

## GOD'S GIFT TO THEM

By CARL PRICE READE.

Of all the spirits in heaven Theodota was the most restless. Theodota was not her name; it means simply "God-given," and names are useless in heaven, where the souls recognize each other by thought transmission; but that was the name by which she was subsequently to be known.

She wandered to and fro, taking no more pleasure in the quiet contemplation of joys so unutterably divine than the most pure and ardent imagination upon earth fails to begin to comprehend them. She wandered to and fro restlessly, seeking counsel of wiser spirits, and presently one stopped her.

"It is thus at some time with all of us," she said gently. "We are not pure enough to enjoy contemplation of the divine forever. It is the taste of earthly joys that is necessary as a corrective—joys and suffering. The time has come for thee to be born on earth, Theodota."

"Was I not once on earth before?" Theodota asked.

"Some say that the soul visits earth more than once, Theodota," answered her guide. "But few of us know, and those who know will not tell. Thy time has come to say good-by to heaven for a brief space of time, in calculably brief, as we know time, but a lifetime as it is known to mortals."

Theodota wept, but the impulse toward earth was too strong in her to be restrained. Presently she found herself far from the divine joys and entering a dark cloud which men call passions, though to Theodota it seemed only a dismal and gloomy place. Envy seemed to her like lightning, and hate like thunder, and anger like a hailstorm; but on the other hand there was love, a soft zephyr, and self-sacrifice, which seemed like balmy sunshine. So she flew on, passing from one to another, tired and



"Take Your Old Ring, Then!"

bewildered, yet driven onward without volition by the force of the earth impulse toward incarnation.

Souls are not conscious of earthly things when they have come down from heaven. If they were, would not each of us choose to be born a king or queen, or a millionaire, or with an endowment of every talent? Souls see only the hearts of their future mothers, not their material circumstances, or those of the men who are to win them. So presently Theodota found herself before a young girl who was seated alone in a handsome room, looking at a diamond ring upon her finger. And it seemed to Theodota, in her love for the girl, that she would like nothing better than to be come her daughter.

The door opened and a young man came in. The girl rose and ran into his arms; she thought she loved him, but Theodota felt the girl's heart contract with disappointment. The soul of the girl knew that the young man was not to be her mate, but the girl knew nothing of this.

And Theodota, hovering by the young girl, began to feel the heart beating on her again; the lightning flashed and the thunder pealed.

"I don't see why you should object to my having a good time, Frank," the young girl said to her sweetheart. "Just because we are engaged—is that any reason why I shouldn't go out with any man but you?"

"You'll have to choose between me and the rest," answered the young man bitterly.

The girl slammed down the diamond ring upon the table.

"Take your old ring, then!" she stormed. "You're a tyrant anyway, and I couldn't be happy with you. If you are as jealous as this before marriage, what will you be afterward?"

Theodota understood nothing of what was being said, but her delicate wings were drenched with the rain, and, seeing a warmer, sunnier place a little distance away, she darted instinctively toward it.

And now ensued a period of forgetfulness. Theodota had lost all memory of the joys of heaven, for the human love that enfolded her seemed sweeter than anything that had happened to her before. Dimly she seemed to be aware of her imprisonment, and, as the sculptor works upon the plastic

clay or wax, so she was forming by her own desires the body that she was destined to inhabit. But of what was happening on earth, of the father's struggles to earn the money to pay for his wife's illness, of his hopes and fears and those of his young wife Theodota was supremely ignorant. She basked in the bride's love as one basked in the sunshine, and her content was absolute.

Then came the day when Theodota's happiness seemed complete. The little body that she had fitted for herself was made. The house was ready for her to inhabit it. She knew nothing of what was happening on earth, of the doctor's grave face and averted eyes as he toiled over the young wife, while the husband waited in an agony of suspense without.

Suddenly, with a shiver of fear, Theodota found herself a spirit again. And, freed from the bonds of human love, she longed to flee back to her place in heaven and rest among the happy spirits there.

But because it is given to mortals, when love is omnipotent, to make their cries heard to the happy souls, and to the souls to hear them, Theodota, about to fly away, paused as she heard the agonized words of the young mother's prayer:

"God, give me back my child!"

And, with the same clarity of vision, Theodota was enabled to see, and even dimly to understand the meaning of the tiny coffin that stood within the narrow room next to the chamber in which the young husband kneeled beside his wife. And the same prayer broke from both their lips.

"We couldn't have saved her," said the doctor gravely. "No human agency could have saved her."

"I know; you did your best," the husband answered.

Theodota, watching that human grief, felt strangely drawn toward it. She did not know that what is called grief on earth is called joy in heaven; but all her desires to be away vanished, and she remained with the stricken mother, nestling against her and trying with all her power to comfort her.

Perhaps she did comfort her, for spirit can speak with spirit, but so obscurely that the outer phantom of flesh and blood, controlled by the brain, understands nothing. Only through the instincts can one soul speak to another. But Theodota remained, until the same cloudy darkness fell upon her again, and, happy in her love, she forgot everything, to pass into a dreamy sleep.

"What a dear little girl she is!" exclaimed the happy mother, pressing her lips to the soft cheek. "Do you know, dear, she looks exactly like that first we lost. What shall we call her?"

"Call her—call her 'the gift of God,'" her husband, who was a scholar, answered. "How do you like the name Theodota?"

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## WHEN BEST WORK IS DONE

Literary and Other Labor Performed Under Pressure Generally is of High Merit.

Fortunately we often have to do our work in less time than it seems to deserve, for that is likely to mean that the work will be better done than if we had ample time for it. A veteran Christian worker and writer once said to a friend: "I never knew anything worth while to be done that was not done under pressure. Men who write under pressure give to their writings a 'temper' they would not have were they written at leisure." Pressure often seems to produce a quality, a concentration of thought, that comes in no other way. Even if we are not sharply limited in our time for a certain piece of work, it is quite within our power to gain the benefit of the sense of pressure by remembering the preciousness of every minute of time, and the stewardship for which we are to be held accountable. An easy-going sense of having "plenty of time" is likely to mean a loose, flabby quality in our work. Let us welcome the enforced safeguards against this with which the circumstances of life often surround us.—Sunday School Times.

**Pearl-Fishing Industry.**  
The world has at least one locality, as it has at least one industry, in which machinery, and even the simplest mechanical appliance, is not permitted, through the agency of prohibitive rules, to obtain ascendancy over hand work and primitive methods of labor. The locality is the Tuamotu or Low Archipelago, composed of 87 coral atolls, about one hundred miles eastward of Tahiti; the industry is the pearl fisheries of the archipelago, the finest pearls in the South Pacific being found in the waters adjacent to these islands, as well as considerable quantities of the so-called black-edge mother-of-pearl shell much used in commerce.

**Awful Misfortune.**  
Children of the right sort take their school work seriously. Jennie, aged fourteen, is a second-year high school student. The other evening she appeared at the family dinner table evidently not in the best of good spirits. Pressed for a reason, she made this explanation:

"Oh, I muffed it in English this afternoon. We had to give oral themes and I had studied mine out so carefully that I wasn't a bit nervous at first. But by and by something distracted my attention for a moment, and I said something that spoiled the unity, the coherence and the literary value of the whole thing."

## TESTING THE AMERICAN COINAGE OF 1914



The assay commission, appointed to examine the 1914 coinage of all the United States mints, is here seen beginning its work in the Philadelphia mint. The coins are subjected to chemical analysis and filing.

AMERICAN IDEAS  
HELP HINDENBURG

Germany's Great Field Marshal Talks About His Part in War.

## SUCCESS DUE TO RAILROADS

"Railroad Napoleon" Enthusiastic Over American Methods of Transportation—Is a Warm Admirer of Colonel Goethals.

German Great Headquarters, East. But for the "field gray" coat and the militant mustache, I should have taken him for a self-made American, a big business man or captain of industry, as he sat at his work desk, the telephone at his elbow, the electric push-buttons and reams of neat reports adding to the illusion. Quiet, unassuming and democratic, he yet makes the same impression of virility and colossal energy as Colonel Roosevelt does, but with an iron restraint of discipline which the American never possessed, and an earnestness of face and eye that I had only seen matched in his commander in chief, the kaiser. Here was a man whom the most neutral American could instantly admire and honor, regardless of the merits of the controversy. It was Hindenburg, the well beloved, the hope of Germany. He has already been "done" by journalists, but 70,000,000 are pinning their faith to him, which makes him worth "doing" again—and again.

For a moment I nearly forgot that I was an American with "nerve," but on making him say something, preferably indiscreet; it seemed almost a shame to bother this man whose brain was big with the fate of empire. But, although I hadn't been specially invited, but had just "dropped in" in informal American fashion, the commander in chief of all his kaiser's forces in the East stopped making history long enough to favor me with a short but thought-provoking interview.

As to his past performances, the field marshal genially referred to the detailed official summary; as to the future, he protested:

Expects Final Victory.

"I am not a prophet. But this I can

## AN AMATEUR SPORTSWOMAN



Miss Eleanor Sears of Boston, who is engaged to marry Harold Vanderbilt, is considered one of America's greatest amateur sportswomen. She is an expert polo player, and knows the finer points of golf and tennis.

say: Tell our friends in America—and also those who do not love us—that I am looking forward with unshakable confidence to the final victory—and a well-earned vacation," he added whimsically. "I should like nothing better than to visit your Panama-exposition and meet your wonderful General Goethals, the master builder, for I imagine our jobs are spiritually much akin; that his slogan, too, has been 'durchhalten' (hold out) until endurance and organization win out against heavy odds."

Then with sudden, paradoxical, terrible, quiet earnestness: "Great is the task that still confronts us, but greater my faith in my brave troops." One got indelibly the impression that he loved them all, suffered under their hardships and sorrowed for their losses.

"For you, this war is only a titanic drama; we Germans feel it with our hearts," he said thoughtfully.

The field marshal spoke warmly of the Austro-Hungarian troops, and cited the results of the close co-operation between his forces and the Austrian armies as striking proof of the proverb, "In union there is strength." Like all other German generals whom I had "done," he, too, had words of unqualified praise for the bravery of his enemies. "The Russians fight well; but neither mere physical bravery nor numbers, nor both together, win battles nowadays."

"How about the steam roller?"

"It hasn't improved the roads a bit, either going forward or backward," he said with a grim smile.

"Are you worrying over Grand Duke Nicholas' open secret?" I asked, citing the report via Petrograd and London of a new projected Russian offensive that was to take the form, not of a steam roller, but of a "tidal wave of cavalry."

"It will dash against a wall of loyal flesh and blood, barbed with steel—if it comes," he said simply.

Lauds American Genius.

My impression, growing increasingly stronger the more I have seen, that German military success had been to no small extent made possible by American inventive genius and high-speed American methods, received interesting partial confirmation from the field marshal, whose keen, restless mind, working over quite ordinary material, produced the new suggestive combination of ideas that, while "America might possibly be materially assisting Germany's enemies with arms, ammunition and other war material, certain it was that America, in the last analysis, had helped Germany far more."

"But for America my armies would possibly not be standing in Russia today—without the American railroading genius that developed and made possible for me this wonderful weapon, thanks largely to which we have been able with comparatively small numbers to stop and beat back the Russian millions again and again—steam engine versus steam roller. Were it for nothing else, America has proved one of our best friends, if not an ally.

"We are also awaiting with genuine interest the receipt of our first American guns," the field marshal added. How was Germany expecting to get guns from America? He was asked to explain the mystery.

"I read somewhere in the papers that a large shipment of heavy cannon had left America for Russia," he said with dry humor, "in transit for us—if they're consigned to the Russians, we'll have them sooner or later, I hope," adding, with his habitual earnestness: "The Americans are something more than shrewd, hard-headed business men. Have they ever vividly pictured to themselves a German soldier smashed by an American shell, or bored through the heart by an American bullet? The grim realism of the battlefield—that should make all the business man thoughtful."

"Shall you go west when you have cleaned up here in the east?" I suggested.

"I can't betray military secrets which I don't know myself, even to interest the newspaper readers," he said. He gave me the impression, however, that east or west, he would be found fighting for the fatherland so long as the fatherland needed him.

Is a Hard Worker.

"Now it means work again. You must excuse me," he concluded, courteously. "You want to go to the front. Where should you like to go?"

"To Warsaw," I suggested modestly. "I, too," he laughed, "but today—sangeschlossen ('nothing doing') in

## SEEMS POOR ECONOMY

ROUNDABOUT WAY OF KEEPING FIRE HOUSES CLEAN.

Story Told by Writer in The Public, Whether the Real Thing or Not, May Possibly Illustrate a Sad Truth.

About two months ago I happened to sit down beside a pleasant-faced old fellow in the smoking car of a train pulling out of Philadelphia. I wanted to smoke, and on discovering that I had no matches, I turned to my seatmate and asked if he could spare me one.

"Certainly," said he, "that is one thing I can get all I want for nothing."

Seeing that he was inclined to talk, I humored him by asking: "How's that?"

"Why, you see," he replied, "I work for the city, in the fire department, and we can get all we want of anything like that. Just turn in a requisition for them and along they come. But there is one thing we can't get all we want of, though."

"What's that?"

"Brooms. We can't get a broom. We can requisition as much as we like, but we can't secure a single broom."

"How's that?"

"Don't know, but we can't get one."

"How do you keep the place clean, then? I always thought they were very particular in the fire department to have everything spick and span."

"That's it," said he, nudging me in the ribs, "that's it! How do we keep it clean? Must be clean for inspection. Know what we do? I'll tell you! We use blankets. Yes, we take blankets, tear 'em up into strips and make mops out of 'em and keep the place as neat as you please! You see we can get all the blankets we want, but we can't get a broom. So we take turns requisitioning blankets."

"But the blankets must cost a lot more than brooms would."

"Sure. Blankets must stand the city at least a dollar and a quarter each, while the best brooms bought in large quantities would not cost over twenty-five cents apiece. And one broom would last longer than half a dozen blankets. But we can't help it. Must keep the fire house clean for inspection or we'll all get fired. No matter how often we requisition brooms there isn't one forthcoming, while we can get all the blankets we want, and no questions asked."

"Seems funny. How is it, do you suppose?"

"Only reason I can give is that the new administration is short of funds. Possibly somebody in a former administration got some graft for laying in a large stock of blankets and got no brooms. But it costs somebody something in the long run. Fierce, isn't it?"—W. P. Jr., in The Public.

## Golf on a Battlefield.

Golfers of the Mexico City country club at Mexico City who were recently barred from their games for two weeks because the Carranza and Zapata forces were using the links for a battlefield, had an unusual experience when, on the day after the retreat of the soldiers they resumed play.

Notwithstanding that the links had been torn up by shells, all went well with the game until the drive-off from the seventh tee had been followed up to the green. It was then that the man who had the best lie waved to his companions excitedly to hurry on up. They thought that he had hold out with his midiron, but found that his discomposure was caused by the fact that he could not use his putter. Between his ball and the cup lay the body of a revolutionist, who had been killed in an exchange of shots the day before.

## Co-operation in Russia.

Even today millions of the Russian peasants are not only too poor to employ any but the simplest instruments of agriculture, but the smallness of their acres makes the machinery we are accustomed to out of the question.

On the other hand, there are large estates with the finest modern machinery, while the peasant proprietor is gradually overcoming the difficulty by co-operative buying.

Six million households were associated with co-operative associations in 1911, and 310 out of the 370 zemstvos were last year engaged in the sale of agricultural machinery.

Long years of experience in the semicomunal dealings of the "mir" have trained the Russian peasants in the qualities necessary for co-operative enterprise.

## Girls Ready to Ride Zebras.

The National Woman Suffrage association headquarters is full of troubles these days. The latest is an influx of actresses, stenographers, journalists and other professionals, who want to "go to California." They have offered to walk the tight rope, ride zebras, "hike," or roll all the way across the continent if they are permitted to wear the badge and use the name of the association.