met Malcom Kirk several times during his three years' course. Once she had sat by him at a dinner given by her father to the class. She had found him an interesting talker

and was surprised when she thought it over afterward. His homely hair, his shyness, his remarkable awkwardness, had amused her. She had laughed a little with her father about something that happened at the table. But she could not help listening to him today with added interest as he went on. Was it the voice? There was something very winning in it. There was none of the Yankee, New England nasal tone about it. It was full and deep and suggested an organ pipe exactly tuned.

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chapel, and her eyes met those of Francis Raleigh. He smiled, and she returned the smile, while a slight color deepened on her face. And he thought to himself it was certainly more interesting to glance now and then at a face like Dorothy Gilbert's than to stare steadily at a tall, solemn young man on the platform who was talking about the "Philosophy of the Prophetic Idea" and its evolution in the Old Testament.

The programme was finished at last, and the friends of the graduates lingered about the platform congratulating the different speakers. Very many of the visitors came up and warmly greeted Kirk. Among them was one alert, active, middle aged man who said he wanted to see Kirk especially on a matter of importance. So the two went up to Kirk's room, and the stranger explained his business briefly.

CHAPTER II.

KIRK RECEIVES HIS SECOND CALL AND ACTS UPON IT.

"I'm superintendent of missions for Kansas. I want you to take a church out there. You're just the man I've been looking for. Don't say 'No,' for I must have you."

Kirk looked at the superintendent thoughtfully. Was this the second call he had mentioned?

"There's this scholarship. I feel the need of the training abroad."

"All right. Go on with that. But there's a church that will be ready for you at the end of your year there. It's in the growing town of Conrad and a great opening for hard work. The man there now will leave at the end of the year."

Kirk said nothing. He looked out of his window. Right across the campus stood the beautiful residence of Dorothy Gilbert's father. It was not the first time he had looked in that direction.

"Of course," continued the superintendent briskly, "you understand the church is a home missionary church and cannot offer you a large salary. They can raise perhaps \$400 or possibly \$450. The society will grant \$200 or \$250. You could count on about \$800 probably."

Kirk was silent. He turned his head away from the window and glanced around his room. The shabby backed books, the simple pieces of furniture, the faded carpet, the meager furnishings, all smote him keenly. It was not the first time his poverty had thrust itself upon him coarsely, but he seemed to feel it more deeply than ever. As he faced the superintendent who was waiting for a reply Kirk had a most astonishing and absurd feeling come over him. He was not thinking about his German scholarship or about the superintendent. The superintendent would have been smitten into bewilderment if he could have read Kirk's thought. What Kirk was saying to himself was, "How can Dorothy Gilbert and I live on \$800 a year in a home missionary church?"

"Well," the superintendent spoke, with a slight trace of impatience, "what do you say? Give me a favorable answer. You can make your mark out there; plenty of hard work, but a good field. Tell me you'll take it."

"Very well, I promise to take the field if it is open when I finish my studies abroad."

He was not the man to wreck a life of Christian service on a passion of the heart, even if his hunger were never fed. But when he arose and went over to the alumni hall to join the class there at the final banquet he carried with him the knowledge that the future for him must have Dorothy Gilbert with it if he would do or be all that he felt he had a right to pray for.

The week that followed commencement day at Hermon found Kirk almost alone in the seminary building. He had been employed by one of the professors in doing some special copying of a book manuscript. In a few days this would be finished. He had fixed on the following Thursday to sail for Liverpool. He had determined to begin his studies as soon as possible. He had been to see the president of the faculty about his scholarship and, to his great relief, found that he was largely free to study in the way that seemed of most value to himself.

"You see, it's this way, sir," he had explained to the president. "It will do me very little good to go to a German university and take some special course in language or history. I feel the need of another method of study. If I can use this scholarship to study human conditions in large cities, going to the people for my material at first hand, it will be of infinitely larger value to me and to the seminary than a course in lectures and books."

"You are free to mark out your own methods of study," replied the president. "According to the terms of the scholarship, the only condition is a year spent abroad in some regular course of study, with a report of it to be made within six months to the seminary."

So Kirk was happy in his thought of the year's work, and when the treasurer had given him the check for the \$700 and he had gone to Boston and engaged his passage in the intermediate cabin he felt as if he had a very interesting year's life before him.

He had come back to his room and made his final preparations for leaving. They were very simple necessarily. He was going light handed to live in the most frugal, economical manner possible. It was now Tuesday evening. His vessel sailed Thursday afternoon. He was all ready to go, and yet he had an irresistible longing to see Dorothy Gilbert before he went.

He fought against the inclination until 8 o'clock and then did what he knew he would do all along—dressed in the most careful manner he knew how and walked straight across the campus to her house.

As he went up the steps he heard the piano. Dorothy was playing. When he was in the hall, he glanced into the parlor and saw Francis Raleigh standing there.

Then a fit of timidity seized him. Something in Raleigh's face and manner made him feel that it was impossible to see Dorothy Gilbert with the gifted artist. He asked the servant if Mr. Gilbert was at home and said he wanted to see him a few moments.

It was the nearest to a lie that Malcom Kirk ever approached. However, when the servant ushered him into Mr. Gilbert's library he was not sorry to have a talk with the publisher.

Mr. Gilbert had been abroad. Kirk asked him several questions about cities and people on the continent. He grew every moment more interested and staid for more than an hour. Mr. Gilbert insisted on presenting him with two or three copies of Baedeker and followed him out into the hall when he finally rose to go, wishing him a successful year of study.

The piano had stopped, and the door into the parlor was closed, but Kirk could hear voices, and it seemed to him that they were unusually earnest. He imagined he could detect a tone of pleading in one of them.

He went out into the night and walked the seminary campus under the grave elms for two or three hours. He felt disappointed. He went over his prospects. He viewed from all sides his position as a man with a career, and before he let himself into his dingy room he had gone down into a depth of self-depreciation that measured a valley of humiliation for him.

But when he awoke the next day he determined, with a dull obstinacy that was a part of his character, that he would see Dorothy Gilbert before he went away. And when evening came he walked over to the house again.

She was playing the piano again, but this time alone. She turned around as Kirk entered and smiled as if she were glad to see him, and before he had time to think of any possible shyness he was talking about his prospects, the places he expected to visit, the methods he was planning to use.

"I heard you playing the 'Traumerel' when I came in, Miss Gilbert. Will you please play it again?" Dorothy looked surprised at the abrupt change, but without a word went to the piano and began. Kirk knew enough about music to know that she played well, better than any one he had ever heard.

When she finished, she turned about and said: "You will hear some good music while you are abroad, Mr. Kirk. The Germans, especially, furnish the people with the very best music in the parks and gardens at a very small price."

She suddenly colored deeply as she thought he might imply that she was thinking of his poverty, of his inability to hear expensive music in expensive places. If he thought of it, he made no sign that she noticed. But he said: "I shall never hear any better music than I have heard tonight."

The minute he had said it he felt the same timidity seize him that came over him the evening before. But it passed away quickly, and, to his relief, he felt a certain inward strength and indomitable courage fill him. Dorothy was at first amused at the compliment; then she was suddenly excited by it. Kirk was as simple hearted as a child. He had revealed his secret in the tone and manner of his words. It was the last thing in the world he had expected to do when he came. But greater and better and wiser men than Malcom Kirk have done as he did.

He rose at once and walked straight over to the fireplace. On the mantel was a miniature of Dorothy, painted by a New York artist, a young woman who was famous for such work.

"I have no right"—Kirk spoke without a tremor—"but if I take this and keep it for a year sacredly to guard it from every eye but my own and never to speak of it and then return it when I come back—"

"She was so surprised that her self-possession failed her. Kirk's hand was on the miniature with a mastery that Dorothy noticed even at that moment.

"You are not unwilling? I make no claim. I have none. I simply shall keep it for a year. Perhaps the constant sight of it will prove to me how hopeless—"

The man paused and looked straight at Dorothy. There was something so hungry and at the same time so unaffected in his look that again Dorothy was speechless. He took the picture, and then lay in his great palm a moment, and then his fingers closed slowly over it. He looked up at her again. She had turned away and was nervously tracing lines with her fingers on the table.

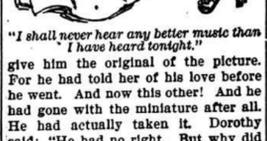
"I have no excuse to offer for what I have done," he said, and there was that in his voice that made Dorothy look up.

"I realize all the distance between us. It will do you no harm to let me have the picture and may do me good."

Dorothy at last found her voice.

"I have not let you have it. It seems to me you have taken it anyway."

"You did not say no," replied Malcom Kirk firmly. Then he paused as if waiting an answer. And again she was silent. He moved toward the hall. "I love you, Dorothy Gilbert," he said, and he looked almost handsome as he said it. He stood there an instant, and then he was gone, and Dorothy remained like one who has felt some great emotion, not yet measured. She had refused to let Francis Raleigh have the miniature. He had begged for it. He also was going abroad to finish his studies in art. But when he asked for the picture she had told him no, and he had gone away without a definite answer to his petition that she



"I shall never hear any better music than I have heard tonight."

give him the original of the picture. For he had told her of his love before he went. And now this other! And he had gone with the miniature after all. He had actually taken it. Dorothy said: "He had no right. But why did I not tell him so?" Somehow Malcom Kirk was a part of her memory now. She had not time to ask what it might all mean. One moment she laughed, then she grew serious, then she turned and played the "Traumerel" again, then she wheeled about and said to herself with a short laugh: "The idea, theologian, and homely and awkward at that! Why, I have actually laughed at him!" But nevertheless she felt the impossibility of laughing at Malcom Kirk any more. No true woman ever laughs at the honest love of a man, no matter how poor or unattractive he may be, and Dorothy Gilbert was a true woman at heart.

As for Malcom Kirk, he went on board the steamer the next afternoon with a feeling that was almost content. It is true he felt a little uneasy to think he had told Dorothy Gilbert so

plainly that he loved her. But, then, he was sure it had done no harm. It was the truth, and, besides, when he came back would he return the picture without a word? Might he not claim the right to keep it anyway?

He scarcely pretended to answer this question. He found his way to his room in the intermediate cabin and came out on the deck again. As the steamer went down the harbor he thoughtfully reviewed his course and looked out into the new life before him with quiet hope.

It was 10 o'clock when he went down to his room. As he proceeded to arrange his few effects in the little apartment called a cabin one of the stewards came by. There were two or three other men sitting at the table in the dining and lounging room.

"Any of you a clergyman?" asked the steward.

No one answered, and Kirk after a moment stepped out and said: "I'm a clergyman. What is wanted?"

The steward looked a little doubtfully at the long, unattractive figure.

"There's a woman down at here in a poor way. She wants some one to pray with her."

"I'll go," said Kirk quietly, and he followed the steward, not knowing as he went that this, his first ministry of service, was to prove one of the most remarkable events in his eventful life. Meanwhile the steamer had reached the limits of the harbor. The great ocean now lay wide and solemn before her, and the lookout on the forward deck was saying to himself, "It's going to be a beautiful night."

On the promenade deck two men were pacing up and down.

"But how did it happen, Raleigh, that you took passage on the Cunard line? I thought you were planning to go by the Anchor line from New York."

"I did plan to go two weeks later, but circumstances changed my movements. I shall be glad to get to work again, and I'm thankful to be thrown in with you, Ed. We can talk over old college days."

They turned in front of the music room, and the light fell on Francis Raleigh's face. It was at this moment that Malcom Kirk knelt in the intermediate cabin deck to pray. The lookout on the bow was saying, "We shall have a quick voyage."

TO BE CONTINUED.

LETTER FROM BRYAN.

He Puts Cuba and Philippines in the Same Class.

The Knoxville Sentinel prints a letter addressed to it by Colonel Wm. Jennings Bryan, in which he expresses his views upon the relations of the Philippines and the Cubans and their rights. It is as follows:

"I believe that the rights of the Philippines and the rights of the Cubans are identical. The recognition of the rights of the Cubans by resolution did not create those rights. They existed before."

"If the Philippines have a right to their independence the fact that they fought for it does not justify us in carrying on a war of conquest."

"It is no more humiliating for a nation to recognize the rights of an opponent than for an individual to do so."

"We would have had the same trouble in Cuba if we had treated the Cubans the same as we have the Filipinos. We would have had no trouble in the Philippine islands if we had treated the Filipinos as we have the Cubans. If we are going to give the Filipinos their independence we ought to say so at once, and thus avoid further bloodshed."

"How can we justify the sacrifice of American soldiers and the killing of Filipinos merely to show that we can whip them?"

Colonel Bryan declares that if the Bacon resolution had been acted upon there would have been no war with the Filipinos.

REPUBLICAN WEAK POINTS.—Let us summarize a half dozen questions that may cost the Republican ticket votes, says the Chicago Times-Herald.