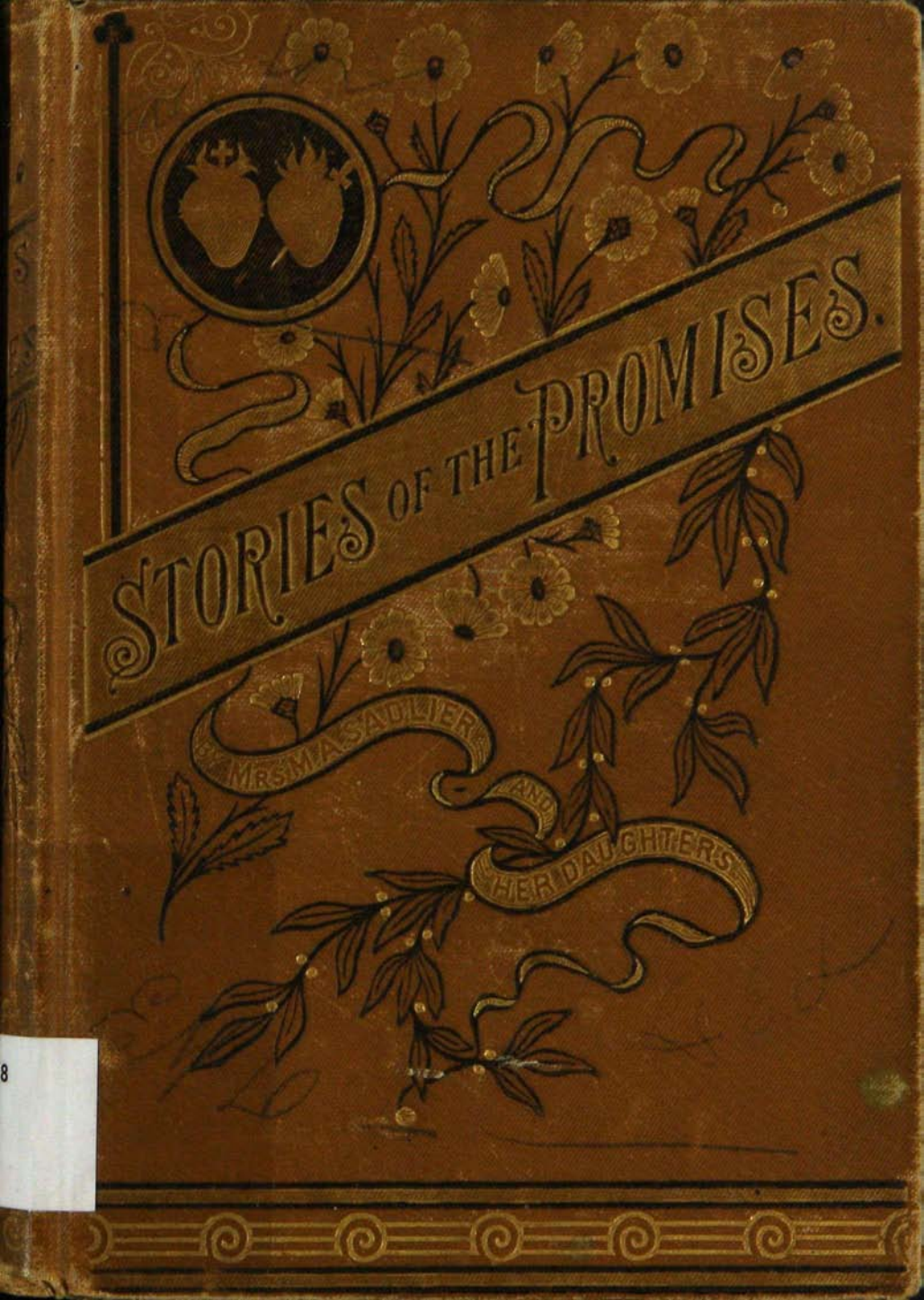
STORIES OF THE PROMISES.
BY MRS. M. A. SADLIER AND HER DAUGHTERS

STORIES OF THE PROMISES

AND OTHER TALES.

BY

Mrs. M. A. SADLIER

AND HER DAUGHTERS.

There on many souls in strait and peril
Did that gracious Benediction fall,
With the strength, or peace, or joy, or warning
He could give who knew and loved them all.

ADELAIDE A. PROCTER.

D. & J. SADLIER & CO.,

MONTREAL AND TORONTO.

PREFACE.

The little stories contained in this volume were all written by my daughters and myself as offerings to the Sacred Heart and first published in the Canadian Messenger during the earliest years of its existence. They are, therefore, of the simplest kind without any pretension to literary merit. Many of them are based on actual occurrences and all on the experiences of daily life. Hence, the lessons they convey are worth studying at this period of growing indifference and religious tipidity foretold by Our Divine Lord Himself to Blessed Margaret Mary as one of the characteristics of the latter times.

Convinced as I am, by the experience of a long life, — much of it devoted to literary pursuits, — that the more simply and directly the great truths of faith, — with the beauty and holiness of those devotions which spring therefrom, age after age, — are presented to the people, the larger number of readers will be secured and the greater amount of good attained for the grand cause to which we Associates and Promoters of the Holy League are all specially devoted : the extension of Christ's Kingdom on earth.

Hoping that this little volume may be found useful in some small measure in carrying out the glorious motto of our League : — " Thy Kingdom Come ! " I send it forth on its mission of charity and peace.

M. A. S.

Montreal, June 1st 1895.

STORIES OF THE PROMISES

AND OTHER TALES

LITTLE HARRY'S LEGACY.

MRS. JAMES SADLIER.

IT was a chilly, cheerless day in late October. The glory of the autumn had faded from Canadian woods and its sunshine from Canadian skies. The scene without was dreary enough, but within a small cottage, a log-cabin, on the outskirts of a town in Ontario province, it was still more dismal and depressing, for poverty and sickness were both there.

On a low bed, covered with a faded patch-work quilt, in one of the two rooms into which the cottage was divided, a mother lay, stricken with a mortal disease which had already reduced her to a state of extreme weakness, the fore-runner of dissolution. Her wan face and sunken eyes told a sad tale of suffering and want, but they also told of coming rest; the peace of God was there.

She had fallen into a death-like slumber, and lay with half-closed eyes, so still and motionless, that the solitary watcher by her sick bed, a boy of some ten

years old, was seized with sudden terror, fearing that she was already dead. He fell on his knees beside the bed and began to sob and cry piteously.

The child's lamentations reached the mother's heart. She opened her languid eyes, fixed them tenderly on her boy, and murmured—" Harry ! "

The little fellow screamed with delight as he seized the wasted hand resting on the quilt, and covered it with kisses : " Oh mother, I thought—I was afraid.—Oh ! thank God you are not dead ! "

" My poor child, my little Harry ! " She cast her eyes around. " Where is your father ? I thought he was here."

" So he was, mother dear, but he went out a little while ago. Shall I go in search of him ? "

" No, no, Harry ! Don't leave me ! It will soon be over now. I have done all I could with him : he only laughs at me when I talk to him of God and his own soul—of death and judgment. Father Cantwell says I haven't long to live—a few hours—may be not so long. If it's God's will to take me so soon, it's only on your account I'm sorry. Oh ! what will become of you when I'm gone ? "

" Mother ! mother ! don't talk like that ; I can't bear to hear you."

" My child, I must talk—while I can—and you must hear me. Thank God, you have made your First Communion. But oh ! you are so young—so young ! and you'll have no one to look after you. If you were an orphan out-and-out, the priest would get you into an asylum where you'd be well cared for. But your father wouldn't hear of that. Oh ! if you were at home in Ireland, near our own people ! It was an ill day I left them ! "

Mrs. Colson lay a few moments silent, then she spoke again in a voice still fainter. "Harry, my son, you know I have nothing to leave you. Stay, here is something better than gold, a medal and badge of the Sacred Heart. I want you to keep them always about you. Do you hear me, Harry? Don't cry now, but listen to me! Keep them ever and always about you. Don't let your father know. He'd take them from you, and put them in the fire as like as not. Our Lord Himself will guide you, and keep you in His holy ways. And the dear mother of God, His own mother, pray to Her, be sure you do!"

They were her last words. When the good priest returned a little while after, he found the patient sufferer of many a weary year dead, with her little son resting in speechless agony against the side of the bed. The wretched husband was gone, Harry said, in search of some neighbor women.

"May the Lord have mercy on your soul, Ellen Colson!" said the worthy priest, as he finished the prayers for the dead, "if it were not for your boy, I would thank Him for this release. You needed rest!"

Two days after, when the churchyard clay covered the remains of the once fair and light-hearted Ellen, the only daughter of a well-to-do farmer in far-off Ireland, the unhappy victim of a run-away marriage with a Protestant mechanic, good-looking and intelligent, but, alas! with no fixed principles of right or wrong to guide him, Father Cantwell would gladly have taken little Harry under his own protection and charged himself with his education; but, just as the dying woman had predicted, the father angrily refused his consent. No child of his, he declared, should ever be called a Papist. He had

had too much of Popery, and would have no more of it. He'd rather see Harry dead than put him in the way of being brought up a Papist. So the priest had best take himself off and never show his face there again. Now that Ellen was gone he'd have his own way at last with the boy.

The man was so determined,—being, moreover, as Father Cantwell well knew, naturally obstinate and headstrong,—that the priest saw further remonstrance was useless. With a sorrowful heart and a fervent benediction he took leave of the motherless boy. "The Sacred Heart will not desert him," he said within himself, while pursuing his homeward way; "his mother did not leave him unprovided for."

* * * * * * *

The after-career of little Harry was a strange and sad one, at least for a long time. His father, when he chose to refrain from intoxicating liquors, earned money sufficient to keep the boy and himself comfortably. An unmarried sister of mature years came to keep house for them. She was a tidy, thrifty woman, who knew how to turn every dollar to account, so that when Bill Colson did go off on a spree, as not unfrequently happened, the comfort of the little household was in no wise lessened. Under her provident care the wolf was always kept from the door.

But alas! for poor Harry, his thrifty, industrious aunt was a bitter Protestant, to the full as great a hater of "Romanists" as her rollicking brother. She left no effort untried to make a sound Protestant of Harry; but neither threats, nor persuasions, nor even corporal punishment, not seldom or sparingly bestowed, could turn the brave little fellow from his dead mother's faith.

Still he managed to say his prayers night and morning, and to go to confession to his well-loved friend Father Cantwell once a month. This he contrived to do on his way home from work on the Saturday evening; he was employed as errand boy in a store in the town. But to hear mass, to receive Communion, was altogether impracticable. Between the lynx eyes of his aunt, and the brutal violence of his father when aroused to anger, the poor child did not dare to go to church on Sunday morning.

Luckily for Harry, his father and aunt, like many others of their kind, seldom or never went to church themselves. Their religion consisted mainly in true Orange hatred of Catholicity. For the rest they gave themselves, as a rule, little trouble about church, and Harry was free to do the same, so long as he did not go to the Catholic church. To prevent that, however, a strict *surveillance* was exercised over the boy's movements on Sunday morning.

Acting on Father Cantwell's advice, Harry submitted in silence, hoping that the Sacred Heart and the Holy Mother he so loved would hasten the time when he could practice his religion fully and freely.

It was a marvel even to himself how he succeeded in keeping his mother's precious legacy, the badge and the medal, together with the beads the priest had given him, from the all-searching eyes of his Aunt Eliza. But he did succeed, and the few short moments he could devote to these beloved objects in simple fervent prayer were his sweetest consolation.

* * * * * * *

So the years passed till Harry was eighteen, taller and stronger than most lads of his age. He was now earning

good wages. He had been attending night-school, and had made the most of his scanty opportunities for acquiring knowledge. His father's health began to fail, and Harry was now the bread-winner of the little family. For some years past he had made no secret of his being a Catholic, and although Bill Colson at first made a show of being terribly angry and his sister scolded with might and main, Harry's quiet determination and steadfast adherence to principle, together with his dutiful conduct in all other respects, soon prevailed over the father's anti-Popery mania. He was really proud and fond of his handsome, stalwart son who was doing so well in every sense of the word, and had surrounded the declining years of his father and aunt with comforts never known before.

A time came at last when Father Cantwell was a frequent visitor at the home of the Colsons, now a decent brick dwelling of two storeys. Even the elder people came to regard his visits with a sort of pleasure, and Bill Colson was heard to say, as he smoked his pipe in the chimney corner, while Aunt Eliza sat knitting or sewing opposite, and Harry read aloud some entertaining book for their delectation :—

" Well, I declare now, 'Lisa, there must be something in this religion of Harry's that you or I can't see. How in the world did he keep to it ever since his mother died, when he was only a little shaver, and both of us doing all we could to turn him away from it? How did you manage it, Harry? Tell me that now ! " and Bill shook the ashes from his pipe vigorously.

" O ! that is easily accounted for, father," said Harry with a quiet smile, as he half closed his book : " It was all along of mother's legacy."

"Legacy! what legacy? Sure, poor Ellen had nothing to leave any one, more shame to the unlucky bird of a husband she had!"

"Father," said the young man solemnly, "she had what was better to me than silver or gold. She had these!" and he drew forth from a tiny leather case in which he had so long preserved them, a faded and worn badge of the Sacred Heart with a small medal of the same divine Image now black with age.

"Those!" cried the father much amazed, while his sister looked curiously at the unfamiliar objects, "and what may *they* be? What does it mean?"

"It means," said Father Cantwell who, just then entering, had overhead the last words; "it means that the Sacred Heart of Our Divine Lord, there represented, is a tower of strength to those who trust and honor it as He desires. It is now nigh upon two hundred years since the Saviour of mankind promised one of His most faithful servants, chosen by Him to reveal the devotion of His Sacred Heart to a world already growing cold and ungrateful, that He would give to those who are devout to His adorable Heart *all the graces necessary for their state of life.* So it is, William, that little Harry's legacy, left him by his good and pious mother, with the faith she had already implanted in his young heart, has been the immediate cause of *his* perseverance in good and of *your* present prosperity."

The brother and sister could not understand this then, but they did later when, under Father Cantwell's zealous care and instruction, aided by the force of Harry's good example and his persevering prayers, they both found rest and peace in the safe shelter of the One True Fold

A BAND OF SOLDIERS.

ANNA T. SADLIER.

THE lion of that brilliant dinner-party given by a notable Upper Canadian was undoubtedly the young lieutenant of a crack cavalry regiment crowned with nobly won honors in the Soudan. It was not that he talked of these things, far less did he display that magical Victoria Cross, or the medals, which told of heroic acts and of a daring upon which home-going reports had dilated in glowing terms. But his merry ringing laugh and his hearty, almost boyish, tones fell pleasantly upon the company. The lieutenant's popularity seemed momentarily on the increase, which perhaps, suggested a motive for the somewhat malicious utterances of a very gilded youth who made one of the after-dinner group. The group consisted altogether of young people, for their elders sat apart, gathered about a couple of luxurious arm-chairs, wherein sat the host of the evening in conversation with a high dignitary. With this latter personage our lieutenant had come to Canada, in the capacity of military secretary.

"By the way, lieutenant," said the very gilded youth, speaking with a pronounced and intolerably affected drawl, "I heard an extraordinary story about you the other day. Upon my life, it was scarcely credible."

"I say, let us hear it," said the Lieutenant in surprise, "without having much curiosity, one does like to hear extraordinary things about oneself."

"My informant was a lady, which is a voucher for the truth of my story. She's a bit peculiar, a Roman Catholic, and goes in for being devout. When I twitted her with going to church at unearthly hours and that sort of thing, she answered: "What would you say, had you been there yesterday morning?"

Interest was excited, but everyone waited in silence. "'Lieutenant—,' she went on, 'who is such a lion at present was not only at mass, but actually said his beads.'"

Every eye was upon the young soldier, who, looking the narrator full in the face, said quietly:

"And why not? I am a Catholic."

Never was there a more crushing retort, and for a moment it had its effect. But the youth, who prided himself upon a shallow kind of scepticism, returned after a pause to the attack.

"Oh, but you must admit, my dear fellow, that it is somewhat startling to hear a man of your calibre going up to the altar and taking the Sacrament, or whatever you call the ceremony."

The sceptical youth glanced around. Even the elders were listening attentively. Perhaps he caught some furtive smiles. In any case he had made a sensation, and ridicule is so potent a weapon against success."

"My fair friend assured me," he continued, "that you really wore what she called a badge, which, being translated, means a bit of cloth, bearing some religious device."

"What I am at a loss to understand," said the Lieutenant, calmly, "is why all this should be supposed to interest the present company, or why any one should be surprised to hear that I do sometimes perform my religious duties."

"The fact is, Lieutenant, in this country at least, a man of the world who has convictions tries hard to conceal them. Of course, I am speaking of a gentleman."

"It would be a poor sort of gentleman who was afraid to profess his convictions openly," said the Lieutenant with honest scorn. "What would you think of a soldier who was ashamed of his colors?"

There was a flash in the speaker's eye and a color on his cheeks, which made one listener, at least, remember the gallant charge at Tel-el-Kebir.

"I like that boy," said the Canadian millionaire to the dignitary. "If he were not in the army, I might find a good berth for him out here."

"The army has need of honest men as well as your great companies," said the dignitary with a smile; "but that lad's a gentleman to the heart's core."

There were few so frivolous in that company as not to echo this sentiment, and some who stifled in their hearts the unspoken longing for faith so firm and so fearlessly professed.

The sceptic felt anything but sure that success had fallen to his share.

II

It seemed that opportunities were multiplying for the young cavalry man to show his colors. The following Sunday afternoon he strolled down to the pier. He liked to look upon the lake. How tranquil and beautiful was the scene in the Sabbath stillness. The island with its groups of grim and leafless trees, which had a beauty of their own, outlined against the sky. This

Toronto, he reflected, was a finely situated town. The young officer sauntered idly about ; he stopped beside the projection of a low wall to light a cigar, and became the involuntary listener to some curious snatches of conversation. The voices of several men were raised as if in argument, and the words came to the lieutenant's ear distinctly.

" When those priests get hold of a fellow, there's an end of it. I wouldn't give a puff of smoke for him."

It was evident to the young soldier's olfactories that the speaker had suited the action to the word, by sending forth a whiff of strong and not too fragrant tobacco.

" Yet Rob's a good enought sort," said a second voice. " Priests or no priests, none of us has anything agin him."

" True for you, Bill," said a third voice. " I say, let every man have his own way, if only he don't try to come it over other folk."

" Here comes the lad, and we'll have a fling at him," said another.

The Lieutenant could perceive a tall, fair young man, advancing awkwardly towards the group. He was evidently in his Sunday best ; his hair was smoothed down over his forehead, a bright red handkerchief took the place of a collar. He had the indefinable look of one who had either followed a seafaring life, or at least had spent much of his time working about ships or dockyards.

He was greeted by a very storm of rude chaff, of vulgar personalities, of half-insulting, half-derisive epithets. Even those who had spoken well of him before he had approached seemed to relish this new sort of sport.

"I say, Rob, how much did you pay at confession? The priest must have chalked up a pretty big score." "Where's that bit of red rag you wore last Sabbath at the Mass-house? Bill Squires seen you with it," were among the most refined of the exclamations.

The poor lad grew red and pale alternately, he twisted his hands uncomfortably. With all his surprise, confusion and anger, there was a curiously blended desire to nail his flag to the mast, and show that he was a man.

"A poor rag of a man," said the first speaker, he of the aromatic pipe. "Sponging around the priests, can't take a drink like an honest fellow, and runs with his whining stories to the parson. We won't have no such fellows among us, trying to cram Popish superstitions down our throats. I say, let us drive him out of our gang."

Poor Bill tried to speak:

"I allus does the best I can," he said; "and I don't know as it's——"

But his voice was drowned by a chorus of angry or mocking shouts. The Lieutenant felt the hot blood, which had glowed within him on more than one battle-field, mount to his face. An instant more, and poor, bewildered Rob felt an arm firmly linked in his, and a voice raised gallantly in his behalf.

"Come, Rob, if you have that badge about you it will just match mine. We fight in the same ranks. See here."

The Lieutenant drew from his pocket the Badge of the Sacred Heart, and involuntarily Rob produced his. Together they stood, a brave young pair, all difference of rank forgotten between them. The aggressors were

silent a moment. Then there was an attempt at an apology.

"We meant no harm, sir. We likes our bit of chaff."

"Queer sort of chaff, tampering with a man's convictions," said the Lieutenant, sternly. "Let me advise you in future to have some respect for a fellow who has got some belief and the pluck to profess it."

Before the Lieutenant was quite aware of what was being done, the men had set up a rousing cheer for him and Rob. It sounded to his excited mood like the exultant shouts he had heard after a victory. Shaking Rob warmly by the hand, and with a hearty "good-bye" to the rest, the Lieutenant walked away.

"That's a plucky young swell," said one.

"Know who he is?" said the man of the pipe.

"He's the officer what came out here with ——," mentioning the dignitary to whom the young soldier was secretary.

"You get along; there ain't no Papists in that crowd."

"I know what I's talking about. That's Lieutenant ——— , and he's got a dozen medals, at least, not to speak of the Victory Cross."

"Draw it mild!" and "Who'd have thought it!" were some of the comments provoked by this explanation.

"He knelt beside me last Sunday at the altar rails," ventured Rob. "He wore the badge that he showed you to day."

"Gosh!" was the emphatic exclamation, following upon this information.

"These Papists is queer folk," said the man with the pipe, who appeared to be a sort of leader in the group; "and, arter all, I likes to see a man stick up for his colors. So give us your fist, Rob!"

One or two bad Catholics who had been amongst this party of English workmen lately arrived from Liverpool, now stole shamefacedly away. They had that day learned a never-to-be-forgotten lesson.

The young Lieutenant meanwhile found his way to the club, where he was to take his dinner, reflecting more seriously than was his wont upon each man's responsibility.

He had never been what is called pious, but always a practical Catholic. He had joined the League at college in England, and had been, through all vicissitudes, faithful to its practices. So that it was with curious emotion he had found himself, here in this strange country, that memorable Sunday morning, amongst the throng of communicants advancing to the altar for the Communion of Reparation. He had worn the badge, but he had little idea that he was so shortly to appear on two occasions as a veritable confessor of the faith. It had hitherto seemed so natural to him to be proud of his religion. He could not guess what seeds of good he had that day sown. It was only in after years that they were to ripen. But he did draw a conclusion from all that had occurred.

" I suppose," he thought, " that one has to be a little aggressive in one's Catholicity at times. Not in attacking but in repelling attack. It is a cowardly thing to shut up one's religion for Sunday wear, especially when we carry about this militant emblem."

He looked at the badge, which unconsciously he had still retained in his grasp, and now restored it to his pocket.

" I never realized before to day," he added with a laugh, " that the League is a band of soldiers."

SAM ALLEN'S LITTLE JOKE.

MRS. J. SADLIER.

BLITHE cheery woman was Mrs. Lanigan, albeit that the battle of life was a hard one for her and circumstances were dead against her. Left a widow while still young, with three little children dependent on her for support, her days were spent in hard toil from Monday morning till Saturday night, and this she bore without a murmur, thanking God for the good health that enabled her to work for the children she so fondly loved. The only thing that troubled her was the hard necessity of going out on certain days to work, and so leaving her little ones all day long without protection.

It was her custom, on those days, to give the children their breakfast and prepare their little mid-day meal before leaving them in the morning. On her return in the evening she cooked the frugal supper, which she and her children enjoyed beyond everything, because they were together and could talk over all their family affairs at leisure. Then, when the little deal table was cleared and the tea-things washed and neatly arranged in the corner cupboard, good Mrs. Lanigan took up her sewing or knitting, and with her children nestled close around her, gave herself up to the pleasure of listening to their innocent prattle, while they told her over and over the little incidents of the day,—how the

task assigned to each had been executed, the plays they had played and the sights they had seen.

The humble abode of the family was in a small court opening on a broad suburban thoroughfare of a large city, where the stream of life ran swiftly past in all its bustle and excitement. So the Lanigan children, from their door-step, or the little window in their kitchen, saw many a thing to interest them in the street beyond their court, during the long hours of their mother's absence.

In those quiet hours of well-earned rest, the mother laid hold, too, of every opportunity of instructing her children in religion and virtue in the measure of her lights—not over brilliant, it is true, but sound and judicious, inspired as they were by simple faith and fervent piety.

* * * * * * * * *

Only one of the children was old enough to go to confession, and had not yet made her first communion. This was Bessie, nine years old, a thougthtful, quiet child, whose chief pleasure it was to assist her beloved mother in any way she could, and to watch over her little brother Peter, seven years old, and Jennie just turned of five.

This last was not so easy a task as might be supposed, especially in regard to Peter, who had already "a will of his own," as his mother used to say, and was somewhat given to climbing poles and fences, hanging on at the back of passing vehicles and other gymnastic feats, to the constant terror of poor Bessie and in forgetfulness of his mother's oft-repeated injunctions.

Another source of anxious fear to mother and daughter, on Peter's account, was the proximity of a well,

situated in the centre of the court, and which supplied the families dwelling therein with water. It is true, there was a substantial parapet surrounding this well, strong enough and high enough to protect those who rested against it while drawing water from below. But who knows not the danger-loving propensity of boys, especially small ones? So it chanced that of all Peter Lanigan's amusements during the enforced absence of his good mother, the foremost was that of mounting the stone parapet of the well and leaning over to catch sight of his own image reflected in the water beneath.

Evening after evening, Bessie had to complain of little Peter's disregard of her advice and reckless indifference to danger. Then the poor mother in her easy good-natured way took the little culprit to task:

"I declare now, Peter, you'll break my heart if you go on so. Don't you know it's a sin and a shame for you to be disobeyin' your mother this way, and keepin' poor Bessie runnin' after you when she has the work of the house on her hands all day long?"

Peter was ready enough to acknowledge his fault and promise amendment; but alas! after a day or two, he forgot all about it, and raced and ran and climbed on the parapet all the same. What would you have? After all, poor Peter was only Jean Ingelo'ws "Seven times one," and was left all the day long to his own resources for amusement. The worst of it was that, not content with running all sorts of risks himself, the sturdy urchin was fond of leading his little sister Jennie, into all the pranks and gambols that were his own delight. This was, of course, when tidy, matronly Bessie was too much engaged to notice their escapades.

It was hard enough for good Mrs. Lanigan to keep up her spirits and brace her energies day by day to take up the burden of her toil and to leave her little ones, so often, to the many perils to which the two younger were exposed, in her absence, from Peter's giddy and reckless nature.

The neighbors were wont to wonder how she could content herself away from her children, all so young, and one so wild and harum-scarum, as they said. Some five or six families dwelt in the same court, all of them working people like Mrs. Lanigan; but, more fortunate than she, the other women having their husbands to earn for them were not obliged to go out to work.

They were a kindly little colony, those dwellers in the court, and, as far as their own avocations permitted, the women were quite willing to look after little Peter and Jennie now and then, when Bessie—a general favorite among them—had to go an errand for her small *ménage* and leave the children to their own devices.

Amongst the families in the court only one was Protestant. Irish Protestants they were too, Allen by name, consisting of the father, mother and four children,—two boys and two girls. These children were not had, as the world goes; the two elder, a boy and a girl, went to school, and the others spent their time, week in, week out, in the more or less noisy sports of their youthful comrades. The father worked in a foundry and the mother had constant work at home from a large clothing store.

"Why in the world don't you try to get work to do at home, Mrs. Lanigan, so as to be all the time with the children?" was Mrs. Allen's frequent question. "I don't know how you can make up your mind to leave

them, and they so young. Of course, Bessie is a wise, steady little thing, but she can't be everywhere at once, and Peter would need some one after him the whole time not to speak of Jennie, the dear little lammie ! "

" True for you, Mrs. Allen," would her neighbor reply ; " but you see it's this way with me : I get three or four days' steady work every week at house-cleanin' and washin', and that's a great thing, you know, for a lone woman like me, for it helps me to pay the rent and to feed and clothe the little ones. So what can I do ? "

" But don't you be thinkin' all day long that somethin' bad might be happenin' at home—some terrible accident, you know ? If I was in your place I'd never have an easy hour when I'd be away from the children."

" Well ! I declare to you, Mrs. Allen, " said the little woman with an easy smile, " that's not the way with me, at all, at all. I don't fret a bit about the children while I'm gone from them. You see, ma'am, when I go out in the mornin' to my work, I just put the children and even the little place we have, under the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary, an' I ask Her to be a mother to them till I come back."

" Well ! an' what then ? " asked the other with an amused smile.

" Why, just this, " said Mrs. Lanigan simply, " that I have no fear for my fatherless little ones when I'm out earnin' their livin', for I know they're better cared for than if I was with them."

A mocking laugh behind her startled the blithe little widow, and, turning she beheld Sam Allen, who had entered, unperceived by her.

" What are you laughin' at, Sam Allen ? " she asked a little testily, for her.

"Why, what would I be laughin' at, Mrs. Lanigan, only at your simplicity? How do you think your Virgin Mary, up in heaven, can hear what you say down here in the court, or take care of your children? I always took you for a sensible woman, but now I begin to doubt it."

"Sensible or no, Sam Allen, that's my belief; and you may laugh as much as you please, you'll not laugh me out of it. So, good-bye, Mrs. Allen dear, an' many thanks for the pattern you gave me for Jennie's hood."

"Good-bye, Mrs. Lanigan," called Sam after her from his door. "Won't you put in a word for us here with your Virgin Mary?"

"Put in a word with her yourself, Sam," replied Mrs. Lanigan, looking back over her shoulder. "My doin' it would be little use when you don't or won't do it yourself."

A few minutes later Mrs. Lanigan and her children were kneeling before a little plaster statue of the Virgin ever Blessed, saying the Rosary, as was their hallowed custom before retiring to rest.

The Allens enjoyed a hearty laugh at the expense of poor simple widow Lanigan, and after talking the matter over for some time, decided that it was tiresome to hear Papists going on about, "their Blessed Virgin," all as one as if she could hear them or help them.

"They're a queer lot altogether," observed Sam, with a yawn, as he arose and began to prepare for bed. "You never know what they'll come out with next when you get talkin' with them. I'd like to make the trial some day of Mrs. Lanigan's belief, as she calls it, in that Virgin Mary of hers. I'll see about it when I have time

on my hands for a little fun. Any way, let us get to bed,—we have to be up early."

* * * * * * * * * *

The long dreary winter had passed away, and the emerald sheen of the Spring was in its transit towards the more mellow brightness of the summer. One evening, Mrs. Lanigan, coming home tired from work, was met some way down the street adjoining the court where she dwelt, by no less a person than her neighbor Sam Allen, wearing, as it struck the good woman, a particularly sombre aspect. He was ordinarily a long-visaged, sallow individual, but on this occasion he looked doleful in the extreme.

"Why, then, Sam Allen," cried the widow stopping short and fixing her eyes on the man's face; "is there anything wrong with you at home? You look as if all belongin' to you were dead and buried."

"Well! no, Mrs. Lanigan, there's nothin' the matter with *us*,"—laying a strong emphasis on the pronoun,—"but—but"

"But what, man? Out with it, whatever it is!"

"Oh! Mrs. Lanigan! Mrs. Lanigan!"

"Now, Sam," said the resolute little woman, "I want to hear the news. I see by your face that something has happened. What is it, I say again?"

"Oh! indeed, then, it grieves me sorely to tell, but I suppose I must. Poor little Peter—"

"What about Peter, Sam?"

"Why, he fell into the well there a little while ago, an' I'm afeard he's drowned. We haven't got him out yet."

"No, you didn't," Mrs. Lanigan quickly answered, "for the best of reasons, that he wasn't in it! Don't

tell me, Sam Allen, that *my* child is drowned. If any one is, it isn't him."

By this time the pair had reached the entrance to the court, where beyond all doubt, there was a wild commotion and a crowd of excited people. A child had just been taken from the well, and efforts were being made to resuscitate the little body, but evidently in vain. The child was dead. But it was not Peter Lanigan, for his mother found him with Bessie and Jennie on the doorstep of their little home, crying in piteous accents that Christie Allen was drowned in the well.

Yes, it was, indeed, poor Sam's youngest boy, a bright little fellow of six or seven years old, who had come to so sad an end. Sam's little joke turned out no joke after all! And Mrs. Lanigan's confidence in the protection of the Mother of God, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, was triumphantly justified. It is worthy of remark that the Allens, from that sad day forward, laughed no more at the widow Lanigan's trust in "her Blessed Virgin."

THAT PICTURE OF THE SACRED HEART.

ANNA T. SADLIER.

I.

AN early Spring had come to Canada. It had touched the buds into life; it had clothed the trees with a delicate green. Cattle were lowing, sheep bleating, the air was full of faint fragrance, as in anticipation of those many odorous plants which should later fill the gardens and the woodlands with their profusion.

Mary Leonard sat upon the porch of her father's little stone house. Tangled creepers of honeysuckle fell about her. A lilac-bush beside the door was sending her its grateful sweetness. A bird or two sang in a neighboring tree. Mary was absorbed in a letter, four pages of closely written school-girl news from a convent friend. On the last page a few lines caught her attention particularly :—" We are all busy here about the League of the Sacred Heart. I am a promoter and have got a cross. Lots of our old convent friends are in it. But, perhaps, you do not know what all this means. "

A brief explanation followed, and Mary mechanically took up an inclosed printed card :—" The Promises of Our Lord to Blessed Margaret Mary. " Mechanically,

too, she began to read. Her thoughts were busy with that mad-cap, Lucy Hearn, the wildest girl in the class, transformed now into a promoter of the Sacred Heart. One promise particularly appealed to Mary:

"I will bless the houses wherein an Image of my Heart shall be exposed and honored."

Acting on a sudden impulse, Mary went up to her room and took from a drawer a colored print. It was of no particular value. It had been given as a reward of merit in the young girl's convent days. It was an Image of the Sacred Heart. She brought it downstairs, and with some hesitation hung it up in the sitting-room, just above a rude little shelf. She did not know what her father might say, and she stood considerably in awe of him and his opinions.

She passed out into the garden and gathered a handful of early Spring flowers, and put them in a vase upon the shelf. Then, she sat down at the window, and looked out over the fields just turning green and the road stretching away into the distance. At last she could see afar off her father approaching, a bent and toil-worn figure. His clothing was rough, his air and manner, as he entered the house, dejected and even morose.

Thomas Leonard's life had been one of hard and prosaic labor. He had had but little time to attend to his religious duties, and the suburb where he lived gave but narrow scope for anything more than the baldest practice of religion. It was only occasionally visited by a priest, the Catholics in the vicinity being the merest handful.

After supper, Mary Leonard carried the lamp into the sitting-room, where her father usually smoked his pipe. Scarcely had he seated himself, when the light of

the lamp fell full upon the picture and the fragrant blossoms before it. Thomas Leonard started as if he had seen a ghost. The divine face and figure rudely outlined, but yet full of meaning and majesty, strangely awed him.

"What's that?" he said, shortly, jerking his thumb in the direction of the Sacred Image.

"A picture of the Sacred Heart, father."

"Who put it there?"

"I did."

"Humph!"

No more was said. Mary was rejoiced that her father had not ordered the picture to be taken down. So hard and absorbed in material things had he become, that beauty, sweetness, spirituality, paused without the stone porch. Work and economy were all the duties that Thomas Leonard imposed upon his daughter. If she wanted to say her prayers—short ones—well and good. If a priest came, she might go to mass, but there must be no humbug. At first when a priest came at Easter, Thomas Leonard was careful to receive the Sacraments. Of late, he had contrived to be out of the way at that particular time, and his faith was apparently dead.

The picture had been in its place a week or more, when Mary surprised her father, one evening, standing, with a light in his hand, attentively examining it. She stole away, unheeded, and again she caught him painfully spelling out "the Promises," which had been left upon the shelf.

Once a grandchild came from a still more remote country place, on a visit. Its mother was a Protestant. The child had been taught nothing of its father's religion

One day Mary overheard a conversation between her father and the little lad.

"Grandpapa, who is that in the picture?"

"It's our Saviour, I suppose," said the man, shamefacedly, the name was so unfamiliar on his lips.

"What is he doing?"

"Oh, I don't know; Mary can tell you."

"He has a beautiful, kind face; and there is a lady in the picture. What is she doing?"

"Praying."

"Do you ever pray, grandpapa?" asked the child earnestly.

Grandpapa growled something in answer. He did not want his young inquirer to learn that for years he had scarcely ever bent his knee.

"Grandpapa is too busy," he added aloud.

"If you tell me how, *I will*," said the child eagerly.

Something like an expression of pain crossed the old man's face, as he rose and left the room. He was a skilled workman, and had risen to be foreman of the factory wherein he had worked for forty years. No one could replace him when he was absent, and he taught many of the new hands their work. But he had never taught any one to pray. He had almost forgotten how himself.

As the weeks and months went by, the picture and Mary's daily offering of flowers before it made a spot of beauty in the house. The bare walls of the sitting-room seemed less dreary. The perfume of flowers had replaced that of new carpet or of stale varnish.

Once when Mary spoke of removing the picture to her own room, her father almost sternly bade her leave it where it was.

It had so far worked its way into his hardened and toilworn heart.

II.

Spring had softly stolen away at the touch of Summer, and the ripe fruits of Autumn had fallen before the vigorous blast of a northerly Winter. Icicles hung upon the trees, the garden of the little stone house was piled high with snow. The roads were blocked, so that Thomas Leonard could scarcely get to his work in the neighboring town. Mary was shut up in a dreariness which she enlivened by decorating, as best she might, the space around the picture. She had begun to burn before it a small oil lamp, which was another school-day relic. Her father had at first said something about the danger of setting fire to the house, but he made no very great objection, and seemed at last to look for the light, on his return at evening. The little sitting-room had an end window, through which the red gleam of the lamp shone out upon the road.

One particularly wild and stormy night came about the end of December. Drifts of snow were whirling, blizzard fashion, up and down the road. The wind howled about the house and rattled the frost-bound trees. Just as the father and daughter sat down to supper, they were startled by a stamping of feet outside and a loud knocking at the door. Thomas Leonard threw it open, and discovered a young man, evidently belonging to the higher classes. The stranger briefly explained that, being on his way to the residence of a gentleman—whose name Thomas Leonard at once recognized—some

distance further on, he had got off the direct road and lost himself.

"You had better stop here to-night," said Leonard, with rough civility; "there's no chance of making your way before day-break, and not then, unless this blizzard holds up."

"But I have a horse and sleigh," objected the traveller.

"There's an out-house for them. I'll see that they're all right."

The stranger yielded, and having partaken of the humble but plentiful supper, sat in the little sitting-room watching Mary knit and her father smoke. All at once he said, glancing, with a smile, at the lamp before the picture:

"That must have been the light which guided me here. It was like a tiny red spark in the darkness. But it answered the purpose. Had I not seen it I should have wandered on in the drifts, or have gone down an embankment."

"If you hadn't found your way here somehow," said Leonard, "you wouldn't have been a living man to-morrow."

"A very little thing to save a life," said the stranger, rising and going over to examine the print. "Will you permit me to inquire," he added, involuntarily addressing Mary, "what this picture is intended to represent, and why you burn a light before it?"

Mary, summoning up all her convent lore, gave as clear an account as she could of the significance of the picture and her reasons for burning the lamp. The stranger listened attentively, asking many questions. He read over "the Promises" more than once, and

returned to the subject of devotion to the Sacred Heart with a persistency which astonished Tom Leonard.

"What had men got to do," he thought, "with all this religious business? The women were the only ones who had time for that."

Unconsciously, however, he learned a great deal, no less than his guest.

The inclemency of the weather detained the young stranger for two or three days under that humble roof. During his stay he conversed more than once with Mary upon the subject of religion, examining her beads, her prayer-book and a catechism, which last he jestingly begged from her as a memento of his visit. Perhaps it was because of the lamp which had saved his life, but he talked most of all of the Sacred Heart.

III.

Ten years had passed away, and again the April blossoms had replaced the Canadian snows. The honeysuckle was climbing once more over the porch of the stone house, and the leaves were fast sprouting on the trees. Mary Leonard was all absorbed by one thought: Her father lay dying, there was no priest nearer than the neighboring town; she dared not go so far, leaving the sick man alone. Besides, he had repulsed her so sternly when she touched upon the subject, and had broken forth into so savage threats, that she was fairly terrified. The picture of the Sacred Heart had been brought with its little red light, and hung in view of the bed. Before it stood the vase of spring flowers. It seemed to have an extraordinary

fascination for Leonard. Even in his ravings he talked disconnectedly about it. A doctor came once, and pronounced, carelessly, that the patient might live a month or two, but that his case was hopeless. He gave his instructions, and departed. Mary was left alone.

The dusk of an April evening was closing in, and recalling to Mary that other twilight, when, reading her schoolmate's letter, she had resolved to hang up the picture of the Sacred Heart. She sat now overwhelmed by the thought that her father might pass into that terrible, unseen world, unshriven, unprepared. Oh, if she could but get a priest! If only one were near. A sound of wheels and of voices aroused her from her reverie, then a knocking at the door. Mary threw it open, and found herself confronted by the stranger of long ago. For some time after his visit he had sent them occasional tokens of friendly remembrance, then there had been silence. Mary recognized him at once.

To her wonder, he wore a distinctly clerical dress.

The explanations which followed were not long.

"I shall not try," said the stranger, smiling, "to unravel for you the tangled skein of my experiences since we met. The clue must be looked for in your picture of the Sacred Heart, and the light burning before it, which saved my life. Do you remember how we talked religion during my visit; how you gave me a catechism; above all, how you made me acquainted with that wonderful devotion to the Divine Heart? Once set thinking, reading, studying, the path was clear to the Church and to the priesthood. My friend, Father——, and I, being in this neighborhood, I made it a point to come and thank you for your hospitality of long ago."

"Perhaps you can do more than that for us," said Mary, quietly. "My father is dying, and has refused to let me go for a priest, even if I could have left him and made my way to town. He will see *you*. My prayer to the Sacred Heart is answered."

An April evening was closing in dreamily. Sunset was fading from the landscape, a faint breeze was stirring the elm-trees, wherein were heard the songs of birds, an echo, perhaps, of the canticle of joy which the angels were singing for one that had done penance. Thomas Leonard had passed beyond earthly speech or sound. But at his bedside was the priest, the stranger of ten years before, and in his hand was a Crucifix. His last words had been an appeal for mercy to the Divine Heart. His dying eyes had rested upon the picture. The red light from the lamp fell as a benediction over the pallid and stiffening form from which the spirit was passing with the last April sun. It fell, too, upon the bowed figure of Mary Leonard, who, through all her grief and desolation, could perceive that the promise had been realized. Great blessings had come from the honor paid to that picture of the Sacred Heart.

A GRANDFATHER'S STORY.

MRS. JAMES SADLIER.

A PLEASANT home-circle was that which gathered round the cheerful blaze of the parlor-fire in a comfortable homestead in a town of Western Canada one stormy evening in late November, some few years ago. The party consisted of the father and mother, three fair daughters, ranging in age from eighteen to twenty five, and a son, a pale student-like young man of twenty-eight or thirty; last. but by no means least in importance, was a silver-haired, patriarchal-looking old man, the grandfather of the young people and father of the comely matron who looked more like their elder sister than their mother.

While the mournful winds shrieked and howled without, increasing the sense of comfort and security within, and the fire-light cast strange weird shadows over the cosy room, with its cretonne-draped windows, and the group around the fire-place, conversation flowed freely in the careless ease of home-life, interrupted only by the merry laughter of the younger girls, or now and again,

> "The quick questioning that brought
> Such gentle calm replies."

One of the girls had mentioned a wedding that was soon to take place in the neighborhood, and to which all the family were invited.

"What a splendid match it is for Alice Costelloe!" said Mary, the eldest girl; "they say the intended groom is quite well off, besides his profession. And we all know the Costelloes are anything but well off."

"You forget one thing, Mary," said her father earnestly. "The wealth and position are all very well, as far as they go. But what of religion—the main thing after all? You know this Mr. Barrington is a Protestant."

"Oh! but every one says that he is very liberal," cried Bella, another of the girls, "and will never interfere with Alice's religion. Indeed, they say he has made all sorts of promises."

"And probably means to keep them, too," replied the father. "But what of that? The fact remains that he is a Protestant, and that being so, all his other advantages cannot make the match a splendid one for poor Alice."

"That is so, Edward," said his wife in her cheery pleasant voice. "No worldly advantages can make up for difference of religion. No matter how good the man is, or how bright his prospects may be, I would rather see one of my children dead than marrying out of her own church."

The girls were loud in their protestations that people were too hard on mixed marriages, declaring that no girl ought to lose the chance of a good settlement in life on account of religion. There was always a hope, they said, that the husband might be converted. Their brother was partly of their opinion, frankly admitting, however, that there was more chance of happiness in the married state where both parties were of the same religion.

The old grandfather had not yet spoken. He had been quietly smoking his pipe in the chimney-corner

an attentive listener to the conversation, an amused smile flitting athwart his aged face at the childish arguments advanced by the young people in support of their worldly ideas. He now took the pipe from his mouth, and, holding it suspended between two fingers, thus spoke :

" Children, I hardly wonder at your way of thinking and talking on this all-important subject of mixed marriages, considering that you have been brought up amongst non-Catholics, and are too young to understand yet how it is that they may be very good neighbors and pleasant acquaintances, even friends, yet most unsuitable for a husband or wife for a Catholic woman or man. I have just been thinking of a little story, an 'ower true tale,' as the Scotch are wont to say, for it came within my own personal experience."

" O grandfather, let us hear it," cried Rosa, the youngest daughter, the others eagerly seconding her request. The old man cleared his throat, and, after a brief pause of what was evidently painful recollection, began his little story :

" You are aware, my dear grand-children, that before I came to Canada to make my home with you—when your dear grand-mother died and left me alone—I had spent the greater part of my life in one of the great cities of the neighboring republic. I had emigrated from Ireland in early youth, and after a little while of striving and waiting in that strange city where I had at first no one to give me a helping hand, I at last found lucrative employment in the workshops of a large manufacturing firm. It was not long before I found a friend in one of my fellow workmen, a young Irishman and a Catholic like myself, whom I will call Lawrence

Rourke. He was a good honest fellow, devotedly attached to the traditions of his race, and faithful in the discharge of his religious duties. In our leisure moments, and especially in our long Sunday afternoon walks in the pleasant suburban places around our great city, my new friend and I often talked of the dear old home so far away, and the good old days we might never see again. We spoke of the pleasant gatherings in fair, or market, or rustic festival; of the kindly ways of the simple folk whom we loved to call our own, and very often reminded each other of some well-ioved

> '——chapel in the glen
> Where oft with bare and reverent locks we stood
> To hear the eternal truths.'

Of the dear old priests, the teachers of our childhood, who had married the parents, baptized the children and blessed the graves where the grandparents were laid to rest.

" In those long-past days, children, our holy religion occupied a very different position in the cities of the Union from that which it does to-day. You will find it hard to believe that the really respectable firm in whose employment Rourke and I were, insisted that we should work on Christmas Day, declaring that they could not allow any such nonsense to interrupt their works. I'm glad to say that of a dozen Catholic workmen in the place, not one would consent to work on the great festival; the superintendent insisted, the men were firm in their refusal, and all the Catholics were, in consequence, dismissed.

" Rourke and myself, finding ourselves so unexpectedly thrown out of employment, were at first bewildered

and at a loss to know what to turn to for a living. But even then neither he nor I regretted for a moment what we had done. Duty, before all, was our motto, and especially religious duty. So it was that, cheered by the approval of our conscience, and trusting in Divine Providence, we set about seeking other employment. In this we succeeded beyond our expectation, thanks to God and Our Blessed Mother, to whom we were at that time equally devout. After a while each of us commenced business on our own account.

" It would be tedious for you, children, were I to go over in detail all that befell Rourke and myself during the long years that followed. Suffice it to say that we both prospered exceedingly in our undertakings. I married a young girl from near my own place at home, and of a family well known to me. She was possessed of good sense and a good heart, and by her prudence and industry, above all by her practical piety and cheerful submission to God's will in all the vicissitudes of life, she helped me to gain a still better position, and sustained me in many an anxious hour. Her death, ten years ago, was my first great sorrow."

The old man's voice faltered and he remained silent a moment, as did all his listeners, who understood and shared his emotion. Looking round with a sad smile, and controlling himself by an effort, he resumed :

" Children were born to us who grew up in the love and fear of God. Nearly all of them, like your dear mother there, have sons and daughters of their own, all good Christians—a son of one family, as you know, studying for the priesthood, and two daughters of another family members of religious communities.

" You will ask how it fared with Lawrence Rourke

Alas ! for the sad story I have to tell of him and his ! He made what our Mary here would call a splendid match. He married the daughter of a wealthy merchant who brought him a fortune of several thousand dollars, which enabled him to extend his business operations and even to invest in property. He bought a fine house on one of the grand avenues as a home for his family. So far all was well. But there was one fearful drawback. The young lady and her family were of the sect of Methodist Episcopalians, and deeply imbued with strong prejudices against the Catholic religion and all that belonged to it.

" Up to the time of his marriage, Rourke had been, not indeed a very zealous Catholic, but still a tolerably practical one. He had even worn the scapular of the Blessed Virgin, and been enrolled, as I was, in her sodality. This went on for some time. His wife went regularly to the Methodist meeting-house on Sunday morning and Rourke to his own church as usual. The first trouble came with the first child, a son. The father would fain have had him baptized in the Catholic Church, but the mother positively refused to allow it, and waxed alarmingly hysterical over the matter ; then her mother declared it would kill her darling in her weak condition if her child were taken to a *Roman* Catholic church for baptism.

" 'So what could I do?' said Lawrence to me when unbosoming himself of this new trouble. 'I could not run the risk of killing my poor wife, you know?'

" 'I don't know about that,' I said, 'where your child's soul was at stake. And besides I don't think it would have killed your wife. She'd soon have got over

it, depend upon it, if she found you were not to be frightened out of doing your duty.'

"'Oh well! it may easily be remedied afterwards,' was the reply. 'I tell you, Ned, I can't go against poor Elsie's wishes at such a critical time. The old folks would never forgive me if I did.'

"I shook my head but said nothing more. I saw it would be all in vain. At first my friend seemed troubled and anxious, but the boy was strong and healthy, and all went merry as a mariage-bell. Of baptism nothing more was said by Rourke, but I had reason to know that the child had been baptized, after two or three months, by a minister of his mother's religion. Other children came in due time and were baptized in like manner, the father no longer daring, or perhaps not caring, to protest. By and by, all were sent to Protestant schools, and grew up in the ways of their mother's family, staunch out-and-out Protestants.

"And still prosperity flowed in on Rourke. His business increased to an enormous extent, and the usphot was that in the course of years, by the time his sons and daughters were grown up, he declared himself to me, in our occasional conversations on the subject, far too busy to practise his religion. The sodality meetings were out of the question, the scapular was half jestingly laid aside, and when Sunday came, poor Lawrence was tired and worn out with the manifold affairs of his vast business during the week.

"It was only now and then that he managed to go to mass, always avoided hearing sermons, and *never* approached sacraments. It took years and years to bring all this about, but it came surely and sadly, even as constant dropping wears the stone.

" It was not without many a strenuous effort on my part that my early friend—now a middle-aged man with grizzled hair and portly figure—sank into this state of awful indifference. He always listened good-humoredly, admitted the truth of all I said, but always wound up with—' It will be all right some day. Never fear, Ned! I appreciate your good intentions, but nothing can be done at present. Let us talk of something else.'

" In vain I endeavored to remind him of the danger of putting off his conversion. ' My conversion, indeed!' he would exclaim with heightened color. ' I tell you, Ned, I'm as good a Catholic as you are. I have lived a good Catholic, and hope to die one, too!'

" It so happened that, after one of these discussions, Rourke was more than usually excited. He seemed rather depressed in mind for some cause unknown to me, and after a short silence he suddenly said:

" ' Ned Dalton, you are my oldest friend. I know your advice is good, and I wish from my heart I could only follow it. But I can't, Ned, I can't! You don't know how hard it is for me to do even the little I do in the way of religion. And when it comes to the end—' he paused again, then, as if making a violent effort, he said in an agitated voice:

" ' There is one thing, Ned, I want you to promise me. When you hear of my being taken sick—I mean, of course, dangerously sick—will you make it your business to bring the priest to me?'

" I was startled by this strange request, wholly unexpected as it was, but I willingly gave the required promise, adding with a smile, ' that is, if I am alive. I may die before you, you know.'

" ' Oh! I hope not; but in case you should, you must

ask your family before hand for some one of them to render me that last service. They all know my wife and children, and can easily do what I ask.'

"'I am not so sure of that,' I replied, 'but we will do our best.' Whereupon he wrung my hand with a nervous grasp and I left him. More than once after he reminded me of this promise, and I could only make the same reply. He was evidently troubled in his mind.

"One day, about three months later word was brought me that poor Lawrence was seriously ill. I went at once to his house, and was told he was too ill to see any one—the doctor had given strict orders that he was not to be disturbed on any account. Knowing very well that the priest would not be admitted, I was wholly at a loss how to fulfil my promise. In my perplexity I went home and told my wife and children how matters stood.

"One of my daughters, a warm-hearted, impulsive girl, declared she would go and try to see a faithful old Irish servant of the Rourke family, and a fervent Catholic, who might succeed in bringing the priest upstairs to her master to whom she was much attached. 'I know Nellie will do it if it can be done,' she said, 'and then, father, you can go at once for Father Williams.'

"My daughter hastened to the Rourke mansion. The bells were all muffled, but by tapping at a window in the basement she succeeded in attracting old Nellie's attention, and, having secured her willing aid in her charitable undertaking, she was leaving the house when one of the Rourke young men came down the stairs.

"'How is your father, Mr. Charles?' she anxiously inquired. 'Do you think he would like to see a priest?"

" 'Thanks very much, Miss Dalton, but my father is just dead!'

" 'Dead!' said my daughter horrified and amazed—'and without any preparation!'

" 'Oh! not quite,' the young man replied with a half smile on his lips,—'the Rev. Mr. Jenkinson, our minister, prayed beside him.'

" The girl came home with tearful eyes and pallid face and told the awful news. My wife and children were loud in their lamentations, but for me I only said —'Ah! poor Lawrence, poor friend, so much for your oft-repeated protestation that you were a good Catholic and would die one.' Alas! he died as he had lived, at least for years and years."

The old man ceased to speak, and was evidently overcome by the sorrowful recollections of vanished years that crowded upon his mind. The young people were deeply impressed by their grandfather's simple story, and all were fain to admit that mixed marriages were not desirable after all.

While writing the above story of a mixed marriage the writer was told of a death noticed in some of the American papers. It was that of a man of ninety, a nominal Catholic, at whose funeral service no fewer than fifty-one descendants, all Protestants, were present. So much for mixed marriages.

WHAT CAME OF IT?

MRS. JAMES SADLIER.

THAT wedding of Alice Costelloe's was a great event in the quiet city of (C——.) "It was attended by all the *éclat* that the wealth of the bridegroom and the high social standing of both families seemed to demand. Everything smiled on the handsome young couple on their wedding day. Even the skies were propitious, and of the gay company of relatives and friends who partook of the festivities at the Costelloe homestead, few there were, if any, who doubted that the good wishes lavished upon them and the "good luck" invoked for them would be amply realized in the sunny future opening before them.

Of the few doubting hearts were Mrs. Costelloe, the pale and care-worn mother of the bride, and her pastor and spiritual guide since childhood, good Father Fitzgibbon. The mother, an earnest, uncompromising Catholic, had never fully approved of the so-called "splendid match" which her more worldly and ambitious husband had had no small share in making for his eldest and best-beloved daughter, while the pastor had, as in duty bound, openly set his face against it as long as there seemed any chance of preventing it. Finding that the current ran dead against him and Mrs. Costelloe—who alone took his view of the danger Alice was

incurring—Father Fitzgibbon studiously absented himself from the Costelloe dwelling during the long weeks of busy preparation.

He had positively refused to be present at the celebration of a marriage unblessed by the Church, and had warned Alice from the first that her union would be an unhallowed one, devoid of sacramental grace. Mrs. Costelloe's heart sank within her, hearing this, and many a bitter tear she shed over the infatuation of her husband and child; but she, like the priest, was powerless to ward off the blow, and the great day came at last—and found Alice outwardly gay and smiling, inwardly full of strange misgivings, for "conscience doth make cowards of us all."

Alas! poor Alice! the shadow of the future was already falling over her hitherto sunny life! This first departure from the path of duty was even then hard in itself, and attended with shrinking pain and trouble. Had she any misgivings as to the final goal, or the coming events that in that hour of hope and joy cast their shadow before?

She had reached the parting of the ways. Were they ever, ever to be re-united? Time alone could tell.

II.

For some years all went well with the Barringtons in their city home, many miles away. The husband's professional practice went on increasing. Money came pouring in, and the large establishment over which the fair Alice presided was kept up on a scale of plenty and luxury that left nothing to be desired, while she, on her

part, made it a model of order, neatness and comfort. Five children, two sons and three daughters, were born to George Barrington and his wife, and, as yet, there had been little trouble even on the score of religion. The boys, as a matter of course, "went with their father," as the phrase goes, while the girls were being brought up Catholics. For Alice was free as air in the way of practising her religion. George Barrington was one of the very large class of Protestants who believe that all religions are good, and that Catholics are about as good as any others, except in the matter of social position, in which they were certainly not up to the mark, and never would be, he supposed—the true reason, after all, why George insisted on his sons, at least, being Protestants. For the rest, he opined, Catholics were not half so bad as they were represented, and Alice and he had got along as well as most married couples.

But George Barrington, being mortal, died one day quite unexpectedly, just when the tide of his affairs had led him on to fortune and his prospects were at their brightest. His family, therefore, were well provided for, and his widow spared the torturing anxiety attendant on straitened circumstances when a certain position has to be kept up. His mother and sisters, who lived in a town several miles distant, were most kind to Alice and her children; all the more so, probably, because they wanted nothing from them. Sharing the widow's grief for the dear departed one, their companionship was most consoling to her and her children, and it was with real sorrow she saw them depart for their distant home after a stay of several weeks. It is true they were not of her own faith, very far from it, and all the comfort they could give was merely human. They were narrower

in their views than the lamented George had been, and were, indeed, what is called "earnest Christians,"—leaders at prayer-meeting and other religious gatherings, teachers in Sunday-School, and painfully strict in the matter of Sabbath observance. But they were soft spoken and sympathetic, they were poor George's own people, and as such Alice clung to them in her time of mourning, although, to say the truth, she had had no special liking for them during her husband's life-time. They were so ultra-Protestant and had so little in common with her as a Catholic!

The children, and especially the boys—one fourteen, the other nine—were devoted to grandma and their "aunties." Robert and George were already as good Protestants as these paternal relatives could desire. They were pupils of a Protestant school during the week and regular attendants at Sunday-school on "Lord's Day." Their mother would have deemed it dishonorable to break the promise she had given "poor George" on his deathbed to interfere in no wise with their religion. So whatever it cost her, and it did cost her many a troubled hour,—she made no effort to explain the mysteries of religion, or implant the faith in the tender minds and hearts of her boys. True, they were as near and dear to her as their sisters, and their souls were no less precious, but how could she break her promise to their dear dead father? Impossible.

As for the girls, Harriet, Jane and Bertha, she took them regularly to mass, sent them to Catechism, and saw that they approached the Sacraments at stated times. Father Fitzgibbon did what he could to save the daughters and imbue them with pious sentiments, since the sons were lost to the Church. The League of

the Sacred Heart had recently been established in the parish at the close of a mission, and he would fain have Mrs. Barrington become a promoter, as, with her daughters, and two Catholic servants, she would have had six Associates under her own roof.

But Alice would not consent. She was about to lease her house in C—— for a term of years and take the children to B—— so as to be near their grandmother and aunts, who had been urging her to this step ever since their father's death. "We are all Associates, you know, Father Fitzgibbon," she said with a faint blush, "and, of course, we can fulfil the obligations just as well in B—— as here. Our tickets can be sent us there as usual. But I could not undertake to be a Promoter. I have really no time for such things."

Father Fitzgibbon sighed. The shadow was falling darker. The heart, once so fervent, was already waxing cold in the dreary blight of religious indifference. Time was, and not so long ago, when Alice Barrington would gladly have made time for "such things," as the good priest well knew.

III.

Again, a few uneventful years and the young Barringtons were no longer children. The boys were studying, one for the legal, the other for the medical profession. The girls had almost finished their education, the two elder were soon to be "brought out" under the auspices of their aunts, who were leaders in the best society of B——. As for Alice, her health had been failing so much of late that she was no longer able to take part in those gay assemblies in which she was wont to shine.

The Barrington girls were expected to make a sensation. They were sprightly and attractive, had been "finished" at a fashionable boarding-school kept by the widow of a Congregational minister, their mother having been persuaded by her mother-and sisters-in-law that a Convent-school could never give the necessary polish to young ladies of their position to prepare them for good society.

So Harriet and Jane were home "finished," but alas! the finishing process had polished away the last traces of the old faith they inherited from generations of Catholic forefathers—the faith of their own devoted mother. They had gradually fallen more and more under the influence of their grandmother and aunts, learned to look up to their school-mistress, Mrs. Wilkins, as a mother in Israel, went occasionally to some Protestant church to hear a fashionable preacher, in company with their good-looking, pleasant-spoken brothers — off handed, manly young fellows, great favorites with the girls of their set.

Needless to say, the Misses Barrington had long ceased to be Associates of the League, giving as a reason that they really could not remember to make the morning offering, and had not time to say the daily decade of the Rosary. The truth was that their dear grandmama, aunts and brothers had all united in laughing them out of what they called such childish nonsense and silly superstition.

Their mother had at first protested, feebly indeed, for she had long ago given up the reins of domestic government to other and more skilful hands. She had begged Father Fitzgibbon to reason with the girls and endeavor to keep them faithful to their obligations. As

a matter of duty he complied, well knowing that the ridicule of their protestant and Popery-hating relatives was a thousand times more potent for evil than his expostulations could possibly be for good.

For some time little Bertha was kept faithful in the practice of her religious duties, especially during the absence of her elder sisters. But no sooner had they returned home than the girl began to follow their example in most things, having an unbounded admiration for these accomplished graduates of Mrs. Wilkins' celebrated school, where she herself was to enter in the following year.

By the time Bertha was eighteen and duly finished by Mrs. Wilkins, her two sisters had married Protestants, professed whatever form of religion their husbands professed, and were foremost in all Protestant works, Bible and Tract Societies, Missionary Societies, and heaven knows what of Evangelicalism besides. The young men were conspicuous more than all for their anti-Popery proclivities, and lost no opportunity of showing their dislike of their mother's religion. Young Britons, Christian Association Young Men were they, and, in short, sturdy upholders of the Protestant cause.

Bertha still remained with her mother, now a confirmed invalid. They had removed to a quiet home in a small town, some miles away from the larger one where their relatives dwelt. The poor mother was broken down with sorrow, as well as suffering. The death that could not be far distant loomed up before her in awful terror. Conscience brought up in stern array the disastrous effects of her ill-starred marriage: her children torn from the Fold and wandering in the mazes of error, for even of Bertha she had little hope, with so

many counter influences around her,—all their posterity lost to God, lost to the Church. Her good mother, worn away with shame and sorrow, long since dead and gone, resting in the shadow of the cross near their dear old parish church; for herself the lamp of faith no longer burning with so clear a flame as in the days of her happy girlhood, as she had for years long neglected many of those practices of devotion that nourish faith and piety in the Christian heart. Bertha, a lukewarm, indifferent Catholic was little comfort or help to the poor invalid. Even the priest was long miles away, and just then the state of the roads made it extremely difficult to reach him. Moreover, Alice Barrington, weakened as she was in mind and body, and with a morbid fear of the last Sacraments, actually shrank from seeing him, while Bertha kept saying—

"Oh! dear me! what's the use of sending for the priest?—mamma is not so bad as that, and there's plenty of time!"

So it went on till one dreary day in late October, a message was brought to Father Fitzgibbon by the brother of one of the Catholic servants, that Mrs. Barrington was dying and he must go to her immediately. Not a moment to be lost, the young man said, if he would overtake her alive.

Through the pelting rain and piercing wind drove the now aged priest, regardless of his seventy years and many infirmities, mindful only of the soul that was about to go unprepared before the Judgment-seat of God. Hoping, praying and yet fearing, on and on he went through the blinding storm, and, all the weary miles past, he drew up his little vehicle at the doors of Barrington Villa. In answer to his eager inquiry he

received the sorrowful announcement that Mrs. Barrington had died an hour before.

The shadow settled darkly and heavily on the deserted home and on the priests' crushed heart. "Oh! my God!" he murmured as he crossed the threshold to pray beside the dead. "How often I warned her that this might happen! Poor, poor Alice, thank God your pious mother did not live to see this sad hour!"

IV.

This is what came of Alice Costelloe's "splendid match," and the merriest heart in that pleasant homestead where we heard it first spoken of was saddened and subdued, while the mournful tale was told in the after years to other ears, in another circle of the same family. The grandfather's chair was vacant; the father of the family, the hale strong man of that vanished time, was gone, too. One daughter, the fairest and gayest of all, had left them years before to serve God and his poor in a religious community. The mother still remained, a white-haired, aged matron now. The son had married and settled in British Columbia, but he, with his wife and children, had come on a visit to the ancestral home. Two of the sisters were there also with their husbands and children, for it was Christmas time, and the happy, united family had assembled under the old roof tree for the Christmas festivities. While the yule-log blazed on the wide hearth in the open chimney, the story of Alice Costelloe was told by the venerable grandmother, as that of Lawrence Rourke had been told by her long-dead father some thirty years before.

A SEPARATE SCHOOL-BOY.

ANNA T. SADLIER.

"HOW good it is of you, Emily, to remember all these little devotions!" said Mrs. Watson, patronizingly. She was leaning back in a comfortable arm-chair, leisurely observing Mrs. Rowan, who was busy arranging a bunch of June lilacs before her picture of the Sacred Heart.

"Oh, this is my special devotion," said Mrs. Rowan, pointing to the picture; "and just now, I am asking a great favor."

Mrs. Watson smiled a dubious sort of smile.

"You were always a good creature, Emily," she said carelessly; "and how young you do keep to have five big children!"

"When I told you I was asking a great favor of the Sacred Heart," said Mrs. Rowan, sitting down on a low seat near her friend, "I was thinking of the children, especially of Paul."

"Yes?" said Mrs. Watson, with very mild interest.

"You know, Our Lord made such beautiful promises," said Mrs. Rowan, "in behalf of those who are devout to His divine Heart, and one of them is, 'I will be their secure refuge during life and above all at the hour of death.' Now, I have betaken myself to the Sacred Heart all these years for the grace to educate my children really

well, and especially Paul. Boys are a so much greater responsibility ! "

Mrs. Rowan had spoken a little shamefacedly. It is easy to profess one's faith to out-siders, but hard to speak of things spiritual to an indifferent Catholic. But Mrs. Watson answered promptly and warmly the latter half of the speech : " Of course, one is always anxious about a boy's education. I lie awake half the night thinking how George is to be pushed on, and what advantages we can give him. "

" I do not mean exactly that," said Mrs. Rowan. " I want him to be a good, well-principled man, a truly good Catholic. "

" Let the priests attend to all that. I send him to church regularly ; but I see by your face there is something on your mind. "

" I am so troubled, because Mr. Rowan wants to take Paul from the Brothers and send him to a public school. He thinks he will learn quicker, and that it will be a help to him in business. He says that if we were wealthy he would put Paul at a Catholic college, and leave him there till he could take a profession. But, as it is, he will not believe what I tell him so often, that the Catholic schools are at least as good, if no better, even apart from religion."

" But, perhaps, the class of boys is not so good."

" I do not care in the least for that, even if it were the case," said Mrs. Rowan, warmly. " I shall never, never consent to see my boy taken away from religious influence."

" What a little bigot you are, Emily," laughed Mrs. Watson ; " if you had been married to a Protestant as long as I have, you would have learned something of the policy of conciliation."

"A Catholic must be one thing or another," said Mrs. Rowan, stoutly. "Why, even the very Protestants despise and distrust a weak-kneed Catholic. And well they may, for there is nothing so despicable. I would not for the world see Paul grown up to be half-hearted in his religion."

"I have never heard you talk so much, Emily," said Mrs. Watson; "you are positively eloquent."

"The subject is near my heart," said Mrs. Rowan "Paul shall remain at a Catholic school."

"Why, look at me," said Mrs. Watson, complacently, "I was never at any other but a Protestant school. I met Jim Watson on Commencement-day; his sister was in my class. Now, no one could be more rigid about the essentials of my faith than I am."

Mrs. Rowan sighed. The illustration was not an inspiriting one.

"Let me give you a word of advice, dear," added Mrs. Watson, rising to go, "follow your husband's judgment. It does not do for a man to be *too* religious, and these public schools are not sectarian."

"So much the worse," murmured Mrs. Rowan. "I would almost rather have them out and out Protestant."

"Then you will not be so much shocked at me, you good little soul! I am going to send George to the Protestant college at——. His prospects are so brilliant, I must not mar them by letting him associate with an inferior class of boys. Do be wise, and let Paul grow up with broader views than yours. Forgive me, dear, but they do not answer in this work-a-day world."

Mrs. Watson, gathering her wrap gracefully about her, made a sign to her coachman, and was soon driven

to that aristocratic portion of the town in which a prosperous marriage had domiciled her.

Two months later, Paul Rowan entered a Catholic Boys' Academy, and George Watson began the autumn term at——.

II

"What a comfort that young man is to his mother?" said Paul Rowan's employer, pointing to where the latter was walking on the opposite side of the street, with his mother beside him.

The old gentleman, as he spoke, sat near the open window of his library, in conversation with a friend.

"This Rowan," he went on, "is a treasure to us. He has excellent principles, his honesty is incorruptible, and he has had a splendid training in Arithmetic."

"You are enthusiastic," said the friend, quietly.

"And well I may be. The boy has worked himself up in the course of ten years to be our head man. Why, if he continues, he's bound to be in the firm before long."

"Is he married?"

"Not he. His mother was left a widow some years ago and he keeps a roof over her, and sends two or three sisters to the Convent."

"He seems young."

"Twenty-five; but he made a good start. A word in your ear, my friend: There's something in these Separate Schools after all. I mean to employ youths educated there, and no others."

"They may not all turn out so well."

"True, but they have a better chance. The system is better, and I'm not going to have any of these free-thinking chaps about me."

"I hope the fellow doesn't talk religion."

"Never a word. But I know that he attends his church regularly and his 'religious duties,' I think they call it."

The worthy man was rather vague as to what these duties were. He could not have explained that Paul was a monthly communicant, being a member of the League, and he belonged to a parochial society as well.

"What does he do with his evenings?" asked the friend; he inquired thoughtfully, as one working out a problem.

"Oh, they're all right. He belongs to some kind of a society for young men, not a secret society. I abhor those. It's an affair got up by his clergyman, the parish priest Rowan calls him, and, by Jupiter, it keeps a lot of lads out of mischief."

"You are half a Papist, my dear sir."

"I am a whole one for business purposes. I want Separate School-boys for clerks, and I'd like them all to join their church societies."

III

"Paul, dear, be careful," said Mrs. Rowan, following her son to the door; "it is such a wild stormy night."

"I'm always careful, mother dear," laughed Paul, "and I would't go out to night, only I promised to look into a business matter for the firm."

"I shall be anxious till you come back."

"I have given you a lot of anxiety, I am afraid," sain Paul, looking half earnestly, half merrily at his mother.

"You have more than repaid me, dear," said the mother, warmly.

And if God spares me, I will try to repay you more and more. Good-night and good-bye, little mother!"

Crossing the track that dark lowering night, Paul Rowan saw a train coming on. He made a hasty leap on to the other track, and as he did so felt a sudden wrench. His foot had caught in a frog. The effort he made to extricate it only tightened it the more. The whistle of a locomotive, followed by the flash of a light around a sharp and not very distant curve, awakened him to a sudden and awful sense of his peril. He cried aloud for help, but the howling of the wind and the rolling, clattering noise of the dashing train drowned his voice even had any one been there to answer. The worst had come. In the swift realization of his approaching end, his life flashed before him as in a mirror—home, only a few paces distant,—sisters—his mother,—till eternity seemed to open and his thoughts hurried to his *God.* There was no long dark void to be filled up between them. He had been to his monthly communion of Atonement the Sunday before. But he had learned in his school days the supreme importance of prayer and the act of perfect contrition in case of accident, and summoning all his energies, he asked with a fervor intensified by the awfulness of the moment, that the Sacred Heart through Mary might give him that grace—one good heartfelt act of contrition such as he often made in his life.

In spite of natural terror, his faculties seemed to con-

centrate themselves marvellously. How strong is faith —! And all the while he relaxed not in his struggle for life to loosen his foot. Another cry—a whistle—and on came the terrible engine of death, its light flaming like the eye of some great beast. "Jesus, Mary, Joseph,"—the cowcatcher struck him and hurled his mangled body beside the track. Eager hands lifted him tenderly, willing feet sped swiftly for a doctor; but the dying man with returning consciousness said only:—

"A priest! quick!"

How graces accumulate around the dying just! The priest came, his own dear parish priest. A suppliant glance of the eye and motion of the hand, the unmistakable confession of a penitent heart was followed by absolution. Then came Extreme Unction, and a last message.

"Tell my mother that I thank her for my Christian faith and education. Tell her how I died."

IV

"My dear," said Mrs. Watson, when she came to make a visit of condolence, some two months after her friend's affliction, "you need not sorrow for Paul."

"That's what our good parish priest tells me," said Mrs. Rowan sadly, "and I try hard to be resigned; but when I kneel at his grave, if it were not for the daily Mass and my Communions, I feel as if I could not live. Ah, such a son!"

"Yes, that's just it, such a son! As for mine"—Mrs. Watson paused, then added hurriedly, "I wish from my heart that I had been a little more bigoted, for my

wretched boy is a failure even in worldly affairs where Paul was a success."

"Seek first the Kingdom of God and His justice, and all else will be added," thought Mrs. Rowan, but she only pressed her friend's hand warmly. There was a sorrow deeper than her own.

"Good-bye, Emily," said Mrs. Watson, departing. "You were right, there is nothing so miserable as a bad Catholic."

Going upstairs, Mrs. Rowan paused before her picture of the Sacred Heart. On it were inscribed the Promises, and opposite to the first the mother had written—Paul's dying message. That was the fulfilment thereof for him and for her. "He was their secure refuge in life" and above all for him "at the hour of death."

HOW PEACE CAME TO THE DOYLES.

MRS. SADLIER.

I.

TWENTY years ago there lived, and probably lives still, in a small town in mid-Canada, some miles west of the border line between Ontario and Quebec, a family whom we shall call Doyle, prosperous, well-to-do people as any in the county. The father and founder of the family had begun life as a railroad-laborer, but had risen by good conduct and steady industry to be the possessor of a large well-tilled farm, then of a thriving general store in F——, and, finally, of a private residence in the outskirts of the town.

So far, all had gone well with the Doyles. The father and, later on, the mother had passed away in a green old age, leaving a good name, a good position and ample means to their three sons and two daughters. In most respects, the second generation of the Doyles was not unworthy of the good parents who had so well provided for their children. As yet none of them were married, and the farm, and the shop, and the dwelling were all common property, the business skilfully managed by the three brothers for the benefit of all, while the sisters kept the house, the home of the family, thriftily and well.

The Doyles would have been the envy of their less successful neighbors, had it not been for one fatal drawback to the blessings they enjoyed, which, in the opinion of the old and wise and God-fearing, went far to counterbalance all. Amid so much prosperity and apparent happiness, peace and harmony were wanting. The brothers were hot-tempered, quick to take offence, much given to fault-finding and complaining one of the other and all of their sisters, who were, nevertheless, as gentle and amiable as their brothers were irrascible and prone to anger.

The sisters were sincerely pious and faithful to all their religious duties. The brothers were of that class of people who think that going to Mass on Sundays and holy days, and making their Easter duty, is all that can reasonably be expected, especially from men who have business to attend to. Every Sunday and feast-day of obligation saw the three brothers, John, William and James, duly seated at High Mass in the family pew, and they never failed to make their annual confession and communion somewhere within the Paschal time, thus barely escaping the sentence of outlawry pronounced by the Church on her rebellious children who fail to comply with that solemn precept.

In vain did Kate and Sarah remonstrate with the young men on this laxity in regard to their religious duties. It only ended in a scene, not unfrequently calling forth a storm of abuse from the brothers, in which threats of "breaking up the house" were sure to be made by one or other of them. This, as they well knew, had always the effect of silencing the girls, whose whole desire it was to keep the home for the family as long as they could and while their brothers remained unmarried.

But it was not only with their sisters the Doyle young men quarrelled on every imaginable pretext. Amongst themselves there was a continual bickering kept up, and such being the case, it was a matter of supreme wonder to the intimates of the family that the flourishing business, built up so solidly and well by old Jerry Doyle, had not long since gone to pieces. The truth is that his sons were capital business men, steady and clear-headed, and far from deficient in industry or application. They loved their sisters and even each other after a fashion of their own, and were rather fond of their home, although their own ill-temper and the frequent altercations to which it gave rise made it, for the most part, anything but a happy one. Even the presence of guests under their really hospitable roof did not always prevent these ebullitions of temper, in which John, the elder brother, generally led the way.

Many a secret consultation was held between the sisters as to what was to be done under these deplorable circumstances. Long and fervent were their prayers for the sorely-needed change of heart in the brothers, who, apart from that one lamentable fault, were kind and generous to them, and strictly honest and honorable in their dealings with others.

"They are father's own sons in most ways," the sisters would say one to the other, "but if they only had his quiet, even temper! Maybe if some of them got married and had homes of their own, they wouldn't be always fighting and squabbling about every little thing that comes up, as they now do."

II.

Alas! the specific failed of its effect. William in due time took to himself a wife, and a year or two after James followed his example. But even to their new homes the old and evil habit accompanied both, and it so happened that the wives they had chosen were not by any means models of patience and forbearance like poor Kate and Sarah. They wouldn't put up with it, not they; and they told their respective husbands so very plainly, adding furthermore that if their sisters spoiled them by giving in to their overbearing ways, *they* wouldn't do it.

When the husband raised his voice in anger, the wife followed suit, and, as she boasted to her fellow-champion of woman's rights, gave him as good as he brought, and paid him honestly back in his own coin. So matters grew worse instead of better. The only difference was that three homes were then made wretched instead of one. William and his help-mate kept up the strife, James and his wife did likewise, and John went on scolding and brow-beating his gentle sisters without stint or measure.

A few more years had passed in the same dreary round. Children were growing up in the homes of the married brothers. John and his two sisters had settled down into middle-aged people. Quiet they would have been, and peaceful, but for John's stormy temper and contentious spirit. And still the sisters prayed, and hoped, and suffered in patient silence, offering up the manifold trials they had to undergo every day and every hour for the conversion of their relatives and the

establishment of peace amongst them. In humble hope and assured faith they waited, hoping that the dawn would soon break and the shadows flee away, and that the tear-moistened bread they daily and hourly cast upon the waters would sooner or later return to them laden with God's sweet mercy.

"Where are you off to now?" said John Doyle one day to his sisters as he saw them preparing to go out. "To church, I'll be bound! It would be fitter for you to stay at home and attend to the affairs of the house!"

"And so we do, John," replied Sarah, meekly; "there's not a thing we don't see to in or about the house, and you needn't grudge us the little time we can spare for God. To-day it's the Mission that's opening, and we want to be there in good time."

John gave a grunt of dissatisfaction, but said nothing more. An inward voice told him that he ought to make the Mission himself, that he needed it far more than his sisters did, but he would not give in. So they went, and he remained moodily at home intent on his usual avocations.

When Kate and Sarah returned they were naturally full of the Mission, the zeal and eloquence of the preacher, the crowds of people that filled the church to overflowing, and how Nellie and Bessy, their two sisters in-law, were there with their older girls and boys.

"Humph!" said John, "it's a wonder Bill and Jim weren't there too! The whole family will soon be as crazy as yourselves about religion."

"O, John, John!" cried Kate. "If you'd only come yourself and listen to even one of the instructions, I know you'd get into the spirit of it and wouldn't want to miss any of them!"

A scornful laugh was the answer as John left the room, banging the door after him.

Next day, John was somewhat taken aback when his sisters told him that both his brothers were at the evening sermon and had announced their intention of making the mission with their wives and children ; " And, John, there are to be great doings about the Sacred Heart," added Kate with breathless eagerness, " The new League is to be established at the close of the Mission, and Father Barry is to be the Director, and there are to be Promoters and Centres, and devotions every first Friday of the month, and a monthly Communion of Reparation. The missionaries explained it all to us."

" And I suppose Bill and Jim and the whole jing-bang of you will be in the thick of it ! " said John.

" Just come with us to-morrow to either the morning or evening exercise, and leave the rest to God."

" I'm not going, that's all about it. There's enough of you there without *me.*"

But he did go all for that. Great was the joy of his good sisters when they found him ready bright and early on the following morning to accompany them to church. Nor did it at all lessen their satisfaction that he kept grumbling all the way about the absurdity of *his* going to the mission. They knew that the grace of God was pursuing and would overtake him then and there, for he was not a bad man, only rough and domineering and somewhat careless about his soul's interest.

III

Two more years had gone by, uneventful years in the Doyle family, to all outward seeming, and yet they were marked within the circle by many and great changes. Where all had been bitterness and contention in the three households, there was now good humor, harmony and peace. The fathers and mothers between themselves, the boys and girls as they went and came in the daily round of merry child-life, and John, the head of the family, in the old paternal homestead—all were changed as though an enchanter's wand had waved over them one and all.

Kate and Sarah, too, where changed, but in a far different way. With them it was that the wan, care-worn look had vanished from their faces. The over-strained minds and the weary hearts were now at last reposing after the long, long years of patient suffering. It is true that each sister had long since seen amongst her dark brown tresses "that first foot-mark of time," the "mute mementoes" of departed youth and coming age; yet neither gray hairs nor faded cheeks might dim the happy light of assured peace and joy and gratitude that beamed in the calm earnest eyes of Kate and Sarah Doyle.

Three pews were now rented by the Doyle families in the parish church, and there on Sundays and holy days they might all be seen assembled, while on days of special devotion, and notably on the first Friday of the month and the Sunday of the general Communion of Reparation, not only all the women of the family with such of the children as were old enough, but the three

brothers were seen approaching the Holy Table together. Truly a most edifying sight, and one that called forth many an expression of surprise and admiration from the rest of the congregation.

" Did you ever see such a change as there is in the Doyles ? " would one neighbor say to another, on their way home from mass. " From being so cross-grained and cantankersome, sure it's good-natured and easy-tempered they are now, and not a bit proud or stuck up for all they have such fine houses, and horses, and buggies, and money to no end."

" I declare to you, Tim," observed another, " I used to be afeard to go into John's store if himself happened to be there ! Now he's as civil-spoken a man as you'd want to see, and has ever and always a kind word for every one. Ay ! and he's so ready now to help any one that's in need of a friend, and never pushes people that are in his books as he used to do. God be praised, but it's a happy change entirely ! "

" What in the world brought it about ? " some one would ask,

" Well ! that's more than any of us can tell," was the general reply.

But to Kate and Sarah and, indeed, to the whole family the change was no mystery, and the ruby lamp that burned day by day in each of the three dwellings, before a handsomely framed picture of the Sacred Heart, told the whole simple story. And in the long winter evenings when the Rosary of the Blessed Virgin was said in each house before that domestic shrine, in the fulness of peace and calm content, how every heart throbbed with grateful love as all eyes turned to the tiny frame inclosing the Divine Promises to Blessed

Margaret Mary, and some one repeated aloud the second of those gracious pronouncements of our Blessed Lord :—

"I WILL ESTABLISH PEACE IN THEIR FAMILIES."

TWO NEW YEARS.

ANNA T. SADLIER.

IT was New Year's time, the season of good cheer, of good hope, of good resolution. Christmas had passed, with its memories, its associations, the green of its holly and the glow of its fires. Christmas with its holy thoughts and suggestions, bringing the beauty and grandeur of the Incarnation mystery once more to mind. Christmas with its story of promises fulfilled and of a Saviour revealed to men.

It was New Year's eve. Marion Phillips sat alone in her apartment. The room was fairly littered with costly trinkets. The air was heavy with perfumes. Luxury prevailed, and extended even to the figure of the young girl reclining in an easy chair in her rich dressing gown. She had just finished reading a letter from a friend absent in Europe, and was still pondering its contents. She was thinking, too, how this friend, young, rich, accomplished, whose talents and whose beauty had delighted society since she had left the convent, should be, as Marion Phillips put it to herself, so eccentric. She had married a wealthy man, and was what people called a social leader. Nevertheless, her delight was to labor among the poor and ignorant and afflicted. She rarely missed the daily Mass, she belonged to various charitable associations, she was a frequent communicant.

"Carrie Bolton might as well have been a nun at once," said Marion Phillips to herself, with irritation. "That's what comes of shutting girls up in convents. Now, I am as good a Catholic as any one, but I say, if you live in the world you must be like other people."

She referred to the letter, and read in her friend's fine clear hand: "Be assured, my dear, that wordliness is heathenism, and that we must be in the world without being of it." She tossed the letter impatiently aside, and rising wearily, looked out upon the streets, covered with snow lying white in the clear starlight. There was a tap at the door. It was Miss Phillips' maid, Mary Farley. Now, Mary had received some education, and by an unhappy coincidence had been, like her mistress, at a secular school, for the sole reason that one met "a better class of pupils there." Mary was sharp, intelligent, tidy,—in fact, as her mistress said, "considerably above her station." To her as to Miss Phillips it was a matter of much surprise that Mrs. Bolton should be at once rich, fashionable and a devout Catholic. Mary was full of the subject just now.

"You would never believe, miss," she began, "that Mrs. Bolton has written Bridget a letter, Bridget down in the kitchen."

"Written Bridget a letter?" echoed Miss Phillips.

"Yes, miss. You see, Mrs. Bolton belongs to some society. She is what Bridget calls a 'Promoter' whatever that means, miss. So she just wrote Bridget a letter and sent her a little pamphlet.

"Indeed!" said Miss Phillips, thinking with more repugnance than ever of the "preachy letter" she had herself received. "By the way, that Bridget is a tiresome person. She brought my breakfast this morning,

and began to speak of some Mission. Really, Mary, you must not let her come near me again. I am as religious as any one, and people should go to church on Sunday and that, if they feel able, but—why, you are pulling my hair, how clumsy of you!"

When Mary had gone, Miss Phillips remained seated in her arm-chair, staring into the fire which burned upon the hearth. She was handsome, young, an heiress. The world lay stretched before her, a fairy prospect. Her parents had sent her to a fashionable school in England. She was heard to boast that her parents had left her free to choose her own religion, hoping that she would elect to remain a Catholic, which she did.

At school she had been taught to keep religion as much out of sight as possible. Discussion was out of the question. Since leaving school she had followed the same rule, and left religion practically out of her life.

As she lingered in her easy-chair, the sound of the New Year's bells, the solemn bells of that midnight which divides the old from the new, fell upon her ear. The sound made her uneasy, and like words set to their music, she heard the counsel of her friend, "worldliness is heathenism; we must be in the world but not of it."

"I hope God will give the master and mistress and Miss Marion, too, a happy and prosperous New Year," said Bridget down in the kitchen, the next morning. She had just come in fresh and rosy from church. "They're too happy and prosperous." snapped Mary Farley, viciously. She had lain awake the night before, revolving the old problem, why she had not been born rich and a lady. "Things is badly managed in this world, I can tell you."

"They're managed as God pleases," said Bridget, cheerily; "and all's well if we save our souls. Did you go out to Mass, this morning?"

"Indeed, I didn't," said Mary. "I leave that to you."

"It's a bad way to begin the year."

"As good a way as preaching."

"Did you hear the bells, last night?" asked Bridget, changing the subject. "Those New Year's bells do give me a queer turn, for I keep thinking, there's another year gone, and may be it's not many more of them God will give me to work for His glory."

"Where did you learn all that fine talk?" sneered Mary.

"Well, it was little schoolin' I got at all, by reason that I couldn't stay at school, but that little was with the Presentation nuns in Ireland."

"Thank heaven they didn't preach so much where I went to school. We learned more grammar and arithmetic and less prayers. But there's the bell, she's gettin up, at last. About time."

And so another year had dawned for Marion Phillips, and she avoke to consciousness that it was New Year's Day.

II.

Another New Year's eve, drizzling and dreary, with a cold sleet falling, and a wind which pierced even the thick walls of the Phillips' dwelling on the most fashionable street of the Upper Canadian citv.

"Madam, if you know my errand you will offer no further opposition to my entering the sick room."

It was a priest who spoke, and he was addressing that elegant and refined woman of the world, Mrs. Phillips.

"But really, sir, I am afraid of the effect your appearance might have upon the child. I know your errand, for I am a Catholic; but the case is not pressing. The doctor tells me there is no danger."

"How can any one give such assurance in so deadly a disease?" said the priest.

"I assure you—"

"Assure me of nothing unless you can safely assure me of your daughter's salvation."

"Why, she has led a most exemplary life, though not what one would call devout She was the best pupil at the Institute in England, and—"

"Has she been to the Sacraments lately?" interrupted the priest.

"Well, no, I can hardly say—"

"The case is more urgent even than I thought," said Father Moore. "Kindly permit me to pass."

He entered the room. It was bare and stripped of its ornaments. The air was heavy with desinfectants. Upon the bed lay Marion Phillips, her features distorted by disease, her eyes closed. A kneeling figure arose and advanced to meet the priest.

"Sure, Father, I'm glad you're come. I counted every minute an hour since I left the message for you. It's my belief she's going fast."

"Why was I not sent for before?"

The priest scarcely listened to the explanation. He was bending over the dying girl; she was unconscious He turned to Bridget.

"Surely she has not been left alone?—Where is the mother?"

"She's in weak health, and though her grief's heart-rending, she can't stand the air of the room."

"We will say the prayers for the dying, Bridget," said the priest, kneeling down.

While they prayed there was a slight stir in the bed, and Marion Phillips opened her eyes.

"Who is there?" she asked, faintly.

"A priest, my child."

A slight shiver passed through her.

"Is there any one else?" she asked, again.

"Sure, it's me, Miss Marion; it's Bridget; don't you know me?"

"Bridget, I thought you had gone; where's Mary!" After a pause: "I remember, she went away when I took ill."

Father Moore now tried gently to tell the young girl of her critical condition.

"I am not dying," she shrieked. "I will not die. I am so young, God would not be so cruel."

She raised herself in the bed, but only to fall back helplessly. Vainly did the priest strive to calm her or to induce her to think of preparation for death. He could only wring from her a reluctant consent to his returning.

"In a day or two I shall feel better," she said, "and then I may think of confession. It is four years since I was there last, and I cannot collect my thoughts all at once."

"How came you, dear child, to be so long away from the Sacraments?"

"I was at a school where I could not easily see a

priest, and since I came home I have been so occupied, and sometimes my health has been poor."

"Will you not try for our Lord's sake to make your preparation now," urged Father Moore; "I shall come back in an hour."

"Impossible," said the dying girl, "there is no hurry, I feel too weak;" then, with a faint smile, "do not be distressed, I won't die without the Sacraments. But death is far off, I shall be out in a fortnight."

"So you shall, my dear Miss Phillips," said a cheerful voice, "that is, if you do not over exert yourself."

It was the doctor who spoke, a most liberal-minded man who, though not a Catholic himself, had the greatest respect for the priesthood. Nevertheless, he was peremptory with Father Moore just then.

It was absolutely necessary that the patient should be kept quiet. The heart was weak. Excitement might be fatal. The young lady did not desire any religious ministrations, and her mother was fearful of the result. And there was no danger.

"After all," concluded the doctor, pleasantly facetious, "she is one of your own flock, you know, Mr. Moore, and an excellent Catholic."

"One of my own flock," said the priest to himself, sadly, as he walked homewards, "how much greater may be the chance of salvation for those other sheep who are not of the Fold."

III

It was midnight on that New Year's eve. The bells were tolling from every steeple the old, old message that another year was dead. Bridget knelt, beads in hand, beside Miss Phillips' bed. The night nurse had fallen sound asleep. Marion Phillips herself, to all appearance, slept, too.

" God bless her," said Bridget, rising and stealing near, " she is having a beautiful sleep, if the bells don't wake her."

No ; Bridget, neither those New Year's bells nor any sound of earth shall ever wake Marion Phillips more.!!! Something in the deathly pallor of the face startled the faithful watcher. She touched the still face, and by her scream awoke the nurse.....

" Heart failure," said the doctor, half an hour afterwards ; " the disease often takes such a course. But, my dear Mrs. Phillips, it was a most merciful death. Absolutely painless and peaceful."

" It is the punishment of my sin," cried the mother, in an agony of grief. " I gave her a high education. She had every accomplishment, but she had forgotten her catechism. They taught her everything but her religion. I neglected sending for the priest, and when he was brought I did not want him to see her."

Her husband entering the room, she took his arm and led him to the bedside.

" We have killed her soul," she said hoarsely, and her husband made no reply.

* * * * * * *

In a dancing hall, Mary Farley was meantime

dancing away the first hours of the new-born year. In answer to a remark made concerning her former mistress, she cried flippantly :—

" I'm never sorry for them sort of people. It's time they had their share of suffering But there's no justice, she'll get well, and be the same as ever. It's made me pretty much give up my religion, seeing the poor down-trodden as they are. I hate that Marion Phillips, any way."

" It's New Year's morning again," said Bridget to herself; " thank God for another year of life. But my heart is heavy for the master and mistress, and poor Miss Marion. God rest her soul ! Oh, if she had lived more for God, what a happy New Year this 'ud be for her."

Mrs. Phillips found that morning in her daughter's writing desk the letter in which Mrs. Bolton had said, that " worldliness was heathenism, and that we must be in the world but not of it."

" Oh, if I had sent Marion to the convent with Carrie Bolton," moaned Mrs. Phillips ; " how she would bless me for it now ! "

The jingle of sleigh bells sounded merrily. The snow was upon the house-tops, the branches sparkled merrily with hoar-frost. It was an ideal Canadian New Year's day. But no echo of the joy and merriment reached the dead. Marion Phillips had gone into that world which her education had taught her to ignore, where her accomplishments, her talents and the advantageous acquaintances she had formed at school availed her nothing.

THROUGH DARKNESS LIGHT.

MRS. J. SADLIER

NESTLING in the shadow of a lofty hill, one of the grand Laurentian chain, sheltered from the Northern breeze by a grove of tall pines, stands a plain substantial dwelling, originally a farm-house, but recently converted into a somewhat handsome villa. It was pointed out to a small party of tourists one breezy day in mid-autumn some three years ago, as the home of Jasper Williams, a successful lawyer in the neighboring city. The name was not unknown to the travellers, who belonged to one of the sister provinces away westward.

"You remember, Hubert," said an elderly lady, the mother of the two young people, a son and daughter, who, with their father, a bluff, good-natured Englishman, made up the party. "You remember, this Jasper Williams married a daughter of old Baptiste Leduc, of L———. They say he has turned out a fearful bigot."

"Begging your pardon, ma'am," put in the city carter, whose attentive ear had caught the words. "Bigot is no name for him. Sure, he persecutes his poor wife, ay! and his daughters too, on account of religion, and makes their lives miserable. And a real lady Mrs. Williams is, and very good to the poor about here, everybody says. The young ladies are just like herself; but the father—you'll excuse me for sayin' it, ma'am, but he's the Old Fellow all out. He hates

Catholics as he hates poison, and the one son he has is nearly as bad. I'm thinking it's a hard life poor Mrs. Williams has between them anyhow."

"I had heard something of this before," said Mrs. Ransom to her husband. "Poor Leonore! I was at her wedding, and a very pretty bride she was, too! I should like so much to pay her a visit as we are so near her house." Her husband made no objection, so they drove up to the door.

Mrs. Williams and her daughters were at home, and the visitors were most cordially received. The husband and son were at their office in the city, and although nothing of the kind was said, it seemed matter of relief and satisfaction that they were absent. The travellers were easily prevailed upon to stay for lunch, and the meal was thoroughly enjoyed by all, as the elders were very old acquaintances, and the young people were soon perfectly at their ease with each other, and chatted away gaily on all manner of topics. Young Ransom was a graduate of one of our principal Catholic colleges and his sister a pupil of a convent-school in one of the Western cities. They were much pleased with Adèle and Lina Williams, who were bright and intelligent, although somewhat grave and quiet for girls of twenty and eighteen. It was easy to see they had little of the lightsome gaiety of their age, and displayed in all their words and actions a seriousness that was plainly foreign to their nature—especially in the case of Lina, the younger.

As for the mother, she looked wan and care-worn, with prematurely wrinkled brow, hair sprinkled with gray before its time and

"——faded eyes that long had wept,"

although they had evidently once been fine and the face passing fair to look on. All this Mrs. Ransom sadly remembered. Indeed, Mrs. Jasper Williams was but the shadow of her former self, and a blight seemed to have fallen on her whole being.

As soon as the two elder ladies were alone together, Mrs. Ransom asked in a voice of deep emotion :—" In the name of God, Leonore, what has come over you since I saw you last? Excuse the freedom of an old acquaintance—I might almost say friend,—but I really cannot help it. I should not have known you if I met you in the street."

" I can well believe you, Elizabeth, for at times I hardly know myself," was the faltering reply, and the oppressed heart suddenly found vent in tears. " My girls and myself are suffering a species of torture every day of our lives."

" Why, Leonore, you shock me. What does it all mean?" Mrs. Ransom partly guessed what the matter was, but she refrained from saying so.

" It means simply this, Elizabeth !" said the other in broken accents, " that my husband, although from an early period of our marriage inclined to jeer and scoff at my religion and its observances, has of late years become a furious bigot, through the influence of his own family, and especially since our boy began to grow up and has taken sides with him against me."

" And the girls? I see you have succeeded in keeping them."

" Thank God, I have ; and, indeed, I don't know at all how I did it, seeing that their father wouldn't let them go to a Catholic school. I held out firmly against sending them anywhere else, and at last Williams con-

sented to have a governess in the house,—a Protestant, of course. This, however, gave me a chance to teach them my own religion and implant it in their minds, as the dear girls are happily devoted to me, and all their sympathies are with me. The governess is gone a year ago, and I have them all to myself. They make no secret of being Catholics, and their father can only take it out in railing against our religion, throwing all the obstacles he can in our way and encouraging Dick to do likewise. Oh ! dear friend, my heart is breaking, and there are times when I almost despair and all is dark before my eyes. The worst of it is, Elizabeth," she added in a tremulous voice, " that the fault is all my own. My son has drifted away far beyond my control, and my poor girls as well as myself are separated from father and brother alike. Oh ! God help me ! What am I to do?"

" I'll tell you what you'll do, Leonore," said her sympathetic friend, as a sudden inspiration came to her. What she told her excited Mrs. Williams' earnest attention and had the effect of drying her tears.

II.

When the Ransoms drove away that afternoon they left their hostess somewhat more cheerful, and Mr. Ransom left a message for Mr. Williams, that he and his wife would look forward to the pleasure of a visit from him and his family at Elm Grove, his home in Ontario, before the close of autumn.

" Humph !" said Jasper William when, on his return that evening, the message was conveyed to him by his

wife. "Catch me taking any of you to *his* house for a visit! I know Ransom well by report as an out-and-out Papist, and he'll look long before he sees *my* shadow on his threshold."

* * * * * * * * * *

For some little time matters went on much as usual in the house beneath the mountain. Mrs. Williams and her daughters, at the cost of much suffering and in the face of stormy opposition, heard mass on Sundays and holy days, and approached the Sacraments once a month, at least. Jasper Williams and his son went once in a while to the nearest Protestant church, more from opposition to the female members of the family, it was plain to see, than for any other motive. Indeed, neither father nor son professed any special form of religion. Like so many others, their religion consisted in hating Popery, as they called it, with a fierce hatred, but for positive religion they had little or none. Still the sorely tried mother and her daughters kept steadily on in their dolorous path of duty.

So the last autumn days passed. The woods flushed and faded, then grew bare and brown. The great river of Canada and its tributary streams and all the fair land were again covered with the ice and snow of the long dreary winter. Spring came again, the fleeting spring of the Northland, and soon it was summer, all brightness and bloom, with radiant skies and smiling earth.

June with her mantle of roses made all the region glad, and robed even the hoary mountain with richest verdure. In the city near by, the Sacred Heart devotions of the month were carried on with great fervor and with much solemnity evening after evening. Mrs. Williams and her daughters found it no easy matter to

be present at these services, but somehow they did manage to do it, although there was much scolding and grumbling, at first, about taking out the horses, taking up the man's time, and so forth. Anyhow, the storm usually passed, and even the low mutterings that succeeded died away in sullen silence.

Before the month was over, Mr. Ransom was one day agreeably surprised to receive a characteristic letter from Jasper Williams, announcing that he and his family were about to pay a visit to Elm Grove before the summer was over. "That is," he jocosely added, "if you'll promise to let me alone about religion, for I won't stand any nonsense of that kind. You know what *I* am, and I know what *you* are. So let us agree to leave religion aside while we stay with you, and I'm your man for a whole week with my good Protestant son and my Papist wife and daughters—not so bad in their way, I can tell you, if they do swear by the Pope and the Jesuits."

III

So the visit was made, to the blank amazement of the Ransom family and, indeed, of Mrs. Williams and her daughters. Nothing was said on the subject of religion, and all went on so smoothly that blustering Jasper Williams could not refrain from telling his host one day what a fine thing it was, after all, to see a whole family living in peace together and all united.

"You're a happy man, Squire Ransom," he added; "and I vow I almost envy you. Now, in our house, we hardly ever know a quiet hour, and it's all cross purposes we're at from morning till night, pulling one against the other."

Ransom smiled. "I could perhaps tell you the reason of all that, my good sir," he said pleasantly, "but you might not like it if I did, so I'll keep my own counsel and say nothing."

"All right, Ransom, all right! I see you're bound to keep the agreement." And Williams turned on his heel and walked away, whistling "the Boyne Water.'

That same afternoon he surprised his wife no little by telling her—"Lennie, why don't you and the girls go to church in G——this evening with the Ransoms? I hear they go every evening this month, and I told them they must not think of staying at home on our account."

"But, Jasper," said his wife in a hesitating way, "we could not think of leaving you and Dick here all alone in a strange house."

"Oh! never you mind that," replied her husband, "I feel as much at home here as though I had been in it for years. And, besides, I'm going to take Dick to see an old friend of mine, Jack Lucas, you remember, who lives about two miles from here, as Ransom tells me. So don't mind us—*we*'re all right."

"God bless you, Jasper," cried the so long browbeaten wife in a burst of joy and gratitude. "If you only knew how it lightens my heart to hear you talk like that! It almost makes me feel young again."

"Well! well! say no more about it, Lennie! It's a long lane has no turn. You've been travelling a pretty hard road, little woman; but maybe the worst is past. Who knows?"

Mrs. Williams could hardly believe her ears, but she made no further remark, well content with the point she had gained.

IV

The days passed rapidly at Elm Grove, for, as Moore once sang—

> "——Never does Time travel faster
> Than when his way lies among flowers."

All too soon the visit of the Williams family came to a close. They set out on a bright sunny morning for their distant home, cheered by a promise from the Ransoms to return the visit in the early autumn. Some whispered words were exchanged between the two matrons while the men where occupied about the preparations for departure.

"Thank God and you, my dear Elizabeth," said Mrs. Williams, "a blessed change has already come for me and the girls. Jasper seems a different man of late, and my boy is more gentle and submissive. What a relief it is to us!"

"There's a good beginning made," returned her friend in the same low tone; "let us go on hoping and praying till we meet again. Good-bye till then, my poor Leonore!" So they parted.

* * * * * * *

All was glad expectation in the home by the mountain during the last days of summer, and with the last week of September came the Ransom family, the young and the old of both families well pleased to be again together though the visit was to be a short one. Mr. Ransom had important business to attend to at home, which necessitated his return thither by the first days of October.

The few days spent together by the two families were days of unalloyed happiness. The dark cloud had vanished from the still handsome face of Mrs. Williams, and her girls were as gay and light-hearted as their young friends could wish. Where the sullen gloom of discontent and a dreary state of unrest had so long prevailed in that beautiful home by the St. Lawrence, all was now peace, if not joy. Jasper Williams was still *brusque* and somewhat rough at times, but that was of small account to his wife and daughters, so long as he left them free in religious matters. No more sneering or sarcasm about Catholic devotions ; no more obstacles thrown in the way of complying with religious duties. Mr. Ransom appeared not to notice the change, but he saw it and rejoiced exceedingly.

When the dreaded hour of departure came he shook the hand of Jasper Williams with the warmth of an old friend. "God-bye, Williams," he said, "you must really allow me, now that we are about to part,

"' It may be for years and it may be for ever,'

to congratulate you on the happy change I see in your family. Go on as you're doing and you'll find yourself a much happier man !" The other answered in the same kindly spirit, and the two men parted.

Meanwhile the wives sat together on the verandah in front of the house while the carriage was brought round, and Mrs. Williams asked her friend :

"How did you bring it all about, Elizabeth? "

"Simply by putting a *very special* petition for *an afflicted family* in the Intention-box of the League in our church in G——, these last months, and having your

name and those of Adèle and Lina enrolled as Associates, as I said I would. You got the badges I sent you?"

"Indeed I did, a thousand thanks for your kindness. We fulfill all the conditions regularly."

"Well! now we must have your Thanksgiving put in the box for the *special favor* graciously bestowed, and you must at once become a Promoter here in your own city and form a circle of your own. The Sacred Heart of Our dearest Lord has fulfilled one of His gracious promises in your regard. He has indeed *consoled you in all your afflictions.* May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be everywhere loved!"

"Amen," Mrs. Williams fervently answered as her friend extended her hand at parting.

THE CRIMINAL.

ANNA T. SADLIER.

I.

HOW gloomy and dismal was that goal in the brightness of a spring morning. Frowning walls, spike-topped iron bars, through which haggard faces peered out at the sunshine and the budding leaves, looking longingly upon those who seemed full of life and happiness in the warm, soft air.

"The prisoner in yonder cell is incorrigible," said one visitor to another, as they passed through the prison corridor. "A hardened scoffer; he mocks at the idea of a God, sneers at all goodness, and declares that when the end comes he will die like a dog."

"Can we have speech with him?"

The gaoler smiled grimly when the question was repeated to him.

"You can talk to him if you like, but I expect you won't get much out of him."

When the cell-door was unlocked, there was seen the figure of a man crouching, animal-like, at the window. His face was pressed close against the iron-bars, as though he had a fierce heart-hunger for the world without, lying beautiful under the spring sun. He turned slowly when his visitors spoke, staring at them with sullen

ferocity, but no word passed his lips then nor during the interval that followed. But when they had passed out of the cell, a mocking laugh, horrible in its dissonance, grated upon their ears.

"The worst case we have ever had," said the gaoler.

"And he is condemned?"

"Yes, without any chance of a respite, either."

"For murder?"

The gaoler nodded.

"Has any clergyman visited him?"

"Scores of them."

"And he will not listen?"

"He listens and laughs."

II.

Scarcely a fortnight later, within that self-same cell, sat an old man, humble of aspect, clad in rusty black, a man of God. His hand rested kindly upon the bent head of the prisoner, whose strong frame was shaken by sobs. He had just finished the story of his life,—the old sad tale of neglectful parents, disobedient sons, a piece at a ten-cent show during the progress of which a man had sat beside the growing youth destined to be his ruin; he brought him into bad company, he lent him dime novels and other literature of the sort. The descent was slow. The lad's parents were respectable and, after a fashion, religious. First, sacraments were neglected, then Sunday Mass was abandoned, and religion went altogether. The terrible ending to the life which followed was told by the prisoner in words strangely solemn, unconsciously dramatic.

"Father, it was that man I killed, the one who sat beside me at the show, who introduced me to evil companions and lent me bad books."

"How infinite has been the mercy of God in your behalf," the old man was saying; "it is the realization of that promise of our Divine Lord, that 'sinners shall find in His Heart the source and the infinite ocean of mercy. For, at first, I slipped into your clothing a medal; next, I persuaded you to accept a badge of the Sacred Heart; and finally, that picture."

The priest pointed, as he spoke, to where the spring sunshine lighted up as with a smile the image of the Divine Master, showing His Heart.

"Then you seemed to melt, you spoke a little of your past life, you consented to read a book in which was the story of a great sinner who had done penance. You sent for me of your own accord. The rest has been easy. As your fall was gradual so has God's mercy followed you step by step."

"But only my death can make expiation, Father!" cried the prisoner, suddenly raising his head.

"You will meet death bravely, then, my poor boy," said the priest slowly.

"Joyfully, Father, for it will make me hope that my sins are forgiven."

"May I tell you, then?" said the priest, taking the criminal's hand gently in both his own.

"Whatever you like, Father," said the young man, firmly.

"The pardon—even the respite—has been refused."

There was a moment's silence. Human nature is weak.

"It is best so, Father; a pardon might be my ruin."

"Brave heart," said the priest, warmly, "Generous soul! How brightly shall that sacrifice shine for eternity! When your sins are washed away in the Blood of the Lamb, your soul shall wear the marriage garment."

"I have but one regret," said the prisoner, thoughtfully, "my parents are in a very respectable position, and my death must bring shame upon them. But, oh Father, if they had only taught me better!"

"God himself has been your teacher in the path of repentance," said the priest; "through much misery he has brought you to true knowledge, through sorrow and ignominy to a happiness which shall be eternal. You have sinned deeply, indeed, but you have found the ocean of mercy which the Heart of Jesus offers to sinners."

A smile lighted up the sin-stained face.

"Even for such as I, that mercy," he said softly.

"Though thy sins are as scarlet," answered the priest, solemnly.

Hushed and still was the air without, save where distant voices came faintly through the grated window.

"How far off seems the world of sin and wretchedness," said the prisoner, "and yet this is but a gaol."

"The soul is free," said the priest, "no prison-bars can hinder its flight to the highest. And now, my son, I am going; do not forget your little prayer, 'Sweet Heart of Jesus, I implore that I may ever love Thee more and more!' Say it often during the day, and when you wake at night add to it, 'Sweet Heart of Mary, be my salvation!' You have need of that good Mother's help." With a kind good-bye the priest went away, his bent old figure robed in rusty black, winning reverence from all whom he encountered. His presence

was as a benediction in that abode of lost hopes and lost innocence. How the spiritual rises above the material! A prison may be the abiding place of peace and hope, and faith and heroism. And that old man, so insignificant in worldly eyes, was sublime in his self-command, his self-forgetfulness, his holiness!

III.

"He was a plucky one," said the gaoler, discoursing of a recent execution to the two gentlemen who, a month previously, had visited the gaol; "and its victim smiled as if he was going to a merry-making, gentle as a lamb. You've seen him for yourselves, before that priest got hold of him, the worst case we ever had in here, fierce as a tiger, sulky as a bear, using the worst language, giving all the trouble he could. But, afterwards, he got to be cheerful and obliging, encouraging all the others that he came across, begging pardon of us—fact, I assure you, he did that—for the bad example he had given us, and praying all his spare time."

"He died a beautiful death," said the priest, who came up at that moment, and to whom the two visitors now addressed themselves. "The poor fellow had been led astray by bad theatres, bad company and bad books, but he was a sincere penitent, saintly in his fervor, touching in his humility, heroic in his courage. On his way to the scaffold he repeated over and over again that promise of the Divine Heart in relation to sinners, and his last earthly act was to show me his medal and badge. There was a smile upon his face just then, and

I knew that he was renewing the cheerful offering of his life, which he did so often during the last dark days."

So the spring sunshine can shine brightly sometimes upon the frowning walls of a goal, and even upon a grave in a prison yard wherein a criminal has been buried. And as the priest passes from cell to cell, he tells the story of him who lies there, and who, burdened with many sins, found in the Sacred Heart "*a source and ocean of infinite mercy.*"

OUR LADY'S MAY-DAY GIFT.

MRS. J. SADLIER.

IT was a very humble home that in which little Mary Lacy sat sewing on a fine spring morning, some ten years ago, while her grandmother, aged, but still hale and healthy, bustled about from one thing to another, making the little house neat and tidy for the day. The dwelling had but one story, divided into a kitchen, which was the living-room of the small family, and two sleeping-rooms at one end. The furniture was of the plainest, none too much even at that; but still there was a look of comfort and cleanliness all about, that, with the spring sunshine streaming in through the small window, made the place home-like and restful. Conspicuous amongst the furniture of the half-kitchen, half-sitting-room, where Mary sat, was a picture of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, about nine by twelve inches, —nothing to boast of as a work of art, and framed in common dark wood, yet evidently highly prized by the dwellers in that cosy littly home. A bracket, fashioned by some rustic hand, was under the picture, and on the bracket some of the earliest blossoms of spring, from field and meadow, bloomed fresh in a glass of water before the sacred images of the Mother and Son.

"Granny," said Mary, a fair, pretty girl of seventeen or thereabouts, as she suddenly dropped her work on her knee, and looked up, "Isn't it very lonesome here

since Willie left us? I can't feel as I used to do, and I'm always, always thinkin' about him, and wonderin' what he's doin', and if he often thinks of us here, all alone by ourselves."

"Well! it *is* lonesome, Mary," the old woman replied, as, having finished her morning house work, she took her knitting and sat down in her usual place. "It's a folly to talk, but I do miss Willie more than I ever thought I would."

"Somehow or another," said Mary, in a dreamy voice, a far-away look coming into her soft eyes, "I'm a'most sorry he ever left us."

"Come, come, Mary," said the old woman, with an effort to appear cheerful, "you mustn't let down your heart that way. You know Willie would never come to anything if he staid here all his life long as his poor father did before him, an' we all thought it best for him to try what he could do in the city. A bright, smart boy like Willie, an' with the good schoolin' we gave him by dint of savin' and pinchin' and hard work from your father, God rest his soul! and all of us,—he ought to be something better than a common day-laborer. And so he will, please God!" she added, hopefully. "Mind my words, Mary; he will."

"God grant it!" said the girl, wearily; "But do you know, granny, I do be thinkin' at times that may be he'd have been better with us after all."

"Nonsense, child, nonsense! You'll make me angry with you, if you go on like that," said her grandmother, in an impatient tone. "It's thankful you ought to be when you know that your brother is already earnin good wages as a clerk in a store, and it's able to help you and me he'll be in no time at all. That's what he

said, you know, in his last letter, and a beautiful letter it was, too!"

"Well, but, granny," said the gentle, pleading voice, "it's about his soul I'm fearful. You see, he's amongst Protestants, and he says himself he doesn't go to church as regular as he did at home. And he hasn't been to his duty since he left us six months ago."

A serious look came over the old woman's face. "Well, Mary, there's truth in what you say. It's a bad thing for a boy of his age to be thrown amongst Protestants. It's a bad thing," she repeated, shaking her head slowly. "May be you ought to write to the priest to look after Willie. You're a good scholar yourself, and I'm sure you could write that letter."

"Well, I suppose I could, granny," said Mary, brightening up at the thought, "and it's lucky that Willie told us in one of his first letters the name of the priest in the parish where he is. I'll do it this very day."

II.

So the letter was written carefully by Mary, "with the skill the good Nuns taught her" in the Parochial School to which the girl had walked two miles each way for all the days of her short school-life,—was duly posted, addressed to "His Reverence Father White," in the city and parish where Willie dwelt.

In due time the answer came, and it was so far from being satisfactory that it cast a deep gloom over the little home of Granny Lacy.

"I am sorry," said the priest, "that I have no very good account to give of your brother, William Lacy. At

first he came regularly to mass, and I noticed him there as having such a good, honest countenance—a fine looking lad altogether—and having made some inquiries about him, I learned that he had no relatives in the city and was thrown exclusively amongst non-Catholics. So I made it a point to see him, and asked him to come and see me at my house. He came two or three times and I talked with him each time. He promised me from time to time to come to confession ; but, I regret to say, he has not yet done so. Let us hope and pray, for there is much reason to fear."

This was sad news for the two lonely women. At first they could only weep and lament. All at once, however, Mary started up, a bright smile lit her tear-stained face —" Why, granny," she cried, with nearly all her wonted gaiety, " what are we crying for this way like a pair of fools? Didn't the priest tell us to hope and pray, and we're doin' neither one nor the other. Haven't we the Sacred Heart of Our dear Lord and Our own Lady of the Sacred Heart to look to for help ? And while there's life there's hope, you know ! See Our Blessed Mother up there, how she's smiling down on us, and Our Lord Himself as well."

The old woman dried her eyes and brightened up instantly. "Well, glory be to God, child, it's you that has the good thought ever and always. Sure, I often heard it said from my young days up—' All's not lost that's in danger.' We'll begin a Novena this very day to Our dear Lady of the Sacred Heart. Isn't she our Mother and Willie's, too? "

So the daily work was resumed in the house and the Novena began that very day.

III.

Meanwhile, Willie Lacy was so much engrossed with the duties and the pleasures of his new life, and the friends, so-called, with whom his leisure hours were spent, that he thought but seldom of the waiting ones at home whose every thought was given to him far away.

Being a good-humored and good looking young fellow, Willie was somewhat of a favorite among the young men of the large store wherein he was employed and the many others with whom they made him acquainted. He had fair wages, too, and as he persuaded himself that he had none to spare for sending home to Granny and Mary, he had always some to spend with his gay companions. He had been several times to the theatre with one or another, had attended Sunday lectures, in some of which the usual covert attacks were made on Romanism, Old-World Superstition, etc., etc. At first, Willie resented these attacks and resolved to keep away from such lectures in future; but, when his friends laughed at his objections, which they treated as a capital joke, he soon began to laugh himself at what the others called his narrow-mindedness and his old-womanish notions, generally, and was easily persuaded to go his way as before—not, indeed, rejoicing, for deep down in his heart there was a voice ever saying that the way he was going was the wrong one.

Of course, if poor Willie had been in the old-time habit of approaching the Sacraments once a month or so, and attending Mass on Sundays and holydays, this would never have come to pass. But these helps were wanting,—not only were the Sacraments neglected from the first, as the priest had written to Mary; but, after a

while, the Sunday mass was rarely, if ever, attended, and so Willie was, perhaps, unconsciously drifting away into the dreary regions where religious indifference and world-worship alone prevail. Even his morning and evening prayers were no longer said as of old, for he found it more than he could do to kneel down and bless himself before the three others who occupied beds in the same room. When he did attempt it, missiles of various kinds were thrown at him and roars of laughter greeted him. Not only that, but his "devotions" were made the subject of continual amusement for the other young men in the house, who described them before him in the most ludicrous way, so that at length he himself joined in the laugh, and was fain to content himself with an "Our Father" and "Hail Mary," said low to himself when, half asleep, he stretched himself on his bed. Fortunately he kept even so much of his home-life and home-training. Had Willie been possessed of more moral strength or stamina of character he would either have held his ground against all odds, as many other young men do, or sought safety amongst his co-religionists, as the priest advised him to do; but he was *not* morally strong, and could not bring himself to seek a more congenial home. So things went on from bad to worse and Willie Lacy,—the son of pious, God-fearing parents, brought up in a thoroughly Catholic atmosphere where the simple faith and heart-warm fervor of his race were the rule of life all day long and every day,—was gradually changing in the deadly blight of evil communication into a very indifferent Catholic.

The days of the Novena passed on peacefully and hopefully in the lonely abode of the Lacys. Mary had sought the powerful aid of her former teachers and

constant friends, the dear Nuns, who eagerly promised to join in the prayers of the Novena. "And it will just end on the first day of May," said Sister Rosalie, "so you see, Mary, we begin it in a good time."

IV.

It was the last day of the Novena, the 1st of May, so dear to the lover of ancient song and story. Evening had come, and the twilight shades were gathering while the pale crescent of "the young May moon" was sailing up the eastern sky.

Granny Lacy and her pretty grand-child were kneeling before the beloved picture. The Rosary was finished—the Joyful Mysteries, for the day was Thursday— and Mary was just reading the Litany of Loretto from a prayer-book, her grandmother fervently making the responses.

Suddenly another voice joined in the oft-repeated "Pray for us!" Through the open door a figure entered, a shadow fell on the faint moonlight on the floor; some one knelt beside Mary, and an arm was thrown around her neck, and another around the old woman's. Their hearts told them who it was. The wanderer had come back to them.

"Go on, Mary," said Willie, soft and low, and Mary went on and the Litany was finished, Willie joining more fervently in the responses than had been his wont in his boyish days.

The prayers being over, the joy of the meeting was given free vent to.

"Thanks and praises be to God, Willie!" cried Mrs.

Lacy, while Mary held her brother's hand and gazed with moist eyes upon his beaming face. "What does this mean? How did you get here, and in time for the close of our Novena, too?"

"And just because of the Novena, granny!—I see it all now," said the young man, with unusual solemnity. "For some days past I began to feel restless and uneasy. Night and day the thought of Death and Judgment and Hell was continually in my mind, and the words that I so often heard in the Mission were constantly running through my head—'What doth it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul?'—Then I began to see what a dangerous way I was in, and what do you think I did? All at once this picture of yours—of ours—came into my mind, and I prayed as I never prayed before to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart and she heard my prayer."

"Glory be to God!"—"And to Our Blessed Lady!" cried the listeners in one breath. "And what did you do then, Willie, dear?"

"Well! I just went straight to Father White and told him all. He took me into the church and I went to confession then and there. He advised me to leave Moore & Armstrong's employment, and said he knew of a place I could soon have in a good Catholic house. So I just came home, like the Prodigal Son, to rejoice with you here over my conversion—for conversion it is. I'm ashamed now to recall how far I had already gone in the way of indifference. And it frightens me, granny, indeed it does, to think of the precipice over which I stood. From this time forth I'm resolved, with the help of God and Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, to turn over a new leaf."

And he kept his word. After spending a few days at home, he went back to the city. Father White had the new place and the new boarding-house all ready, and he entered at once on the new way, or rather on the old way of his earlier youth. It is needless to say that, after that, some of his earnings were regularly sent home to Granny and Mary.

When next he visited his home, he made glad the loving hearts of the dear ones there by the happy news that he had not only become an Associate of the League of the Sacred Heart, but, furthermore, a Promoter. His whole circle, he said, were clerks, like himself.

A BUNCH OF JUNE ROSES.

ANNA T. SADLIER.

A bunch of June roses, heavy with fragrance, rich, ruby red in coloring, stood upon a table in a gorgeously-appointed drawing-room. Their perfume filled it with exceeding sweetness, mingling with the odorous breath of flowers and trees, which came in through the windows opening on the veranda. Costly trifles were everywhere displayed about the room, Turkish rugs covered the parquetted floor, and reclining upon a couch, propped by luxurious cushions, was a woman, whose wasted form and pallid face bespoke, one would fancy, the near approach of death. Her eyes were closed, yet she seemed to listen to the words spoken by a man, who sat in an arm chair close by. His voice was grave, and his face wore an expression of anxiety, even of suffering.

"Isabel," he said, "you can hardly fancy the pain it gives me to tell you that my resolution is unalterable. I must refuse your request."

"You have the heart to refuse me *now*, Maurice, to refuse me *now*," said the woman, opening a pair of beautiful violet eyes, and fixing them upon his face, "when death is probably so near me, when I shall be leaving you for ever; and after all, it is but a trifle."

"A trifle! My God, Isabel, can you call such a matter a trifle? Heaven knows I am, I have been indifferent

enough. But this is a case wherein my conscience will not allow me to yield. Our daughter must and shall remain a Catholic."

"Must and shall, Maurice," she repeated, awed nevertheless by his earnestness. "These are strong words. Now, as far as I am concerned, I have no deep-rooted religious opinions, but it would be decidedly more advantageous, socially, at least, for Beatrice to be brought up in the Church of England. She can be as High Church as you please, and then her aunt will leave her her fortune."

"To sell my child's soul for a fortune, for respectability! no, Isabel, never!"

She looked at him curiously, as he went on:

"I am not a religious man, I have given you, I fear, very poor example; but oh, Isabel, it grieves me to the heart to hear you talking in such a manner, when, there is no disguising the fact, you are in actual danger of death. Can I do nothing, Isabel? Is there no way I can help you from this darkness into light?"

He was surprised at himself. Long afterwards, he was wont to ascribe his fervor upon this occasion to a Badge of the Sacred Heart which his sister, a nun, had lately made him promise to wear. His wife lay quite still, looking at him with the same half-wondering expression. Handsome, gay and worldly, a favorite at clubs, on the race-course, in ball-rooms, at the dinner table, this Protestant wife, whom he had married, never dreamed of the deep current of living faith which had remained under the cover of an apparently callous worldliness. She had heard Maurice excel in witty repartee, in the refined badinage of the drawing-room, in the good story at the dinner table, but she had never

heard him speak with such force and feeling and directness before. These Catholics were curious people, she reflected, and something like a half-formed wish arose in her heart that Maurice had talked this way sooner and oftener; a half-formed wish that she, too, could believe and feel.

The sound of a light pattering step upon the threshold and over the floor, and Beatrice stood beside her glowing with excitement, her childish face flushed with pleasure, her blue eyes actually dancing with delight.

"I have been over to the nuns, and they were so kind, and they gave me this for *you*. They said for you to put it on, and that perhaps it would make you well, or that anyway it would make you love the Sacred Heart."

She thrust into her mother's hand as she spoke a tiny Badge of the Sacred Heart, at which the sick woman looked long and earnestly, without speaking.

"Oh mamma, I wish you could see the chapel to-day," continued Beatrice, fairly breathless in her haste to describe the beauties she had seen; "it is so lovely. It is the 1st of June, and so there are lots of flowers and lights, and a red lamp burning before the altar and a picture of God—the Sacred Heart. And the nuns were singing there a hymn to the Sacred Heart, and everybody was saying prayers, and—"

The child's eyes, roaming restlessly around the room, caught sight of the roses in the bowl upon the table.

"Now, I would like to bring some of those roses over to the chapel and put them before God's picture," she said earnestly. "They are red, just like the Heart in the picture."

"Bring me the bowl, dear child," said the mother,

gently, and she chose the most beautiful cluster, and gave them to Beatrice.

"Take them over to the nuns," she said, "and tell them to put the roses before the picture you are so fond of."

The child, kissing her mother, darted out of the room to fulfill the welcome commission. The father, who had attentively observed all that had passed, said quietly :

" Isabel, would you really wish that child to become a Protestant ? "

And his wife, after a moment's struggle, said softly : " Perhaps it is best as it is. We will let her aunt's money go."

II.

But she could not let go from her mind, as she lay there alone, after her husband had gone, the scene which her little one had conjured up, and the look upon the child's face as she spoke. The childish imagination, so pure and true, had added a glow to the landscape, and given to the crude sketch a subtle depth and truthfulness. The chapel, with its lights and flowers, the Tabernacle wherein these people, including her husband and child, believed that a God reposed, the light burning before it, and the picture of the Sacred Heart / It haunted her, do what she would. She looked at the pictures on the walls, the water-colors, engravings, etchings, which had cost such an amount of money, She looked at the carvings and decorations, at the curious chairs, at the rare china, at the Venetian mirror. These things represented almost every land under the sun. They reminded her of morn-

ings in Rome, of sunsets in Florence, of dawns upon the Alps, of moonlight nights on the Lagoon at Venice. They told their tales of journeyings in Palestine and sails upon the Bosphorus, of ancient Spanish cities and of drives in the Bois de Boulogne. But they told her nothing of that world towards which she might be hastening—the world, to her so dark and mysterious, beyond the grave. A strange anxiety took possession of her, and at the same time an intense desire to see that convent chapel and the picture of the Sacred Heart. If ever she were well enough—but there was little chance—she would go there, she would hear the nuns singing and watch the people praying. The scent of roses would somehow be inseparably connected henceforth with all that the child had told her, and she felt a curious satisfaction that some roses sent by her were actually breathing out their fragranee, spending their sweetness, as it were, over there in the convent chapel.

III.

June was at its close. Its warm, bright days and soft exquisite nights were presently to give way to sultry July. Its roses, its sweet sounds and sights and smells would soon be of the past. In the gorgeously-appointed drawing-room were gathered once more together husband and wife and child. Isabel, no longer reclining upon the couch, moved about the room, with just enough of the languor of an invalid to serve as a reminder of her late serious illness. Great changes had taken place in that little family. The husband, once so worldly and careless, had become an earnest, practical Catholic.

Ever since the memorable conversation upon the subject of their child's religion he had striven to impress his wife by the strongest of all arguments, — good example. He had become a regular frequenter of the Sacraments, had caused his name to be inscribed as an Associate of the League, at the same time asking prayers for his wife, and had proudly displayed his Badge whenever opportunity offered. Meanwhile, the lessons of that first afternoon of the month of the Sacred Heart had sunk deeply into the wife's heart. It had forcibly impressed her, that her husband, so worldly and careless, should upon a question of faith be willing to make so great a sacrifice. She knew it had pained him to refuse what she then had believed to be her dying request,— he who had never refused her anything.

Then the child had come with so sweet an expression upon her face, and had told her that simple child-story which had so lingered in her imagination. She had pondered over the strangeness of it all, that this child of hers, who had never been anywhere, who had lived her whole life in Canada and spent her time principally with her Catholic governess and the nuns, should know many things of which she, the accomplished, the travelled mother, was ignorant.

Then there had been the episode of the roses repeated every day, a bunch of most beautiful crimson ones being sent each afternoon for the altar of the chapel; and the wearing of the Badge. She had worn it, and to its application, as well as to the constant prayers offered up by the nuns, and to the prayers of the League, both she and her husband ascribed the change which shortly took place in her health.

On this particular morning, the Feast of the Sacred

Heart, the invalid had gone out, almost for the first time, and had knelt with her husband and child at the altar, in the convent chapel, to receive her First Communion. Some changes had been made in the drawing room as well. A statue of Our Lady had replaced one of the finest bits of sculpture, and where the choicest water-color had hung was a picture of the Sacred Heart, before which Isabel had just placed, where the sunlight brought out their warm red color, a bunch of June roses.

A TRYST IN THE SACRED HEART.

MRS. J. SADLIER.

I.

THE pallid sun of early November was shining its brightest on the gray walls and vine-wreathed windows of a southern convent some years ago in the tender radiance of the fair Indian summer. The girls of the school were in the full enjoyment of holiday leisure, for it was Reverend Mother's feast, and everything that loving kindness could dictate was done by the dear Sisters of the community to make it a bright and happy day for their pupils.

Yet the light-hearted gaiety of the hour was not without a cloud to dim its brightness. That very day,—nay, in a little while, the best loved of all the graduating class, Helena Weston, was to leave the abode of four happy years for her far-off home away north in the old Granite State. And the cause of her going made it all the sadder. Early that morning had come a telegram announcing that her father had been suddenly stricken with apoplexy, and lay, it was feared, at the point of death.

At this sad news all her girlish ambition to win the honors of the school, all her eager desire to attain proficiency in the several branches of study, all her bright hopes of success,—all vanished like the morning dew.

The one thought of her father's danger, the one fear that he might die without her seeing him, hearing his dying words, or receiving his last blessing, took entire possession of her loving heart. To get away—even from that peaceful convent-home, so justly dear,—to find herself on the way to that still dearer home where her beloved father might even then be passing away; where her mother and sister and brother were counting the hours till she should join the anxious group of watchers around the bed whereon the head of the family lay, perhaps unconscious, or, it might be, asking faintly for her, the absent one;—that was all she thought of.

Her few preparations were quickly made by the Sisters, and after a hasty meal—at which poor Helena could only be persuaded to take a biscuit and a cup of tea,—the little convent rockaway was brought round, and while her trunk was being carried out and her other little "belongings" disposed of in the carriage, the last farewells were exchanged with her fellow-pupils and then with her beloved teachers where they stood, a dark-robed, sympathetic group, on the broad verandah in front of the convent.

Helena was already descending the steps when the Mother Superior detained her a moment while she said: "Helena, my poor child, a word before you go! A thought has just come to me. It is a long and perilous journey you have before you. You are going all alone, without any earthly protector. Now, I want to place you specially under the loving care of the Sacred Heart, and this I do most earnestly and confidently. This evening, just before the Angelus, we here will say the Rosary of the Sacred Heart for your intention, and you will join us in it. Remember—before the Angelus!"

In a voice choked with tears Helena promised. She entered the carriage and was driven rapidly towards the Railway station some two miles away. Many a loving prayer went up for her at that sad moment from those she left behind—for how long, no one knew.

II.

Meanwhile, the hours passed slowly and sadly in the northern home of Helena. The last sacraments had been administered to the father and husband of the Weston family, a man who but two days before was in the flower of his years, a successful merchant who had done well for his family, and a fervent convert from some one of the many sects, to the Catholic faith. He was still conscious and fully resigned to die, but yearning for the sight of his eldest and best-beloved daughter before he closed his eyes in death. His voice, but late so full and sonorous, was already growing faint and feeble, and it was only by leaning over him and listening intently that his sorrow-stricken wife could catch his words :

" I am willing to die, " he murmured, " if God so pleases—I have tried to serve Him—I leave you all to His holy keeping—but I want to see—Helena—I want to hear her voice."

" She is on her way now, Richard !—she left in the 10 o'clock train and it is now 2 o'clock. We may look for her about 7."

The sick man heaved a weary sigh—" So long," he said, " so long—my God ! let her come in time ! Oh ! if she were—too late ! "

Oh ! how earnestly the watchers looked and prayed

for the absent one's speedy return! Many an anxious glance was cast at the clock on the mantel-shelf and thence to the pallid face among the white pillows on the bed. He was holding out wonderfully, everyone said. God was dealing tenderly with him in giving him so many hours of life contrary to all expectation. But as the time of Helena's arrival drew near, his anxiety seemed to increase and his failing eyes were ever and anon turned to the time-piece.

At last the hand on the dial reached 7, and yet Helena came not.

"There—it is 7 o'clock—and she is not here. Must I go without seeing her?"

"Be patient, Richard, be patient!" whispered his wife. "You know it takes ten minutes to get here from the station."

But ten minutes passed—twenty—and still she came not. Then young Weston stepped softly to the door whence some one without had beckoned to him. Before he could close the door after him, his sister followed him and heard him say to their own coachman who stood there with a scared look on his white face—"What did you say, Peter?—an accident to the Baltimore Express. Many people killed? My God! did you say that?"

"I did, Master William!—the Lord help us all this day!—I did say just that!" Miss Weston clung to her brother in speechless terror.

"You went to the train to meet my sister?"

"I did, sir, and waited till after 7, but there was no train there, only crowds of people waiting, everyone wondering at the delay. Then news came in all of a sudden that the bridge at N——was open and no lights up and—and——"

"And what—can't you go on?" cried the young man, excitedly.

"And then—the cars went right down in the middle of the river."

"Is the carriage at the door?"

"It is, sir, it is!"

"Well! I'll go at once to the station and see what can be done. Not a word now, Carrie, not a word! and mind!—no screaming or crying if you would not kill father instantly. Say nothing to mother—if - if the worst has happened, she will know it too soon. Go in now, and try to look as if nothing were wrong. If mother asks why I came out, say I went to meet Helena. That's all!"

"Oh! William, is there any hope?—do you think there is?" and the poor girl grasped her brother's arm and looked up into his face with a look that wrung his heart.

"How can I tell, Carrie?—You have heard what Peter said. We can say that God is good, and pray that—that we may still have a sister! Go in now to poor mother." And he hurried away after the faithful Irish servant who had already gone back to his horses.

Within the room there was solemn silence. The shadow of the death-angel's wing seemed already falling over the sick bed and its scarcely breathing occupant. Even the one last lingering trouble, the one last feverish desire, had well nigh disappeared at the near approach of death. The mother raised her head as her daughter entered and cast a look of eager inquiry on her face; startled by what she saw there she could hardly repress the cry of terror that rose to her blanched lips. But knowing well what the consequence of any sudden alarm might

be, she mastered her emotion, bent her head again over her husband's face, and said within herself: "Thy will, not ours, be done!" Her hope now was that *he* might die without knowing.

III.

Two hours later, while the desolate mother and daughter were prostrate in silent prayer beside the bed whereon lay the motionless form of him who seemed already dead to all the world, steps were heard on the stairs, the door was gently opened, and young Weston entered. He glanced at the bed, then inquiringly at his mother, who shook her head sorrowfully.

"O mother, is he gone?" broke from the young man's lips in a half-stifled cry. At the sound, the father opened his languid eyes and looked up at his son. His lips moved, and he spoke more audibly than before.

"Is she dead?"—he faintly articulated—"I know—what—happened?"

"No, father, not dead—but safe and well!" cried Helena herself, who, left by her brother at the door, could bear it no longer. In her delight at finding her father still alive and hearing his dear voice again, she forgot the possible danger to him of the sudden shock, and rushing in she threw herself on her knees beside the bed, and seizing the cold, clammy hand her father tried to hold out, she bedewed it with her tears. The others waited in silence, fearing the worst result from Helena's indiscretion. It was very different from what they sadly expected. Mr. Weston's eyes grew brighter

and his voice stronger, while words of joy and gratitude came from his lips, so lately colorless. "Thank God! oh! thank God!"

Just then the priest entered the room. Having so lately prepared Mr. Weston for death, his first glance was at him, whom he expected to find dead,—then his eyes fell on Helena, and he exclaimed—

"How is this?—Mr. Weston still alive and better, I see, than when I left him; and you here, Helena! I heard of the terrible accident to the Baltimore Express, and knowing that you were coming by this train, I feared the worst, and—in fact, I came here expressly to break the news to some of the family and keep it from your father, in case he still lived."

"Accident!—what accident? I thought something had happened!"

It was Mr. Weston who spoke, and the others shrank from telling him — all but Father Casey, who said cheerily:

"You may tell him, Helena!—joy will not kill him—I verily believe it has brought him back to life. But let your father rest a little while—he will be all the better for it, and when you have had your tea come in again and tell us all. Go to tea, all of you, and I will stay with Mr. Weston till your return. I have some of my office to say yet, and he will keep quiet and try to sleep while I say it. No, thank you, Mrs. Weston," in answer to a whispered request from that lady to go and have tea with the family; she would remain with her husband,—"No, thank you, I have had tea hours ago. Do not mind me! I will wait, for I want to hear about the accident and how Helena escaped unhurt."

IV.

In the silence of the sick-room Mr. Weston slept a refreshing sleep while Father Casey read his breviary, the light of the lamp carefully shaded from the patient's eyes.

A very little while and the small family were again assembled round Mr. Weston's bed. All were eager to hear what Helena had to tell, and when she said to Father Casey in a hesitating voice—"Do you think it will do father any harm to hear it?" the patient smiled as he looked at his daughter, saying in a whisper—"Good, not harm, my child." The priest nodded encouragingly, and Helena began her account. She told of her departure from the convent in the early afternoon, of what the Mother Superior had said to her the last thing, and how her fear of the long railroad journey all alone and its possible dangers, all disappeared from her mind, and she began to look forward hopefully to reaching home in time to see her father alive and perhaps not so low after all.

The dear Sisters had provided her with a book, in case she felt inclined to read, and in her more hopeful state of mind she gladly beguiled the tedium of the way by reading. It was Miss Starr's beautiful volume "Patron Saints," and she soon became so deeply interested in its pages that the hours passed almost unnoticed. The short November day passed—night fell, and the lamps were lit in the Pullman car; laying down her book, Helena began to think of her sick father and all the dear ones at home whom she was so soon to see. Then her thoughts went back to the scarcely less dear

ones she had left behind, and the parting words of Mother Augusta stood out in strong relief from all the rest: "We will say the Rosary of the Sacred Heart for you just before the Angelus—and you will join us in it."

She looked at her watch, and started to find that it wanted but twenty minutes of the time. Instantly taking out her beads she crossed herself with them, to the evident amusement of the few other passengers in the drawing-room car who were chatting away merrily at the other end. Helena, little heeding their derisive remarks or amused glances, began low to herself the beautiful prayer of St. Ignatius, usually prefixed to the Rosary of the Sacred Heart—"O good Jesus, hear me; within Thy wounds, hide me!" She had reached the last invocations of the Rosary—"Sacred Heart of Jesus! have mercy on us!—Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us!" when a tremendous crash was heard; it seemed, as Helena described it, as though heaven and earth were coming together—a sound of crashing timbers,—the roof above was rent asunder as were both sides of the car, and in the twinkling of an eye that half in which the merry party of travellers were seated disappeared from Helena's horror-stricken gaze, while their despairing cries made her heart stand still. Wonderful to relate, the portion of the car in which Helena sat remained firm on the edge of the yawning chasm where the black river rolled for below.*

On the instant, and while Helena, stunned and bewildered, could scarcely articulate a prayer, and unable to realize what had happened, the Angelus rang out from

* This incident is literally true. Many still living will remember reading the account in the journals of the time. Indeed, the major part of the story is all true, including the spiritual tryst mentioned.

the tower of a neighboring church. The Sacred Heart whose tryst she had kept with her far off teachers had saved her from a fearful death where so many others had perished !

Helena could tell nothing more, and never knew how she found herself in her father's carriage supported by the strong arm of her delighted brother who had just reached the scene of the disaster.

But the Sacred Heart had done more than save Helena. From that happy hour Mr. Weston began to recover, and was soon restored to his former health and strength.

Next day a telegram from the Maryland convent asked —" Was Helena saved ? "

" Saved by a miracle," was the reply—" *just before the Angelus !* "

THE WIDOW'S ONLY SON.

ANNA T. SADLIER.

"WE must be very near the place now," said Mr. Wallace to his wife and a friend who accompanied them; "it was a few miles from the town of B—— which we passed some time ago."

"We are both very curious to see this wonderful spot," observed the wife, smiling, "for it made such an impression on you, Henry! Let me see, it must be fully twenty years since you were here."

"Add five to that and you will be nearer the truth," said Mr. Wallace. "The house with its pretty garden was so quaint; its mistress so cheerful and obliging, and she had such a fine little boy. Do you know, Mrs. Layton, I had serious thoughts, from time to time, of adopting the lad."

"What did you say to that, Mary?" said Mrs. Layton, addressing her friend.

"I negatived the proposal," said Mrs. Wallace, half laughing, half serious. "In the first place, we might not have made him so happy as he was in the idyllic home which Mr. Wallace describes, and then, the care, the responsibility, the anxiety."

"There was a huge apple-tree before the door," soliloquized Mr. Wallace, "and..... Why, there it is, laden with fruit as I saw it more than twenty golden years ago Driver, stop, stop, this is the place!"

The carriage stopped and the party alighted. Mr. Wallace looked around him with that half melancholy air with which one returns to a spot hallowed by past association. He looked half wistfully at the great tree, its wide-spreading branches falling over the fence of the pretty garden, full even now of late flowers marigolds, poppies, pansies and golden-rod. He smelled, again, the familiar scent of honey, mingled with the odor of boiling maple sugar, so characteristic of Canadian country districts. He looked unconsciously for the figure of a litle lad, rosy-cheeked, with brown curls protruding from a torn, straw hat. He listened for the merry laugh.

" I spent avery, pleasant summer, here," he said to his companions, repeating the oft-told tale with emphasis.

" I do not wonder," said both the ladies together, as they looked around them admiringly.

" And I was actually looking about for the little chap," said Mr. Wallace, pulling himself together, and laughing; " he must be a great, sturdy man, now, if he is alive."

At this moment the door opened and a woman appeared, curtseying to them, but regarding Mr. Wallace, like the rest, with a blank look of non-recognition.

" Alas ! for the flight of time ! " sighed Mr. Wallace, " have you altogether forgotten me, Mrs. Lalor ? "

" It seems to me, sir," said the woman, hesitatingly, " that I have seen your face before and heard your voice, too, but —

" Twenty five years have done their work, I suppose," said the gentleman, cheerily, " and you have had time to forget the summer of — and the lodger, who had the end room overlooking the garden."

Mrs. Lalor's face brightened into more than recognition, into positive pleasure:

"Is it you then, Mr. Wallace?" she said heartily, "then, it's myself that's proud and glad to see you again," and with a quiet glance at the two ladies, she added, singling out Mrs. Wallace, "and this beautiful young lady is your wife?"

Both husband and wife felt a curious gratification at the homely compliment, while they were surprised at the readiness with which she had hit upon the truth.

"Come in, sir, come in, and the ladies, too, God bless them!" said Mrs. Lalor, warmly, and in they went, to the self-same little parlor which Mr. Wallace had so often and so glowingly described. There was the smell of lavender and sweet-scented dried plants, mingling with the fragrant odors from without; there was the apple-tree nodding in at the window, and in its shadow were the gravelled garden paths; and there was the home-made, rag-carpet, with its stripes of yellow and red, grown somewhat faded now, and the stiff-backed wooden chairs, and the odds and ends of curious crockery or glass and the religious pictures. Over the mantel, as Mr. Wallace presently noted, was a new picture of the Sacred Heart, an engraving, differing much in quality from the other rude prints, with which he had been familiar.

"There, from that window," said Mr. Wallace to the ladies, "is the view of which I have so often spoken."

It was, indeed, an enquisite view, pine-clad mountains, overtopping each other, their monotony varied by clusters of fiery red maples, and the trickling of a limpid, mountain stream.

"How lovely," whispered Mrs. Layton, "quiet and beautiful as a poet's dream!"

And whilst they admired the views and even strolled out, passing the limits of the garden and wandering a little amongst the wooded slopes above, Mrs. Lalor busied herself with hospitable cares. Upon their return, despite all protestations, they were forced to sit down at table, where awaiting them was a veritable rustic feast. There was a delicious cup of coffee, with home-made bread and cake, butter of Mrs. Lalor's making and thick cream, with the inevitable accompaniment of grated maple sugar.

"And what about the little lad,?" said Mr. Wallace, when they were all seated to enjoy the good things. "Do you know, Mrs. Lalor, I have never tired entertaining my friends with his pranks, his queer sayings and his bright promise."

"Oh, he's not a very little lad now, sir," said Mrs. Lalor, with her genial laugh; "but before I tell you all, sir, I'm going back, by your leave, to a conversation we had about him when you were here. You mind, sir, that his poor father was still living, that time?"

"I do; and I never heard of his death," said Mr. Wallace, with some emotion, for he, too, had been part of the picture of that by-gone summer, a stout, stirring typical farmer, strong of frame, bronzed of face, and with a hearty if somewhat coarse manner. "When and of what did he die?"

"It was five years after you left, sir! He got pneumonia, and it carried him off inside the week. Lord be merciful to him, but it was a sudden call! He was in his full strength on the Sunday, and that day week he was buried."

"Poor fellow," said Mr. Wallace, "poor fellow!"

"Well, sir," went on Mrs. Lalor, "do you recall a

conversation we had together, yourself, the poor man that's gone, and myself? It was about them public schools. You warned us against them, and you begged of us whatever came or went that we would send our Johnny to a Catholic school. For a time we did our best,—there was a little village school taught by a Catholic,—and kept him there till, at last, some men from town got around Michael and myself, for the matter of that. They said we were wronging so bright a boy to keep him at such a school, and that he could easily take the train every morning and go into B——, where, a stone's throw from the station, was the public school. They flattered our foolish pride by telling us he'd be pushed on there, and that there was no telling what high station might be in store for him."

Here Mrs. Lalor broke off in her discourse, to replenish her visitors' cups with coffee, and otherwise busy herself with their comfort. At length, at her visitors' request, she continued.

"To make a long story short, we did send him to the public school."

"*You* with your staunch, old Irish faith," cried Mr. Wallace; "if anyone else had told me I wouldn't have believed it."

"You may well say that, sir," signed Mrs. Labor; "it was a poor day when any of my stock, or of Michael's either, was brought to do such a thing. Well, all went well for a time. Johnny was forward in his studies and he got fine prizes, and he seemed to grow smarter like every day. But the first thing that opened my eyes to what we were doing was, when I heard him call dear old Father William, *Mister*, and he kept his hat on talking to him, and it was all one, as if it was a

Protestant minister or any other man for the matter of that. Then I spoke to Michael, and I told him I was afraid the boy would lose his faith. At first he made light of it, but it wasn't long till *his* eyes were opened, too. But, mebbe, I'm wearying the ladies with the long story."

"Not a bit of it," cried Mr. Wallace, while the two ladies begged that they might hear every detail of it.

"We both began to notice the difference in his behavior to us, and a way he got into of talking of religious matters and his conduct in the church. And in a history he had, he showed me how everything was turned wrong, as it seemed, about the church. I'm not much of a scholar myself, but I knew enough to know all wasn't right in *that* book. At last the boy began to stay in town of an evening, not very late, but late enough to frighten us. One night as God would have it, his father was kept late in the town! where he had gone to buy grain, and in the railway station, he saw Johnny, with seven or eight other lads."

The woman paused as if the recollection were painful to her, and rested her head on her hand a moment, while only the ticking of the old clock in the corner broke the silence.

"Michael saw at a glance that the boy had been drinking." She presently resumed, "beer, or mebbe something stronger, and he was talking of his father, the poor man that was so fond and proud of him, as the "stingy, old governor," and he was boasting, God forgive him, it was the ignorance of a child,—that he supposed he was a Catholic, but he'd take good care not to go to confession to a man like himself, and that one religion was as good as another. I won't weary

you with all that followed, "added Mrs. Lalor, wiping away her tears," but the next day the boy went off, as a boarder to the nearest Catholic college. We made sore sacrifices to keep him there; at one time we feared the old house would have to go, but he stayed there, and, thank God, it was not too late. In course of time, he became the same, dutiful, affectionate son he had been before, and as pious and good as he was quick with his lessons.

"And where is he now? cried Mr. Wallace.

"Is he with you still? asked Mrs. Wallace.

"What have you put him at? inquired Mrs. Layton.

The woman smiled at all her questioners, in turn, as she answered their questions.

"He is in——" mentioning a neighboring town, "he is not with me, and I had a letter from him this morning, if I may make so bold, I'll read you a bit of it."

She unfolded a letter, whilst her visitors bent forward in speechless interest:

"My dearest Mother,

"I am as busy as ever with my parish duties. Even the curate of so large a parish has his hands full, and lately I have had a great but a happy addition to my work. I have been made director of the League of the Sacred Heart. As you are an associate, I need not tell you what that means. But, oh, my beloved mother, I am never tired of reflecting upon what I owe you and my poor father. I need not say that I remember his soul every day in my mass. What might have become of me had I not left that godless school in time? It was at a great sacrifice you sent me to the College and left me there, but surely the result has repaid you."

"A priest," cried Mr. Wallace, "glorious, my fine curly headed philosopher, a priest. Give me your hand, Mrs. Lalor. I shall go to see him if I have to travel five hundred miles."

"I think I have already seen him," said Mrs. Layton. "Is he not stationed at —— Church?"

"He is, dear lady, he is."

"And are not his initials, J. F.?"

"They are, indeed."

"Then, to him I owe the happiness of being received into the Church; and let me tell you, Mrs. Lalor, mine is not an isolated case. Many, many more have been brought to the truth through his indefatigable labors. His name is a synonym for zeal. His charity to the poor, the great good he does amongst them, the edifying example of his own life, and his great solicitude for Christian education, are common talk In ——. He is a real apostle.

The tears were streaming down the mother's face. She was thinking of the long years, after her husband's death had left the whole burden to her, during which she had sold the poultry and the eggs, the butter and the cream, the apples and the honey, adding always to the little store set apart for her son's education. She was thinking of the constant privations, how she had deprived herself of all but the barest necessaries for his sake. But well was she then repaid, even in a material sense. For her son, as she told her guests, out of his small salary, and also by means of some literary work which he did, contrived to send her every year a sum, which with her own efforts, was sufficient to keep her in comfort at the old home.

"I must show you my Promoter's Cross," said Mrs.

Layton, smiling, "which I got only last June from Father Lalor's own hands."

The mother looked at it, as if it were a relic.

"He is so devoted to the Sacred Heart, "said Mrs. Layton," that many people consider that to be the secret of his succes in the ministry."

But time was flying. The sun was beginning to dip behind the mountains and to cast a gold-colored haze over the wooded slopes. So the little party, again, got into the carriage and drove away, waving salutations to Mrs. Lalor, who stood at her door, until a turn of the road, hid the carriage from their view.

"What a charming bit of history is now associated with your favorite spot," said Mrs. Layton, addressing Mr. Wallace.

Say with *our* favorite spot, "broke in Mr. Wallace," henceforth, we shall all have a share in it, garden, orchard, apple tree, dainty house and warm-hearted mistress of it.

"But to think of my curly-haired philosopher," mused Mr. Wallace, my prattling guide companion and friend, become a priest. It's too good altogether. Who knows had I adopted him, all might have gone wrong, and the widow's only son, might never have become the apostle of the Sacred Heart.

THE INTENTION-BOX.

THE General Intention for the month of November given by the Sovereign Pontiff himself for the prayers of the League throughout the world—the Sons and Daughters of Ireland—recalled to my mind something that takes the form of a little story, which I am going to tell the readers of our Canadian MESSENGER. It will while away an hour some of these long winter evenings, in the homes of our far-stretching Dominion where the MESSENGER pays its monthly visit.

I.

Among the steerage passengers of one of our great ocean steamers, bound for Montreal, in the early summer days, some three years ago, many remarked a blithe, good-looking young man who seemed to be a general favorite with his fellow-passengers. Full of life and health, bright, active and intelligent, Manus O'Donnell seemed well adapted to make his way successful in the new World where he was about to seek his fortune. His apparel was that of a young townsman, and his speech had no trace of what is call facetiously "the brogue," from which indeed the tongues of the northern Irish are usually free. Manus was in fact a pupil of the Christian Brothers in an Ulster town, and knew well how to speak and write correctly, with many other things likely to advance him in that far-off El Dorado

where others of his name and lineage had already made their way successfully.

There was a young Irish priest on board who had been spending a few months in his native land to recruit his health, much impaired by the wear and tear of parish duty in a small Canadian town where his pastoral charge was a peculiarly trying one. This reverend gentleman had noticed, from the first day of their passage, his young fellow-countryman, O'Donnell, and having made his acquaintance, soon began to take a lively interest in him.

"What do you propose to do, Manus, when you reach Montreal?" asked Father Sheehan one day as they stood on deck together.

"Well, indeed, your reverence, that's more than I can tell you," the other replied with a pleasant smile. "I suppose I'll get something to do as well as another. I can turn my hand to almost anything to earn a living."

"Do you write a good hand?"

"Yes, I think I do," and he smiled again.

"And keep accounts?"

"Well! I ought to be able to do that," said Manus laughingly, "for I learned book-keeping, both single and double entry, at school."

"That is well. I am sure you will easily find employment, for you seem smart and active. Only be steady and sober and keep clear of bad company. Above all, be faithful in the practice of your religion and all will go well with you, even if you have your little trials at first."

"Oh! as for that, Father," said Manus cheerily, "I am an associate of the League—my badge is here with my scapulars," laying his hand on his breast. "My

mother is a Promoter at home, and she put an intention in the box for me, at the end of last month, that I might get employment out here. Then I'm young and strong so I'm not the least afraid." Then he added, "I forgot to tell your reverence that I have a cousin here somewhere that's doing very well, they say. If I can make him out, I know he'll help me along.

"Well! God bless you, my young friend," said the priest in a voice full of emotion, "you are in the right way for success. May the Heart of Jesus be your aid and prosper you in your undertakings!"

On the following day Father Sheehan said to Manus when they met: "We are now entering the Gulf of St. Lawrence, so the end of our voyage is drawing near. Before we leave the steamer I will give you my address, for I want you to write and let me know how you are getting on."

"Many thanks to your reverence; it's just what I was going to ask you for. I'll write very soon, and I hope in God I'll have good news for you."

The priest smiled somewhat sadly as he looked at the beaming face of the young man. He had been long enough in America to know how many disappointments and hard trials come to damp the ardor of youthful emigrants at the outset of their career in the Western world. But of this he breathed not a word, and he himself was indeed sanguine as to the success of Manus O'Donnell.

II.

The glorious sun of August lit up the wooded slopes of our guardian mountain and all the hither and farther

shores of the great river—the fair and fertile plains stretching away southward towards the distant highlands of Vermont and the shadowy Adirondacks dim on the horizon. It shone on the burnished roofs and tapering spires of the fair "Queen City of the North," our own Ville Marie, and high on the mountain slope, on the dome of a vast cross-crowned edifice, the Hotel-Dieu, wherein the devoted Hospital Sisters of St. Joseph minister year after year, as they have done for ages long, to the suffering and sick of the flock of Christ.

In one of the men's wards where some of the convalescents were sitting near their beds, wrapped in loose light coats provided for their comfort, the windows all open wide to admit the balmy mountain-breeze that gently fanned the snow-white curtains, a young man reclined in a cushioned chair, his eyes closed, and his thin hands folded on his chest. The pallor of long and wasting illness was on his sunken features and his lips were colorless as those of a corpse. It seemed as though the lamp of life burned dimly, indeed, in that wasted form and pallid face.

It was hard, indeed, to recognize our engaging young emigrant, Manus O'Donnell, in that poor invalid. And yet he it was! How came he to this condition in so short a time would be the natural question. Ah! it was the old pitiful story, so common in this New World, of disappointed hopes—the unavailing search for employment—no vacancy anywhere—no work—nothing to earn—and yet, board and lodging to be paid for—money dwindling day by day till nearly all had vanished! Then, when hope died out at last, and cruel anxiety began to crush the heart but late so gay and lightsome, the robust health gave way—the vigourous frame was

stricken with disease, and a slow consuming fever set in.

Thus suddenly prevented from continuing his efforts to obtain employment, and with little means to defray expenses, it would have gone hard indeed with poor Manus had not his kind friend, Father Sheehan, to whom he wrote at the beginning of his illness, come into the city himself and had him removed to the Hotel Dieu, where, it is needless to say, every care and attention had been lavished upon him. Now the worst was over. The patient was at length in the way of recovery, and the doctor declared that "building up" was all he required; he would soon be himself again.

A little while after, when the Ward-sister came along and stopped near O'Donnell's chair, the young man opened his eyes and spoke, in a voice very unlike his old blithesome tones :

"I'm not asleep, Sister !—I was just thinking of something. Can you wait a minute till I tell you what it is?"

"And what is it, poor fellow?" she asked in a compassionate tone.

"I want to ask, Sister, if you have an Intention-box in the chapel below?" he could see down into the Sanctuary from where he sat.

"An Intention-box. What is that?" the religious asked in surprise.

"Why, the box for putting the Monthly Intentions in for the prayers of the League. Of course, you have the League here—the League of the Sacred Heart, you know?"

"No Manus, we have not."

"Nor the Intention-box?"

The good religious shook her head.

"Well! now, that's odd," said O'Donnell musingly. "Why sister, we have the League all over Ireland. All the churches and chapels have got Intention-boxes, and in almost every parish we have Circles and Promoters and regular meetings and the Monthly Communion of Reparation. You know, Sister, all Ireland"—he added with a proud smile—"all Ireland was consecrated to the Sacred Heart by the Bishops and Archbishops years and years ago.

"O yes, I know all about that," said the Sister quickly her Irish blood all a-glow at the recollection, "and I know by heart McCarthy's beautiful poem about that consecration. Well! Manus, I have heard of the League being established at the Gesù—that's the Jesuits' Church here in the city, and I'll ask Reverend Mother to let us have it here in the house."

"And will you send an Intention for me, Sister, to be put in the box in the church where you say it is, for I know the box is sure to be there too?—my mother put one in the box for me at home before I left; but I want a Thanksgiving put in now for my recovery, and also to ask prayers again that I may get something to do. If you would kindly write them for me, Sister, I'd be for ever obliged to you, as I'm not able yet to write myself."

The Intentions were written and placed in the box.

A little later, and the League was duly inaugurated in the great hospice on the mountain-side, and several circles formed in the house, to the great joy of Manus O'Donnell.

III.

It might be two weeks after the petition was put in the box. The young man was progressing favorably. Health was slowly but surely returning to his attenuated frame, and the deadly pallor was fast disappearing from cheek and brow. Already poor Manus began to think what he was to do when the doctor declared him sufficiently well to leave the hospital. His funds were all but exhausted, and he dreaded to start again on the wearisome quest which he had found so hopeless.

"But I'll not despair, Sister," he said one day to the good sister who had shown so kind an interest in the lonely stranger, sick and poor in a foreign land. "We say at home, 'All's not lost that's in danger,' and I know the Sacred Heart will not fail me now in my worst need."

"Surely your faith will be rewarded, Manus," said the compassionate religious, with tears in her kind eyes. "But truly your case is a hard one. Have you no relations—or friends—in these parts?"

"Well! I have a first cousin somewhere in Lower Canada, but I haven't his address. It's a couple of years since we heard from him. I wish I could see Father Sheehan—that's the priest that got me in here. He might advise me what to do. Sister, if you'll be so kind as to get me pen, ink and paper, I think I'll write to him."

The letter was written and sent, but before an answer could arrive from Father Sheehan his aid was no longer needed.

The faith of Manus O'Donnell and his confidence in the Sacred Heart were fully justified.

IV.

Poor Manus was pacing the ward to and fro that same afternoon with the uncertain step of early convalescence, when one of the Sisters came to tell him that some one was asking for him in the parlor.

"For me?" the young man cried in surprise. "Why, who in the world would be asking for *me?*"

"He's coming up anyhow, and here he is." And as the religious moved away, a tall well-dressed man entered the ward and approached Manus, who was pointed out to him at the door. Manus looked at the visitor, but without any sign of recognition.

"Are you Manus O'Donnell from the county Donegal, Ireland?"

"That is certainly my name," replied O'Donnell!" and I come from Donegal too,—I wish I was there now," he added drearily.

"Don't say that Manus, my boy!" cried the newcomer, his honest Milesian face beaming with warm emotion, and he grasped the other's hand cordially. "You'll have a different story ere long. Tell me, now, did you ever hear of one Philip Hughes, a cousin of yours by the mother's side, that came out here to Canada some fifteen years back?"

"Hear of him?" gasped poor Manus," why, to be sure I did, many's the time. Wasn't it in the hope of finding him that I came to Montreal? We heard he had done well in Canada, and my mother thought he might help me at the start. And are you Phil?"

"Phil and no other, Manus! and your mother, my good old aunt Peggy, was about right. I am both able

and willing to help you, my poor fellow! You'll come now to my house, where my wife will be right glad to see you, and to give you a home as long as you care to stay with us. Sure, she's from the door with us at home, a daughter of old Dan McQuillan of the Cross Roads. She's a capital nurse, is Susie, and she'll soon have you well and strong again, I'll go bail. And whenever you're able for it, Manus, I have a good situation ready to your hand. I'm a contractor myself, and am just in want of a smart fellow to assist me in keeping my accounts and such like work. Father Sheehan told me you could do that well."

"Father Sheehan? then it was he that put you on my track?"

"Indeed it was. I know him well, but I hadn't seen him for some time past when, as luck would have it, he came into my office about some repairs he wanted done out at his place, and he asked me point blank if I wanted a clerk, an honest, smart young man, that I could trust with all I was worth. Then he told me your name—how he came out in the steamer with you, and all about your disappointments and your sickness. I told him I guessed you were a cousin of my own, and asked him where I could find you. He told me of course, right glad you may be sure, and so here I am, and as soon as the good Sisters can let you come with me, we'll be off."

"Well, glory be to God, Phil! and thanks and praises to the Sacred Heart!" cried Manus in a voice quivering with joyful emotion.

An hour later Manus O'Donnell was comfortably seated in a large arm-chair in his cousin's cosy parlor, while the kindly housewife busied herself in preparing a room for his reception.

The Sacred Heart had wondrously answered the petition put up through the prayers of the League, and had sent a flood of light and hope where all seemed dark and dismal. And this was fully realized by the happy group that assembled that evening round the fire in the home of Philip Hughes.

FATHER SHEEHAN'S PARISH.

MRS. J. SADLIER.

I.

WHEN Father Sheehan reached his home after that voyage across the Atlantic in which he had made the acquaintance of Manus O'Donnell, his heart was filled with anxious forebodings. It is true he was returning to his parish much improved in health by a three months' sojourn in Ireland, his native land. His going there was a matter of actual necessity, prescribed by his physician and sanctioned by his bishop, who had kindly sent a brother priest to replace him during his absence. Now that he was nearing the end of his journey, his parochial cares, laid aside for a time in obedience to authority, began to weigh again upon his mind. He remembered what had, indeed, struck him at the time, that the accounts he had received of parochial affairs in the letters of his friend Father Daly, during his absence, were somewhat vague and by no means re-assuring.

Father Sheehan's parish was one, be it observed in passing, that required even an unusual amount of zeal, energy and patient forbearance on the part of its pastor, together with sound health and great determination. It consisted of a small town where certain factories had

been established some years before, which fact, together with the advent of a dozen or more "shanty men," who had lately been attracted thither by the prospect of steady employment all the year round in the factories, had more than a little demoralized the working population of the place, and changed—not for the better—the quiet simple character of its people. A more wordly spirit had gradually assumed the mastery, and the old-time piety and respect for authority that had been wont to distinguish them was lapsing into careless indifference and insolent self-sufficiency,—the prevailing spirit of the times in which we live. As a consequence of this change, vices before almost unknown were of late years becoming but too common, and resisted all the efforts of the priest to eradicate.

Such had been Father Sheehan's experience, and this it was that, together with the ordinary work of the holy ministry, at all times arduous and laborious, had undermined his naturally good constitution, so that absolute rest and change of air had been found expedient to ensure his recovery. To all his enquiries, while in Ireland, as to how matters stood at home, his friend Father Daly had usually given evasive answers, evidently trying to make the best he could of it. On all this Father Sheehan reflected with a sinking heart as he journeyed homeward. From Montreal he had a railway journey of a few hours, then a short distance by stage, and lo ! there was Father Daly waiting for him at the door of his little presbytery. Home again ! *Deo Gratias !*

II.

After tea on that first evening, Father Sheehan, with some hesitation, approached the subject nearest his heart.

"And now, Father Daly, that I have given you all the news from home, tell me how things are going on here. Is there any change for the better?"

Father Daly shook his head. "So far from it, that I really pity you coming back to such a place. I have tried very hard to get the men into the Father Matthew Society you got up last year, but my efforts have been for the most part a lamentable failure. Only six or eight have taken the pledge since you left, and the taverns are more flourishing than ever. Then the Sacraments are but little frequented, and even the Sunday Masses thinly attended."

Father Sheehan sighed wearily. Then he asked: "And what about the Confraternity?"

"Well! that is not so bad. A good many women and girls have joined lately, and the meetings are somewhat better attended. Still, even there the progress made is not very considerable, and, indeed, the general outlook is far from encouraging. That turbulent spirit of insubordination is still rife among the men, and I see little before you, my poor friend, but trouble. I wish I had a more cheering account for you on your return, and that I could give you back your parish ever so little improved; but alas! it is very, very far from being so. By the way, you remember Tom Barry?"

"The blacksmith!—of course I do, to my great sorrow. He is one of the hardest cases we have in the parish."

"Of course he is. Well! I'll tell you something characteristic about *him*. You must know he lost his wife some five or six weeks ago."

"A good riddance for her, poor woman!" put in Father Sheehan—"that is, if she were well prepared."

"Oh! she was, indeed, I'm thankful to say, for sorrow and trouble had done their work in her regard, and she turned to God with her whole heart."

"What a life she had of it for the last two or three years, since Tom took to drinking. If ever any one died of a broken heart, it was she."

"Not a doubt of it. But, knowing that, you will be able to appreciate what I am going to tell you. I was just preparing for bed about 10 o'clock, one rainy night, about two weeks after her death, when a messenger came in haste to say that I must go immediately to Tom Barry's. 'And who am I wanted for there?' I asked. 'Oh! for Tom himself, your reverence! He wants to see you mighty bad entirely!" With some misgiving I went, I must confess, knowing Tom's habits, and fearing it might be an attack of *delirium tremens* he had. I found him stretched at full length on his bed in his usual attire, apparently much at his ease. 'Well! Tom, my poor fellow,' I said, approaching the bed, and no little relieved to see him so quiet—'You sent for me, did you not?'—'I did, then, your reverence,' he replied. 'What is the matter with you? You don't appear to suffer much." 'No, it isn't that I'm sick at all, Father Daly,' was the answer, 'but I just wanted to shew you *that*.' And, raising himself on his elbow, he pointed to a large wooden cross painted black that hung over his head. 'But what has that to do with your sending for me?' I asked in no small surprise. 'Just look at it now,' was

the answer, ' I want you to take a good look at it.' 'I have done so, Tom, but what then? Why did you send for me?' 'Well! I'll just tell your reverence,' he coolly answered." I got that cross made to put over poor Nora, and sure I knew you'd be glad to see it before it was taken to the cemetery above.' 'And that was why you sent for me on such a night as this, and just when I was about to retire to rest!'

"I tell you, Father Sheehan," the priest went on, "it was as much as I could do to keep my temper, seeing the fellow regarding the cross and myself alternately with a half-drunken smile of maudlin complacency as he lay there comfortably on his bed. I merely told him, however, to be more careful another time how he sent for a priest on such a fool's errand, and started for home through the darkness and rain." *

Preoccupied as he was, Father Sheehan could not help laughing at this extraordinary "sick call" of Father Daly's, and the latter joined merrily in the laugh, though it was at his own expense. But alas! the situation was too critical for mirth, for, unhappily, Tom Barry was but one of many drunkards who were the cause of much sorrow to the pastor and much scandal to the whole parish. Temperance meetings and Temperance sermons were alike ineffectual in reclaiming any considerable number of these public sinners. And, unfortunately, there were other scandals of old standing that were, if possible, still more grievous.

The two priests talked long and earnestly over these matters, but without arriving at any practical decision,

* This incident is literally true, and actually occurred in Montreal to a zealous Irish priest, well known to the writer, who was at the time a member of the Seminary of St. Sulpice, and attached to St. Patrick's Church.

on that last evening they were to spend together for some time, as Father Daly was to leave on the following day to report himself to his bishop.

III.

Left alone once more to take up the heavy burden he had reluctantly laid aside for a brief season, Father Sheehan set himself face to face with the many difficulties that lay in his way. In addition to all those he had discussed with Father Daly, there was the heavy debt on the church,—a new one built by his predecessor in the parish, at whose death, a few years before, it was still unfinished, although so far advanced by his zeal and perseverance as to be fit for divine worship. To complete the church and at least reduce the debt, Father Sheehan had established a Building Society, which as yet had produced but scant results. Then there was the Parochial School—English and French—which it was the dearest wish of his heart to see in active operation ever since his appointment to the parish—but now, alas! very far in the future, as far as human probability went.

And here was the pastor back again among his people, full of gratitude for restored health and full of zeal to do something solid and tangible for the glory of God and the lasting good of the souls placed in his charge. Next morning when he offered up the Holy Sacrifice, it was not only in thanksgiving but with the special intention of making reparation for the sins of his people, and obtaining aid from on high to bring the sinners to repentance and increase the number of the good and well-disposed.

To work he went meanwhile with renewed energy and devotion, to do his share for the attainment of the end he had in view. He made a general visitation of all the families, called meetings of the different associations existing in the parish, and left no means untried to excite a better spirit among his parishioners. Alas! his persistent efforts were attended with little or no success. Only the few responded to his call, the many were sunk in apathy and the stolid indifference that follows on the utter neglect of religious duty. Vice walked abroad unblushingly, waxing bolder as time went on. Even the priestly instructions and admonitions were scoffed at and set at naught by the scandalous sinners whose evil example and influence were making such havoc amongst the working population of the place.

So matters went on for some time longer, when Father Sheehan received a letter from his grateful young friend, Manus O'Donnell, telling him of the marvellous results of his application, through the Intention Box, to the prayers of the Holy League. As the priest read, a sudden access of joy and hope thrilled his heart. A flash, as it were, of lightning illumined his mind, and revealed in letters of flame a divine promise spoken ages before to the virgin Saint of Paray-le-Monial in the mystic silence of the cloister.

"And I never thought of it before!" he cried within himself in a reproachful spirit, as he proceeded without a moment's delay to prepare for a visit to Montreal. "But it is never too late to do good, and that Fountain of Mercy is never closed! Courage, my soul, courage! Who knows but the dawn of a new day is at hand?"

IV.

There was a great commotion in the town some days later, when Father Sheehan announced from the pulpit that a mission was to be given during the following month in that church by Fathers from Montreal.

"The Mission will last for two weeks," he said, "which will give you all ample time to make your peace with God. Now, I want every man and woman in my parish to attend this Mission; and as there are only a small number of you here present compared with the whole population of the place, let everyone make it his or her business to tell the good news to friends and neighbors, and try to get them all into it. Remember that my blessing and the blessing of God will rest upon every one that induces others to avail themselves of what may be for many, and certainly will be for some, the last opportunity of saving their souls. Now, mind, you are all invited to make this Mission,—no parish needs it more, and woe to him or her that rejects the means of grace now offered."

Many grumbled and declared that they wouldn't make the Mission,—not they, indeed; many more were glad of the opportunity, and made up their minds to profit by it. Grace was already knocking at their hearts, preparing the way for conversion.

The Mission was opened. At first the attendance was slim indeed. Little by little, however, more people came, some impelled by curiosity, some with a half formed resolution of trying to mend their ways. At the end of three days the church began to be crowded, the sermons were heard with attention,—the mission was talked of

eyerywhere, in shops and factories, as well as in the homes of the people, and in the church the priests were kept busy hearing confessions all day long. The Mission promised an abundant harvest, and very many were the souls brought back to God. But, alas! a certain number still hung back, obstinately refusing to make the Mission which they knew would necessitate a change of life, and that was not to be thought of. They would not even enter the church during the Mission, fearing for their pet vices and darling sins. The relatives and friends in their new-born zeal for souls mourned over them as lost; but the pastor said: "Courage, the end is not yet!"

And behold! at the end of the Mission, the League of the Sacred Heart was preached with apostolic fervor; the story of Blessed Margaret Mary and the apparitions and the Promises was told with touching simplicity, and the hearts of the people were stirred with a new and strange emotion. Then a Centre of the League was formally inaugurated in the parish with Father Sheehan as Director; numerous Promoters came forward to form Circles, and an outburst of holy zeal among the people so lately callous to all religious influences was witnessed with astonishment and even awe by those who had long and vainly sighed for this blessed change!

V.

Somewhat over a year had passed away. Father Sheehan's parish presented a very different aspect. The first Friday of every month was duly celebrated; the old confraternities were filled up and new ones established; the Building Society was in full operation, and it was cheering

and most edifying to see the men who had so lately been utterly indifferent to church matters and the interests of religion now coming regularly in with their returns, happy and proud to make them satisfactorily, and so help to lighten the burden for their beloved pastor. Then the confessional was crowded, especially on the eves of great festivals and of the First Friday, while at the altar-rails were seen on those solemn days of devotion row after row of men, women and children eager to participate in the Divine Banquet, each and all wearing on their breasts the precious little badge of the Holy League with its glorious motto: THY KINGDOM COME! Very many of both sexes had been invested with the Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, and in the homes of the parish it was no uncommon thing for the passer-by to hear the Rosary being recited in the calm hours of rest after the day's toils were over, where such far different sounds had been heard not so very long before!

"Well! I protest it seems nothing short of miraculous, the change in this parish of yours. Now that I have seen with my own eyes what you have so often described in your letters, I can hardly believe it to be the same place that I almost gave up in despair while I was here as your substitute less than eighteen months ago. Surely the ways of God are wonderful! How did it all come about,—I mean, at the beginning?"

"I'll tell you that in a very few words," Father Sheehan replied with a happy smile. "It was neither more nor less than a sudden inspiration that came to me soon after you left, just when everything was dark around me and my parochial affairs seemed to have reached their worst. The words that flashed before me all of a sudden, while I knelt sad and lonely before the Tabernacle, were

those of that Promise of Our Lord to Blessed Margaret Mary :

'*Priests shall receive the gift of touching the most hardened hearts, and they shall work with marvellous success if they are penetrated with a tender devotion to the Divine Heart of Jesus.*'

"You may be sure I lost no time in acting on the suggestion, and you yourself and all the Associates of the League helped to bring about the blessed results you now behold."

"I helped!" exclaimed Father Daly. "In what way?"

"In praying for the success of a certain number of 'Missions' on a particular day of the previous month, and mine here was one of them. I see you are amazed, you will be more so when I tell you that Tom Barry, your old friend of the black cross, is one of my very best promoters. What do you think of that?"

"Why, what can I think or say but this, that the Sacred Heart of Our Divine Lord is indeed changing the face of the world and making the desert to blossom as the rose!"

ST. JOSEPH'S CLIENT. *

ANNA T. SADLIER.

IT was a night in the early part of March, dark,—save when occasional glimpses of fitful moonlight shone out through scudding clouds. Father Lewis, wearied after a long day's work, sat in his study writing. As he leaned back in his chair from time to time, struggling against the weariness which threatened to overpower him, he could see the sanctuary lamp shining out from the side windows of the church. Its gleam fell full upon the statue of St. Joseph, as it stood upon the altar, profusely decorated, because of its being the month of March.

All was still. No sound of footsteps on the pavement below, as the hour crept on to midnight. Only the wind at intervals went sweeping up and down with a dismal, moaning sound.

All at once, a loud summons at the door below told the tired priest that his labors were not yet done. Raising the window, he looked down. Standing out clearly in the light of a street-lamp Father Lewis perceived the figure of an old man. Something in the apparition produced an indescribable sensation upon the priest. The voice which replied to Father Lewis' question was clear, full and vibrating.

* The main facts of this story are true.

The priest was told that he must go to a certain street —it was at a considerable distance—that he must follow that street to the end, and would there discover a small house completely detached from all others.

"You had better pilot me there yourself," said the priest; "if you wait one moment I will be with you."

He merely waited, to snatch coat, muffler and cap, and to procure what was necessary for his ministrations. Descending to the door, he looked about for his guide. The old man had completely disappeared. In fact, the street was totally deserted. Father Lewis looked up and down, and peered into the shadows of the doorways. No trace remained of him with whom he had so lately conversed.

Something like a shiver stole over the priest. He knew not whether it was the touch of the icy wind or an impulse of half-superstitious dread. He had no resource, however, but to make his way, if possible, to the address indicated.

He found the street at last, leading out, as it seemed, into the country. It was full of the driftings of a late snow-storm. The houses upon it were but few, of wretched appearance, and isolated one from the other.

As Father Lewis pressed forward in the teeth of a biting wind, he asked himself, could the sick-call have been but a trap, and would it not be wiser for him to give up the affair until morning. But no, the summons had been imperative, the case was urgent, and it was his clear duty to reach the place indicated if it were humanly possible to do so.

He had left what appeared to be the last house behind him. The street, where there was no longer the semblance of a sidewalk, stretched out, as he fancied.

into illimitable distance. He was fast growing exhausted, and his heart sank at thought of the distance which lay between him and home.

On a sudden he caught sight of a glimmer of light, and presently he saw that it proceeded from a half-ruinous house which stood almost buried in snow by the roadside. The light of a solitary candle shone out upon the gloom. The priest knocked at the door, and heard a feeble voice which bade him enter.

On a low couch in the corner was the figure of a man, —old, for his hair lay silver-white upon the pillow; emaciated, until the face had almost the appearance of a corpse. His fading eyes pierced the semi-darkness of the room, as the opening door made him aware of a presence in the room. Father Lewis, advancing, inquired :—

"Did you send for me, my friend?"

"Did I send for you?" said the man, with a hushed, awe-stricken note in his voice. "No; how could I send, how could I send?"

He tried to raise himself, as if impelled by excitement or joy, or some hidden feeling. But the effort was vain. Nature had all but exhausted the resources of a frame once vigorous. He sank back on the pillow, silent an instant, then he asked :

"And, sir, if I may make so bold, who are you?"

"Who am I?" said Father Lewis. "Why, a priest, of course. I was directed to this spot for an urgent sick call."

"A priest!" cried the man, "a priest for me. O God, I give Thee thanks! St. Joseph, I bless Thee."

Astonished at these utterances, the priest asked an explanation.

"All my life," said the man, "when I bent the knee at morning or at night, I prayed to the great St. Joseph that I might not die without the Sacraments. Whatever came or went, I never failed in that prayer. The years went by, I grew old and poor. Relatives and friends dropped around me like falling leaves. I was left alone. At last I was reduced to this miserable shelter, where I managed to keep body and soul together by working a little whenever I was able. Feeble in body I could not reach the church very often for long past. A month ago I took to my bed, seized with a burning fever. Since then I have dragged on the days and nights here alone, and my strength is almost exhausted."

All this was told in a feeble, gasping voice. Father Lewis asked had not the neighbors come in to give him some help and to notify the priest of his condition.

"The nearest are more than half a mile off," said the old man, "and they are strange people who have come there of late and scarcely know of my existence. No, there was no one to send for the priest, though I knew that Death was approaching fast. Still, I felt that I would not die without the Sacraments. My confidence in St. Joseph was so great, that I knew that, if I had to live on as I was for fifty years, a priest would come. And you, Father, how did you get here?"

"Providentially, as I believe," answered the priest, solemnly. "A man of venerable appearance rang at the bell, and informing me that there was an urgent sick call, directed me clearly and explicitly to this place. When I came out of the house, he had gone, and there was no trace of him in the street. I made so little delay, that a man of his age could hardly have walked away so quick."

"It was the good Saint himself," said the man confidently.

"Who can tell?" said the priest thoughtfully, "though indeed, the protection of St. Joseph may have shown itself by inspiring some neighbor to come for me."

The man shook his head.

"The neighbors know nothing of me," he said, "and most of them are a low and worthless set of people, who think little of priest and religion.

"Well," said Father Lewis, "whoever may have been my guide, it remains for me to accomplish the work for which I have been brought here. The time may be shorter than we think."

"It will be long enough for that, Father," said the old man, the same confident smile passing over his face. "But, if you please, I will begin. I want to make a general confession, and I have been preparing for it this many a day."

The wind whistled moaningly about the house. It rushed in through the crevices and crannies and under the miserable door, threatening the life of the candle, as Father Lewis continued his ministrations at the bedside of the dying old man.

The dawn gleamed white and cold, streaking the sky towards the East, as Father Lewis stood upon the threshold of the open door and looked out upon a scene of unexampled dreariness — a low, broad waste of snow, unbroken by a human habitation, lying under a gray sky. Chilled and exhausted he turned to gaze upon the couch in the corner of the room, where lay the old man, dead. There was something weird and solemn in the repose of the figure, majestic despite its wretched surroundings.

As Father Lewis passed out and closed the door, being anxious to arrange about the funeral, he murmured softly: "Amen, Amen. I have not seen such faith as this in Israel. St. Joseph has heard his life-long prayer, and a beautiful soul has this day passed into its Maker's hands."

THE CHILDREN'S PRAYER.

ANNA T. SADLIER.

EACH day the little brother and sister went hand in hand to the great, solemn church, where the statue of St. Joseph stood wreathed with flowers, bright with the glow of lamps and tapers. They had learned that tiny prayer, "St. Joseph, Foster Father of Jesus, pray for us," though they could not say it very plain. Still, each day, they knelt before the statue and said the little prayer, and went home again with toddling, uncertain feet. They lived but two blocks from the church, in a small, wooden house. They were orphans, and their grandmother, with whom they lived, but seldom stirred out. She sat nearly all day in a rocking-chair, knitting. The neighbors said her mind had grown as feeble as her body during the long years that had passed since her silvery locks were black.

In any case, she rarely spoke to the chidren, and they lived their little life apart. An aunt, a middle-aged woman, worked all day at a factory, and came home tired and somewhat cross, cared for the children's clothing, put them to bed at night, and woke them very early in the morning. Having tidied up the house and given a very early breakfast, she hurried off, with a caution to them to keep away from the fire and to be good to grandma. They were good to grandmamma in their own babyish way. Two quaint little figures, in strong but ugly pina-

fores and long dresses, they hovered about her chair, picked up her knitting-needles if she dropped them, and asked her many questions. To most of these she responded only by a smile and a shake of the head. Her tired old brain refused to work out even their baby problems.

They played mostly with bits of paper and string, a bit of colored glass Francis had found in the street, and a bundle of rags tied up for a doll, which little Mary fondled and caressed and put to bed in a wooden box given to her by the grocer's boy.

The church down the street was the children's great marvel and delight. Their aunt brought them there on Sunday, when she was not too hurried to dress them, and she had taught them some simple prayers. She was a good woman and anxious to do what was right, but she was painfully hurried and worn with constant labor. So she knew nothing of all the thoughts the two little ones had about the church. They conversed about it constantly with wonder and awe after their simple, baby fashion. The stained windows, the altar where God was, the great gilt candlesticks and the angels guarding the sanctuary were endless sources of admiration to them.

Once, the nun who was arranging the altar spoke to them, and told them that it was St. Joseph's month, and gave them each a tiny picture with the prayer on it : "Good St. Joseph, Foster Father of Jesus, pray for us." After that the nun figured in their conversations as a beautiful if somewhat mysterious lady, and they paused every day before St. Joseph's altar, always saying the little prayer. The kindly face of the Saint became as something dear and familiar to them, and they wondered if he looked like that up in heaven.

One afternoon, they had just got home from their visit to the church—it was still clear light, for their aunt had told them never to stay out when it was dark, and they would not have dreamed of disobeying her. They were playing, as usual. Little Mary sat on a tiny, wooden stool, cutting up paper, and Francis was busy driving an imaginary horse. They did not perceive the smoke which began to pour in from the hallway through the crevices of the door. The grandmother, indeed, was the first to notice it.

" Smoke," she said, and she laughed softly to herself as if the notion pleased her. Perhaps it was because she was able to remember its name, words not occurring readily to her as a general thing. She pointed it out to the children, repeating, " Smoke, smoke," with the same childish chuckle. The little ones had at first no comprehension of the danger, until, instead of smoke, flame began to make its way under and around the closed door with a strange, crackling noise.

Then little Mary began to cry, and Francis said to her that they must say their prayer to St. Joseph, and kneeling down both together and clasping their tiny hands, they prayed to St. Joseph, Foster Father of Jesus, saying, " Dont let the fire catch granny or us ? "

At that moment a gentleman passing stopped before the house and cried out to other passers-by that there was a strange light shining from the window, and that, in fact, the house was on fire. The neighbors quickly took the alarm, knowing well how helpless were the three inmates of the dwelling. In an instant, the door was burst open, and the flames pent up in the narrow hallway poured out with a blinding mass of smoke. Brave men rushed into the room into which the fire had scarcely

effected an entrance. They found the old grandmother seated in her chair, childishly delighted, and the two little ones kneeling in the middle of the room with clasped hands.

The neighbors and the firemen thought it little short of a miracle that the old woman and the children were brought safely out, and women wiped their eyes when they heard the children tell that "they weren't afraid, because they had told good St. Joseph not to let the fire catch granny or them."

HOW IT CAME TO PASS.

MRS. J. SADLIER.

SITTING in the cool shady little parlor of our great Montreal Hôtel-Dieu, one bright warm day in the June of this present year, we heard with thrilling interest from one of the Hospital Sisters of St. Joseph the simple narrative of many marvels of grace wrought among the patients from day to day by the Merciful Heart of our Saviour God. One of these struck us so forcibly that we told the Sister from whom we heard it that we must make it known to the readers of the Canadian MESSENGER, and she agreed with us that it is too great a triumph for the Sacred Heart to be left unpublished. It is substantially as follows :—

Only a few months since, a young Frenchman of good family and ample means was admitted into the Hôtel-Dieu as a patient. He had been but a few days in Montreal, whither he came from New-York in order to be amongst French-speaking people, as English was to him an unknown tongue. He was laboring under a grave malady, the effect of long and reckless dissipation.

His story, gathered by the Sister in attendance on him, from his broken and at times incoherent bursts of confidence, was far from being an uncommon one. Tenderly and carefully brought up by a pious mother, still living in La Vendée to bewail her son's ruined life and his miserable career of vice and folly, he had, soon after

leaving college, fallen into the toils of unprincipled and irreligious companions, who helped him to dissipate much of his fortune while leading him into the haunts of vice, and drawing him from the paths of virtue and religion.

It was the old story repeated over and over again since the world was young. The spoiled and cherished one, the prodigal, taking his substance away from his father's house and squandering it among worthless and vicious companions in that "far country" where wanton waste and wild extravagance run ever riot. His father had died while he was yet a child, and his widowed mother was left to mourn in solitude the cruel desertion of her still beloved son. At times, when he spoke of his mother, there was a slight tremor in his voice, but he quickly mastered his emotion and laughed with unfeeling levity as he recalled her wise counsels and gentle admonitions. The wicked world had taken such entire possession of his heart and soul that no virtuous sentiment, no pure affection could find place therein. His one idea was regret for what he called vanished pleasures and the little hope there was of his ever "enjoying" them again.

In vain did the patient listener, the Sister in charge of that particular ward, endeavor to put in a word here and there that might revive some hallowed recollection long dormant in his soul, some thought of Heaven or Hell,—of the after-life to which he was hastening,—of the mother to whom he had been a curse instead of a blessing, the mother whose prayers were going up to heaven for him night and day. To all her entreaties, her efforts to bring him back to better thoughts and desires, he turned a deaf ear, renewing his lamentatlons for the "jolly times" and the "gay comrades" of his past life.

II.

"It's no use, Sister," he would say with querulous impatience. "It's no use talking to me about the happiness of serving God. That's not the happiness I want. Religion and virtue are stuff. I want to hear no such pious twaddle."

"But suppose you were to die in those dispositions, what do you think would become of you?"

"Oh well! that's my own look-out. I'm not going to die now; and even if I were, I couldn't go back to the days when I believed and prayed. I have neither done one nor the other for so long that I couldn't do it now, even if I wished it,—which I do not."

"Oh, my dear young man!" would the shocked religious cry, "do not say that—do not say that!—you know you cannot help believing—even the devils believe and tremble. You cannot but fear the terrible judgments of God!"

"It's no use, Sister,—it's no use, I tell you!" would the miserable young man cry out, and then, fearing that an out-burst of anger might prove dangerous in his enfeebled state, his careful attendant was fain to desist from her fruitless efforts, at least for the time being.

One evening, when the young Frenchman—whom we will call Monsieur Lambert,—seemed worse than usual, the Sister ventured to ask him if he would not let the chaplain come and see him. "He is coming to administer the last Sacraments to that poor man in the corner yonder who is drawing near his end."

"No!" cried Lambert, in a voice so loud and strong that the gentle religious was startled by the fierce energy

of his refusal. "I tell you I don't want a priest. None of your 'last Sacraments' for me! Last Sacraments, indeed!" And he laughed ironically.

Then fearing any further importunities, he turned his face to the wall and would not even look in the direction of the chaplain, when a little while after, he appeared at the bedside of the dying man who calmly and reverently awaited his coming.

Before the priest left the ward, he approached Lambert and asked him how he felt. But no answer was vouchsafed him, and after another unsuccessful attempt to induce the sick man to speak, he made a sign to the religious in attendance to leave matters as they were for the present.

Accompanying the chaplain to the door of the ward, the Sister asked in a low voice—"Oh! dear father, what is to be done with him?"

"Leave him to the Sacred Heart, Sister!" was the whispered reply. "We can do nothing for him as he is, you see."

III

Things remained so for a few days. Then Sister M.— took heart of grace and spoke to Lambert in a casual way, as it seemed, of the devotion to the Sacred Heart. The patient listened at first with his usual stolid indifference, as though none of these things had any interest for him. Nothing daunted, the religious went on to speak of the wonders being wrought everywhere through the Sacred Heart, how the sick were cured, the sorrowful comforted, the sinful and erring brought back to God.

"That's enough about the Sacred Heart," cried Lambert, losing patience. "I want to sleep now."

"Well, I'll go away and let you sleep," said the Sister soothingly, as a sudden inspiration came to her. "But will you take this little badge of the Sacred Heart from me before I leave you?"

"Oh! I don't want it in the least," replied Lambert; "but you've been so kind to me, Sister, that I'll take it just to please you. It will do me no harm, I suppose, if it do me no good."

"Thank you so much!" said the Sister with assumed calmness, unwilling to let her eagerness appear. "Now, as it might get lost about the bed, I'll just put it here!" and she fastened the badge to the breast of the patient's night shirt.

"Well! I call that a good joke!" Lambert said, regarding his new decoration with an amused smile. "If only my old Parisian comrades might see me now!"

"Never mind that, monsieur, but lie down and go to sleep!" and the Sister moved noiselessly away, breathing an inward prayer to the Sacred Heart.

What the dreams of the sleeper might have been who could tell, as he lay in the fading light of the summer day. Were they of that far-off Vendean home, amid whose pleasant shades his happy, because pure and innocent, youth was passed among pious kindred and friends, all deeply imbued with the Christian spirit of their heroic forefathers and full of the ennobling traditions of that glorious strife for faith and country that has made the name of La Vendée for ever famous and for ever honored? Or were they of scenes of wild revelry, of unhallowed pleasures among the semi-pagan brawlers of the French capital? Not the latter surely, for when the sleeper

awoke in the late twilight, he looked around with a wondering, dazed look as though but half-conscious, then glanced down at the tiny badge reposing so calmly on his breast, and a smile lit up his wasted features. He looked around for the Sister, but she was not there. Indeed, she was at that moment kneeling before the Blessed Sacrament in the convent-chapel, praying to the merciful Heart of Jesus for all her dear patients, and very specially for the lonely stranger from far La Vendée, sick in mind as well as in body.

IV.

A few minutes later Sister M—— appeared and asked Lambert how he felt after his sleep.

"Better," he replied; "better—and—" he stopped short, while the religious waited and wondered what was coming.

"Sister," said the sick man, after a pause of some minutes, "what day is to-morrow? I think you said it was some feast-day?" he added in a sort of shame-faced way.

"Well, not exactly a feast-day, monsieur!" the sister replied with a beaming smile. She saw and felt that a change had come over her patient. "It is simply a day of very great devotion, the first Friday of the month. Did you ever hear of the blessed Margaret Mary, the Visitandine nun, her wonderful visions and the revelations Our blessed Lord made to her in her convent at Paray-le-Monial in your own France, concerning His Sacred Heart?"

Lambert passed his hand over his forehead, as though

trying to bring back some half-effaced remembrance. At length he said slowly :—" Surely yes, Sister. I used to hear my mother tell—oh ! so often—of—the Blessed Margaret Mary—and Paray-le-Monial."

" And Our Lord's promises to that holy religious ? " the Sister asked eagerly—" and what he said about observing the first Friday ? "

" Not so fast, dear sister ! " said the patient with a faint smile. " I cannot say I remember all that. But the names and the visions, oh yes ! I remember about them. What did you say about the first Friday ? "

With an inward prayer that her words might reach the poor wayward heart of her listener, the good religious told simply and briefly the beautiful story of our dear Lord's apparitions to the Virgin Saint of Paray-le-Monial, His commands in relation to the first Friday of each month and the observance of the Friday after the octave of Corpus Christi as the annual feast of His Sacred Heart. Then she told of the many gracious promises attached by the Divine Master to the public and private practice of devotion to that Heart of His which, as He touchingly said, " has so loved men."

V.

The young man lay silent for a while, and the Sister, unwilling to disturb the course of his reflections, moved about among the other patients, smoothing a pillow here, administering some medicine or a cooling drink there, and everywhere speaking words of comfort and encouragement.

At last she came back to the young Frenchman's bed and found him anxiously awaiting her return.

"Sister," he exclaimed as she came within hearing. "Do you think Father C— will come here this evening?"

"I do not know, monsieur; but if you wish to see him he will come. Why do you ask?"

"I want to go to confession, Sister. Do not laugh, now!" mistaking the arch smile he saw on the calm sweet face,—"I tell you I'm in earnest. I *must* go to confession. I want to be good again. Do you think I might be ready to receive communion to-morrow morning?"

"That depends a great deal on your dispositions: How long is it since your last confession?"

"Twenty-five years, sister! I see you are shocked, but I must say the truth. For twenty-five years I have not been to confession."

"I am not at all shocked, my poor friend!" replied the Sister calmly. "I have heard such things before in this very ward. I am glad and thankful that you see your error now and wish to repair it. I will ask the chaplain to come and hear your confession. To morrow morning before mass he will visit you again and have you finish your confession. Now I will leave you to examine your conscience and excite yourself to contrition. You have not forgotten how to prepare for the Sacrament of Penance?"

"Oh no, no, Sister! I was too well instructed in my early days not to remember that. Indeed it was not from ignorance I fell into sin and remained in it. It was all along from bad company and bad reading."

"Well, now, you must keep very quiet and pray very hard that you may know and be sorry for your sins. The priest will come bye and bye. The Sacred Heart has done much for you already. It will do more, so hope and pray!"

VI.

An hour later and Lambert had made his confession of five and twenty years. The Divine Heart of Jesus had softened that hardened heart and poured into it the abundant grace of true contrition. So full, so complete, so sincere was the confession of that true penitent, that the chaplain, amazed and overjoyed, declared it to the religious a miracle of grace reaching over the entire life and into every recess of the heart.

"A second confession will be hardly necessary," he said, "this one has been so good in every respect. But the poor young man is so anxious to purify his soul from every stain of sin before receiving Holy Communion that I will hear him again to-morrow morning before mass. You see, my dear Sister," he added with a pleasant smile: "the Sacred Heart never does things by halves."

Yes, the prodigal had returned to his Father's house. The heavenly Banquet was prepared for him and the mystic ring of reconciliation was placed on his finger.

Next morning while the early sunshine illumined his bed and rested like a halo on the wall above his head, Lambert received the Bread of Life, with the tranquil joy of the wanderer restored to home and kindred after long and weary years of absence.

His one trouble was that his mother was not there to witness his happiness,—his first and most earnest request that the glad tidings might be conveyed to her with as little delay as possible.

As a sequel to this true story of quite recent occurrence, it will interest the reader to know that our young

Frenchman still lives, his health somewhat improved, though his ultimate recovery is hardly to be expected. Although the Sacred Heart may heal the body as well as the soul of His faithful client. Who knows?

"THAT WORTHLESS LAD."

ANNA T. SADLIER.

THAT he was a worthless lad was the usual verdict upon Harry O'Connor. He had left school early, because he had never done any thing there. He could rarely be got to say a lesson, he was invariably late for the opening exercises, he was the cause of much disorder in the class, and he never got a prize, except for baseball. It was finally intimated to his mother, who was a widow, that she was wasting her hard-earned money in keeping him at school. After that, things went, so to say, from bad to worse. Not that Harry actually did anything very bad, but there was a general impression that he was wild, unstable, untrustworthy,; at all events, it was very evident that he was careless about his dress, and averse to anything like steady work; altogether, his mother found it very hard to get him employment. What he did earn usually came in the form of small coin for doing errands, or holding horses, or selling newspapers.

People always took him at his worst. Hence his usual demeanor was one of sturdy defiance, with a touch, perhaps, of insolence. But, in the recess of his own heart, poor Harry often reflected bitterly upon his own evil tendencies, and upon his utter inability to succeed at anything.

"I'm a duffer at everything," he once said to an intimate friend, "I'm no good to anybody." His friend did not correct his grammar, nor could he contradict the statement, but pleasantly persuaded by a generous sense of his own superiority, he gave Harry a new peg-top as a species of consolation.

Friends of his mother often condoled with her that all the advantages she had given her son were wasted. What was the good of all his education and the years he had spent at school? The widow groaned in spirit over the truth of these allegations, but she only said aloud:

"Who knows? The good of it may be seen some of these days, and any how I did my best."

In his own rough way Harry was always kind to his mother, though he did not usually get credit for it. He helped her with all sorts of odd jobs about the house, and he never answered her reproaches by even so much as a word.

"She's right," he would say in himself in the solitude of his own room. "I'm a burden to her. I let her pay for my education, and I'm letting her toil and slave yet to keep me."

The fruit of such resolution was that he usually went down town next morning, and made a vigorous but generally unsuccessful effort to get something to do. Even if he did succeed, his evil genius or spirit of mischief and a love of idling caused him in most cases to be dismissed within the week.

Once he had gone off with a number of his companions for a day's berry-picking in the country. He came back at evening with little to show but torn clothes and soiled hands. The berries which were to have been a profit-

able speculation were not forthcoming. No doubt it was an aggravation to the feelings of his sorely-tried and hard-working mother, when he offered her, very humbly and sheepishly, a little bunch of fragrant hawthorn blossoms.

"I thought may be you'd like them," he observed.

"Get out of my sight for an idle vagabond," was the mother's only response, as she seized the flowers and threw them out of the window.

It was a natural impulse, perhaps, under the circumstances, but it was a matter of regret to her afterwards. Harry slunk away to his room, more ashamed of the better instinct which had led him to bring home the flowers than of his day of idleness.

Harry went to Church on Sunday, and occasionally he approached the Sacraments. He tried hard after his own fashion, and generally did pretty well for a time after each of these occasions. It probably made it harder for him, that he was very likely to hear such remarks as the following :

"Much good it does you to go to Church or to the Sacraments. If you'd try to earn a little money for your mother it would be better."

This made Harry shy of approaching the altar frequently, or yet of making known to any one his little bit of devotion. At school he had joined the League of the Sacred Heart, and, unknown to any one, he always wore the badge. His was such a life of constant failure that he had a feeling that he would rather hide this emblem of devotion, that he would not like to put himself forward as an associate of the Apostleship. But he often took out his badge and looked at it, and after his uncouth

fashion he said a prayer that he might be able to do better and to help his mother.

As the Spring came on he heard his mother deplore to her friends her utter inability to meet a certain debt, which, though small, was totally beyond her means. After overhearing one of these conversations he went out and made a great effort. He seemed in demand for errands and he sold a lot of papers, and he sawed a cord of wood. He went home at night and put the money away in a drawer. Next day, he went out again, and though he met with less success, still he made something, and he resisted innumerable temptations in the shape of a base-ball match, of marbles, tops, candy or soda water, saving both money and time with heroic resolve.

This went on for a week or ten days, and the little pile in the drawer was growing, as his mother's complaints were also increasing, and he heard one of her friends say one day.

"And to think of that worthless fellow, that son of yours, after all you've done for him, idling away his time." The mother only sighed and nodded her head, as if in agreement with the sentiment.

Harry went out after that, feeling unusually despondent, but eager to add a trifle if he could to the pile in the drawer. As he got to the corner of the street, he turned and looked back at the little house, so poor, but so clean, and bearing such a stamp of decency despite its shabbiness. Into his mind came a throng of recollections, crowding upon him, he knew not, however, why. He remembered the day when he had come out, holding his mother's hand, a little baby-boy, clad in a sombre black dress, to go to his father's funeral, and another day, a bright, sunshiny one it was, when his mother had first

brought him to the Brother's school. He was fifteen now, and how little he had accomplished. The figure of his mother came before him, bent with hard toil, the face deeply lined and furrowed, the hair silver grey. With a sudden rush of pity and tenderness, for which no living person would have given that rough lad credit, Harry hurried on his way, determining once more to eschew idleness forever, and to win rest and comfort for his mother.

He went in the direction of the hotel. Perhaps he might get some odd job over there. As he was within a few blocks of it, he noticed an unusual stir amongst the passers by, and presently an alarm of fire and the whirling past of reels and hooks and ladders. Harry followed the crowd, resolving, however, not to linger too long, nor permit the fascination of the fire to interfere with his good intentions.

Growing excited, however, he stood by a while, and watched the flames wrapping themselves around the doomed building, bursting through windows and doors, through roof and chimney. Firemen were darting in and out, ladders were being put up and taken down again. The throng around the spot were swaying and quivering with excitement, now shouting, now watching dumbly in suspense. Suddenly there was an agonizing cry, awful in its intensity of grief. It came from a woman who was struggling with several firemen. Her child was in the burning building and they would not let her go to him.

"A light weight might go up that ladder," said one fireman to another, "but I'm blessed if any grown man could do it. Why, it's charred and almost burned through in the middle."

"Is there no other way to save the child"? asked the other.

"None, it would be madness to risk it."

The speakers stood near Harry. He drew in his breath hard. That mother's cry had appealed to something in him, which his years of failure had not been able to eradicate.

"I'm such a duffer," he said to himself. "I ain't no good to nobody. If I could get that child out it wouldn't matter much if I did get knocked over. And p'rhaps they'd give mother something."

He grasped his badge of the Sacred Heart, and he made a swift act of contrition, with a simple prayer for help and courage. He had been to Communion only the day before. He paused a moment. It was hard, the sky was blue and the air sweet and fragrant, and the birds were singing. How often all these things had lured him away from duty. Another instant and he was on the ladder.

"That room is not on fire yet," he shouted, "I'll bring out the child if it can be done."

Cries of "brave lad," "noble boy!" "hold him back," "it's certain death," rang in his ears, but he held steadily on his course. What mattered—a useless life like his? It was the first time any act of his had been met by the applause of his fellows, but he was insensible to it now. He had but one purpose in view—to save the child; and, whether he lived or died himself, to gain perhaps some pecuniary means for his mother.

The smoke almost blinded him, flames scorched his face and hair, till at last he leaped in at a window to a room, which the fire had hitherto spared,—the room where a child lay sleeping. There was a dead pause

without, and within Harry could hear the raging, roaring flames hissing and crackling in the corridors. Harry seized the child, and at a bound reached the window. Slowly, carefully, he began to descend; when, about half way down, a dozen of willing hands reached for the child. Harry fairly threw it into the stalwart arms of a fireman. He heard the mother's shrick of joy just as he came to the rotten part of the ladder of which the firemen had spoken.

He heard, too, a deafening cheer, the recognition of his heroism. It was followed instantaneously by a death-like silence. The ladder had given way, and, as it fell with Harry, a stone overhead became detached. It crushed in the youthful hero's chest. He lived but a few seconds, having scarce time to bid them tell his mother of the little pile of money in the drawer which he had saved for her. "But I'm such a duffer, I didn't get enough."

He grasped his badge of the Sacred Heart, and his dying eyes sought it eagerly as he ended, thus gloriously his "worthless life."

Before the judgment seat, where he had to appear, perhaps his failures counted for less than his efforts. By his death, moreover, he accomplished, what he had been unable to do in life. His mother was placed, forever, beyond the reach of want by a comfortable yearly allowance from the lady whose child had been saved from so terrible a death by that "worthless lad."

THE STORY OF MARY MARSON.

ANNA T. SADLIER.

A gray November morning, the trees rising skeleton like towards a leaden-colored sky, a moaning wind that spoke of coming storm, streets strewn with the last remnant of the fallen leaves. This autumnal dreariness had its full effect upon Mary Marson. She was a stranger in this city, where once, so many years ago, her mother had lived before her marriage. Having struggled back thus to what had been her girlhood's home, and having been disappointed in finding old friends dead or absent or estranged, the mother had died, and Mary Marson was left alone. She had actually no means of livelihood. She had paid that morning her fortnight's board, being well aware that it was the last payment she should be able to make. She had, in fact, but a dollar in the world. All means of obtaining employment had been so far unsuccessful.

As she passed disconsolately down the principal street of the city, jostled by the hurrying crowds of men and women, confused by the endless traffic, by the never-ceasing din and confusion, Mary Marson suddenly caught sight of the great stone church of Our Lady, its towers reaching heavenward. A sudden inspiration seized upon her. She had always had a particular devotion to the Holy Souls. This was their month. She would give a portion of her last dollar to have a Mass

or two said for them, and she would ask their help. So many had found it efficacious even in temporal matters, why should not she ? *

About a week later, Mary Marson, grown paler each day with anxiety for the future as well as for present needs, came out of church on the morning of the first Friday. She had just offered up a fervent Communion for the holy souls, though thinking sadly that her little sacrifice in their behalf had so far failed to bring her help. Almost outside the church she caught sight of a tall, fair young man, clad in mourning. Though his appearance was most striking, Mary Marson would have passed on without a second glance, but he stepped forward, saying, as she thought, somewhat abruptly :

" You are in search, are you not, of some position ? "

Involuntarily she answered " Yes, " though much startled at being addressed by a stranger.

" Go, then, without delay to this address," he said, mentioning a street and number ; " a lady desires a companion. Show her your reference, she will engage you."

So dazed was Mary Marson by the whole affair, that she asked no question, allowing the stranger to depart, as he instantly did. At first, she was undecided as to whether or no she should act upon the information so singularly given. Something within her seemed to urge her to proceed without delay to the given address. In less than an hour, she was sitting, nervous and uncomfortable, in the luxurious drawing-room of a fine house on one of the best streets. She dreaded the meeting with the unknown lady, to whom she was about to make her application. How should she explain her

* The main incidents of this story are true.

presence, or why she had presumed that a companion was required?

The door opened, and a tall, slender woman, evidently past the allotted threescore and ten, entered the room. Her face, delicately featured and pale, framed with snowy masses of hair, seemed unaccountably familiar. Where had Mary Marson seen her before?

In a few words the young girl made known her desire for a situation as companion, whom she believed the old lady was seeking.

"I am at a loss to know why you should have come," said the old lady, thoughtfully, at the same time looking fixedly at her. "I have, indeed, made up my mind to secure a companion, should I find a desirable one, but I have not put an advertisement in the papers, nor have I made known my intention to my friends."

Mary Marson blushed and hesitated. Her presence seemed like an intrusion.

"I was sent here by a gentleman," she said, "whom I accidentally met at the church door. No doubt, he had observed me at church, and had learned of my need of a situation from the Fathers, but he distinctly told me to come here, and that if my references were satisfactory you would engage me, I thought," continued the young girl, after a pause, "that he might be your son, he was tall and fair and——."

For instantaneously, it had occurred to her that the familiar look of this lady's face was due to her likeness to Mary's mysterious informant.

"You are mistaken," said the old lady: "I have no son." Was the coldness of her tone real, or was it assumed to hide some deep emotion? Presently she continued: "Probably this gentleman was deceived as

to the address. But in spite of the singular coincidence, I cannot permit your annonymous informant to decide upon the suitability of a companion for me."

Mary's heart sank, as was clearly shown in her expressive face. The old lady continued more kindly :

"However, I will confess that I am very much tempted to judge by appearances in the present case, and to avail myself of what may be a most fortunate coincidence."

"I can show you my references," said Mary brightening up, "and you can, if you wish, call upon friends of my late mother, to satisfy you as to my antecedents."

As a mere matter of prudence, the lady looked into Mary's credentials, for from the first she had felt so strong an inclination to engage her upon the spot, that it seemed to herself marvellous.

"You will have a good home with me," she said; "light work, much free time to yourself, the opportunity of travel if my health keeps good, and a fair salary."

The sum which she mentioned seemed a fortune to poor Mary. She was silent for very joy and wonder, the old lady looking on, and, as she said long afterwards, feeling as if it would have been a real grief to her had Mary at that moment refused the situation. Some of the names which you have given me here," she said, referring to Mary's list, "are personal friends of my own. You can hear of me from them, and can be prepared to come to me in a day or two, that is if my terms suit you."

"They are too generous, too liberal," answered Mary.

"Then all is arranged, once you have seen your friends and consulted with them."

The friends, who had been disposed to receive Mary coldly when there was question of substantial aid, were only too glad to help her in securing a situation, which, they assured her, was better than anything she could have hoped for. The old lady, who occupied a leading position in the city, was rich, childless, a devout Catholic and of a kindly disposition.

II.

From the first, Mary Marson became, as it were, the daughter of the house. A close bond of sympathy seemed to unite her with her employer, so that the girl had almost a unique experience in that usually trying position of paid companion. From the first she had perceived that a heavy sorrow had shadowed her benefactress' life. A thousand circumstances, trifling in themselves, brought her to this conclusion. But through natural reticence, exaggerated by years of loneliness, the old lady at first made no allusion to her troubles.

It was the last evening of November, and as the two sat together, their talk had been of the special devotion of the month,—the departed souls. They had talked long and earnestly on the means of helping the poor souls, of the merit to be gained in doing so, and Mary Marson had told her benefactress of her constant devotion to them and her faith in their grateful intercession. "To them I am confident that I owe my present happiness," said Mary, looking gratefully at her employer, for whom she already felt so sincere an affection.

"Perhaps, who knows?" said the old lady, thoughtfully. She sat in a high-backed arm-chair, close to the fire, so that its light fell from her lace cap to her plain

gown of black silk, and brought into relief once more her finely cut features. To Mary's mind came again the remembrance of the stranger who had sent her thither, and of his wonderful resemblance to this woman. But she made no comment. Their talk drifted on to those of speculations into which people from time to time are carried, concerning the conditions of the after-life, and as to whether or no the souls in purgatory can have knowledge of what is done on earth.

When the old lady had gone upstairs, Mary remained below a few moments, to be sure that the house was properly secured. On going up, she saw a bright light in a room at the end of the hall, which she had always believed to be unoccupied, and which was usually locked. Surprised at the circumstance, she stood irresolute, uncertain whether to inquire into this unusual occurrence, or to pass on. Suddenly the door opened, and her employer stood upon the threshold. "Mary," she said, "come here ; there is something I want to tell you, much that I want to show you." Mary went forward. She entered that luxuriously appointed room and looked about her indifferently enough, till all at once her eyes fell upon a portrait over the mantel piece. Turning pale, she asked hurriedly:

"Who is that ? "

"That," said the old lady, the tears rolling down her cheeks, "is he of whom I brought you here to speak, —my only son."

Deeply moved by the overwhelming grief of her tone, Mary said hastily, "Then he is alive ; you are not childless after all."

"He died five years ago. It was upon his anniversary you came to me."

"But it was he who sent me," cried Mary, much agitated; "I recognized him at once; I should know him anywhere."

They both stood silent a moment. Then, as by a common impulse, both fell upon their knees.

Thenceforth, Mary Marson put aside a portion of her salary—rather allowance, because she had become the formally adopted daughter of her wealthy benefactress—for the relief of the souls in purgatory.

THE MESSAGE OF THE CHRISTMAS BELLS.

ANNA T. SADLIER.

THE wind swept moaning over the wintry landscape, moaning over distant hills, moaning in the trees as they crakled in their icy armor. Henry Moore stood at the window of his library looking out. He saw the snow-covered earth glistening under a frosty moon. He saw the hoar-frost mantling the bare trees with fairy like ornamentation. He saw the stars shine with the intense brilliancy of a Canadian winter's night, and the line where the ice-bound river joined the horizon, vaguely, indefinitely, seeming to melt into a measureless distance. But his fancy baffling time and space had gone far beyond. In that land across the ocean, in the green island of his birth, he was a boy again. In his father's farmhouse, the great kitchen was aglow with light and warmth, and the added warmth that comes from merry hearts and true. For it was Christmas eve. His father, his mother, smiling, his sisters, brothers—hark ! that is the bell, calling them to chapel, to the humble structure with its thatched roof and mud walls. Yes, surely, a bell is tolling ! He leans forward, draws back, and smiles at his brief forgetfulness. The bell that rings is that of the great church in the square, calling the worshippers to Midnight Mass.

The Irish home has vanished, — faethr, mother, brothers, sisters, all are gone. There are many mounds

in the village churchyard where the Irish earth rests lightly on forms once familiar and the simple crosses record their well-known names Dead? All? No, there is one alive—a brother.

A frown darkens Henry Moore's brow. He has vowed never again to speak to his brother Michael. There had been business trouble between them, Michael had cut adrift, after many hot words had been spoken, and to crown it all had deliberately acted against his brother's advice, by marrying to please himself. Marrying whom? A young Irish girl, an emigrant, utterly portionless, and quite unsuited, as Henry believed, to the new position which the brothers had made for themselves here in this Western world.

As he reached this stage of his reflections, Henry Moore involuntarily glanced around the luxuriously appointed room in which he sat, and as he looked, he sighed. What was it that struck an icy chill to his heart? He shivered, and ringing, ordered a better fire. He paced the room, and heard as in a dream the Christmas bells growing louder, fairly deafening in their clangor. What was it the poet made them say, "Peace and good-will, good-will and peace." Voices from without reached him dimly. "Merry Christmas," they said; "merry, merry Christmas, and many of them."

"What mockery it was," thought Henry Moore, bitterly, this wishing of merry Christmas to men and women, into whose inmost hearts the canker of care, or sorrow, or disappointment, or loneliness was eating daily and hourly. And yet—it had not been a mockery long ago. Those Irish hearts had been warm and true. Their joy had been genuine as their love, and faith, and hope. They had looked upon the merry Christmases of earth

as foretastes of joy to come, in the New City, in the great Hereafter. The world recked so little of all this, and it was so far removed from the question of success in life!" Just then, Henry Moore felt that he would give his success in life and all that it had entailed for one look of love from kindred eyes or one warm pressure of the hand.

And Michael, oh! if he had not been so head-strong! If those twenty years of estrangement were but a dream! And that they two, the only ones of their name and race, could meet as of old. Michael had drifted away to the Northwest. He had written once, asking that bygones be bygones, and saying that he needed nothing, and only wished that the old kind feeling might exist between them again. Henry had hardened his heart, and had sent back the letter. Then there was silence. Into that silence had come the shadow of death for Henry. His wife and his only son had been taken. He was a lonely and heart-stricken man. A week ago he had learned that Michael had come back into the city, and was living with his family in obscurity, if not in poverty.

If the bells would only cease with their monotone of peace and good-will, good-will and peace. Surely that was no idle fancy of the poet. It was the message conveyed by these blessed bells. His mother used to tell him they were blessed. Over the lonely watcher's soul was pouring a tide of softened feeling. Yes, they were right, those older friends. Christmas was more than a season for eating and drinking, and giving presents, and sitting a space in a comfortable pew at church. His fashionable Protestant wife had done that for years, and he had drifted with her. He had stumbled past the great spiritual landmark of the year, Christmas, unaware

of its significance. All the beautiful symbolism of the Feast had been lost upon him, as well as the mighty fact which it recorded. It had brought him no awakening of the soul. It had never roused him from his dream of money-getting. Christ had died, and had taught that poverty is blest. He had forgotten both, and had worshipped riches.

Clearly he saw now, as in a vision, his brother Michael, a little boy with rose-red cheeks, bright eyes and raven hair, pressing close to him, upon that Christmas eve, his last in Ireland, and offering his hand to "bring him to church." He could almost feel the warm, soft touch of his fingers, upon which his own had closed so lovingly. Oh, if this Christmas night would only wear away, if the dawn would only whiten that snowy landscape. He would seek his brother, and seeking him, find also the meaning of the Feast.

"Michael, little lad," he murmured, "I will find you to-morrow, and you shall bring me as of old to the altar of God."

***

An humble home in a narrow street, shabby and time-stained without, scantily furnished within. A fire burned in the grate of the little sitting room, an unusual luxury to celebrate a great occasion. Around it were grouped a father and mother and five children, boys and girls, all touched by the red glow from the hearth and the brilliant sunlight of the Christmas morning. Another sunshine was upon them, that of cheerful hearts, to whom had come the old, old message of peace upon earth through glory to God. The father, a prematurely

aged man, bore many marks about him of care and sorrow, which were reflected all too faithfully in the once handsome face of his wife. But as her hand rested upon his shoulder, and as they smiled one at the other, pleased at the joy of the children, there was in the bearing of both the assurance that the battle of life had been bravely fought, strong in their mutual support and strong in a Higher Trust. The children were busy emptying the stockings which they had hung the previous night, and which had been so scantily filled, as husband and wife had acknowledged to each other with a pang. But to those little ones, the horns of colored paper, deftly arranged by their mother's hands, and the gilded nuts, and the trivial toys, were things of beauty, even if the joy of them were short-lived. The father and mother knew how much anxious thought it had cost them to provide this semblance of a Christmas.

"I have nothing for you, Michael dear," said the wife softly to her husband; "it's the first Christmas I'm without anything at all to give you. But I couldn't manage it. I knew you'd rather the little ones had it."

"And so I would, Mary," said her husband, adding sadly: "but it hurts me that I couldn't bring you home any trifle at all, you that's slaving for us day and night."

"I'll be angry with you, Michael, if you say any more," said his wife, quickly. "And, after all, if our poverty is hard to bear, there's many worse off, and it brings us nearer to the Crib of Bethleem. I was thinking that same to-night, when I brought the children over to adore the Infant Saviour."

"True, Mary; you are always in the right, dear! Poverty has the blessing of God with it, and anyway we mustn't let anything spoil the brightness of this day.

But there's one thought uppermost in my mind that I can't drive out of it, do what I will."

"And I can guess what it is without your telling me. It's Henry."

"Just that, Mary. When I think how fond and proud I used to be of my big brother, and how long ago in Ireland. when we were both boys, I used to walk beside him and believe that I was bringing him to church. And he was good and kind to me; and perhaps it was more my fault than his that we differed. Looking back now, I might have been more patient. And it frets me the more that I'm afraid he's given up his religion."

"God pity him if he's done that," said Mary; "it would be a hard world without it. But I'll tell you a secret, Michael. Since I joined the League of the Sacred Heart over at the church. I got a little card, and on it was marked the Promises made by Our Lord Himself, and one of them is about reconciling those at variance."

"Well?" said Michael, anxiously.

"Well, I set to work and I prayed for that intention, and with it that your brother might have the grace of coming back to the practice of his duty, and I got the children to join with me in a novena, and it ended with the Communion of the Midnight Mass."

"Why in the world didn't you ask me to join in it?" said Michael somewhat aggrieved.

"Well, I was in hope we'd get the favor and have it for a surprise for you on Christmas. And you know I did ask you to join us in praying for an intention, and to offer your christmas Communion for it."

"I remember, but God knows best, and I suppose He isn't going to grant it just yet, at any rate."

" Michael," said a voice, close beside him.

And as Michael turned, Henry saw, with fast falling tears, the face of the little lad, deeply furrowed now and framed with silver hair. The hand he grasped, once soft and warm, was hard with toil.

" You will bring me to church as of old, Michael ? "

" With God's help, Henry, I will."

" Blessed be God, who has reconciled those at variance, according to His holy promise," murmured Michael's wife, while over the frosty landscape without rang the bells of Christmas morning, calling the worshippers to High Mass, and repeating the self-same message, " Peace and good-will, good-will and peace."

AUNT ISABEL'S NEW YEAR'S GIFT.

MRS. JAMES SADLIER.

CHRISTMAS had come and gone. A right Merry Christmas it had been in the home of the Morrison family away off on the northern shore of Lake Champlain. The great feast had brought, with its Christian joys, its extra good cheer, its household gatherings from far and near, and its general atmosphere of kindly and genial contentment. The presents had been exchanged as usual, to the entire satisfaction of all. Not as in the by-gone years, indeed, for now the mother was a widow, and her children—three daughters and one son—were all grown up people who had already left their childhood behind them with all its dear delusions. Santa Claus had long deserted the farm-house by the lake, and alas! the stockings were no longer hung in the chimney for the tiny feet that filled them then in the swiftly passing days of happy chilhood were now those of men and women plodding on more wearily on the road of life. Yet none the less the tokens of affection exchanged all round were fully appreciated, and tranquil happiness reigned supreme, notwithstanding the saddening memories which that joyous season ever brings of loved ones vanished from the home circle as the slow years drag along.

New Year's eve came round, and there was again a stir of pleasurable excitement in the Morrison household.

A package had just arrived by express from Plattsburg, and it was known to contain the presents from Aunt Isabel, the French Canadian wife of Mrs. Morrison's favorite brother, long since dead. Aunt Isabel's gifts were always sent at New Year's instead of Christmas, and they made as it were, a second Christmas for the family.

Much curiosity was expressed as to what Aunt Isabel had sent for each, but the presents were only to be distributed after mass on New Year's Day. So each one was fain to wait with as much patience as might be under the circumstances.

In the ruddy fire-light from the open chimney the little family sat late, waiting to see the New Year in. And while waiting, they talked over the many, many changes the years had brought in their own circle, and the days gone for ever were recalled with tender recollection while the year's last hours and moments passed lingeringly away.

At the first stroke of twelve, whea the bell of the neighboring church, their own parish church, rang *out* the old year and *in* the new, the mother and the children wished each other a happy new year, and, somewhat sobered, as most people are, by the solemn influence of that hour when the two years meet and one vanishes into eternity, they slowly sought their several places of rest, each one burdened with the consciousnesst that another stage of life was entered upon since they gathered round the home-fire in the early evening hours.

II.

The first morning of the New Year was clear and cold and bright, with the peculiar sparkle of the mid-winter sun. The Morrisons had all assisted at an early mass at which each had partaken of the Bread of Life, with the one exception of Robert, the son, who was by no means pious, although in the main a good sort of young man, as the world goes. His mother and sisters had vainly urged him to go to confession on the previous day so as to receive Holy Communion with them on the first day of the year.

"I went at Christmas," said Robert, "to please you all, and I think that's enough. You can't expect a fellow to make a muff of himself and go as often as you women folks."

"Well! but Robert," said his mother very gently as they took their seats at the well-spread breakfast table, "don't you think it is the proper thing to receive Our Lord in Holy Communion on New Year's Day, before any material food enters one's mouth?"

"May be it is, mother," was the young man's half sullen reply; "but, I tell you, I dont want to be seen so often going up to the altar rails. If I go at Christmas and Easter, I think I'm doing very well."

The mother sighed, but said no more on the subject, and the morning meal proceeded gaily enough. At its close, while the maid-of-all-work cleared the table, the family adjourned to the sitting-room, and Aunt Isabel's package was eagerly opened.

Presents for everyone admirably suited to the taste and the requirements of each. Mrs. Morrison and her

daughters had, they declared, just what they wanted. Aunt Isabel had succeeded to a marvel in the somewhat difficult task of pleasing everybody. But as each gift was joyously exhibited, Robert's face began to fall; there seemed to be nothing for him. Even Jenny, the servant, had a nice little present. Robert alone was forgotten.

"Why, good gracious, how is this?" cried Lizzie, the eldest girl; "there isn't a thing for Robert. Surely Aunt Isabel sent him something!"

"It appears not," said Robert drily and somewhat bitterly.

"Yes, yes! here it is!" and Mary, the youngest sister, who had been excitedly rummaging among the papers that had wrapped the different articles, held up an envelope marked with Robert's name. This she eagerly placed in his hand, saying, "I knew auntie wouldn't forget dear old Bob!"

III.

All eyes were fixed on the mysterious envelope in Robert's hand, but as he felt it over and turned it round and round he seemed in no hurry to open it.

"I guess it's not much of a present," he at last said.

"But why don't you open it?" cried one and another. "Let us see it, whatever it is!"

"There it is, then!" said Robert with a flushed face and an angry light in his eyes, as he drew forth, first a Badge of the Sacred Heart with its noble legend *Thy Kingdom Come*, next a Rosary ticket — the First Joyful Mystery; and, lastly, an admission ticket of the League!

Everyone was surprised. Even the mother and sisters, fervent associates of the Holy League as they were themselves, were more than a little disappointed. As for Robert, he quietly replaced the contents of the envelope without examining further, saying with a somewhat scornful smile, "What do you think of *my* New Year's gift?"

The girls were dumb with amazement.

"Well! I declare I can't understand it;" said their mother a little confusedly. "But is there nothing else in the envelope? No letter?"

"Yes, I believe there is," said Robert carelessly, as he took from the envelope another folded paper—"What have we here? Read it, some of you girls! — any one that likes may, for me." He was turning to leave the room, but his mother begged of him to wait and hear what his aunt said in the letter. So the young man stood still while one of his sisters read the letter as follows:

"My very dear nephew.

"Being, as you well know, a Promoter of the Holy League, and having on my circle your good mother and sisters, all your family except yourself, I cannot rest until you, too, become an Associate, because of the great advantage it will be to you in every possible way. As you have till now always refused to join the League, I feel inspired to make one more effort on your behalf; so I send you, as a New Year's gift, the Badge, Rosary ticket and the Ticket of Admission, hoping that you will do me this so great favor of becoming a member, and an active member, of our dear League at the beginning of this New Year. I send you no other gift at this time, because I could give you none half so good for you,

exposed as you are to many and great temptations in your way of life. If you comply now with my wishes, I may at next New Year's send you something different. So commending you to the Sacred Heart, I will now place you on my list of Associates.

"Accept my best wishes and my fervent prayers for a very happy New Year, for you and all our dear ones, and believe me, my dear Robert, your loving aunt,

"ISABEL DALTON."

The mother and sisters looked at each other, but said nothing, waiting anxiously to see the effect on Robert. They had not to wait long, for his vexation quickly found vent in words:

"The old fool!" he said in a voice of concentrated anger. "I'll soon let her see she can't badger me into doing what I don't want to do. I'll send her back her *present*"—with a disdainful emphasis on the word—"and I'll tell her at the same time to mind her own business as far as I'm concerned."

"You'll do nothing of the kind, Robert!" exclaimed his eldest sister, his chief friend and general adviser,—"You'll just keep what auntie sends you, join the League as she asks you to do, and write to thank her for the kind interest she takes in your welfare. That's my advice to you!"

"Do, my dear son!" his mother added; "do this to please us here as well as your aunt, and I promise you, you won't be sorry!"

"Well! well!" grumbled Robert, "I suppose I may as well give in when five women are *leagued* against me," with a mocking accent on the word. "If this League business does me no good, I guess it can't do

me much harm But I warn you all that I have no faith in that sort of thing. Anyhow, I needn't tell the other fellows, you know ! "

" Of course not,—if you don't like," assented Lizzie, with a slight smile and a meaning glance at the others. And so the matter ended.

IV

It was quite true what his aunt had said, that Robert's position exposed him to dangers of various kinds. He was employed as clerk in a large factory some two miles from his home, and went in the railroad cars of the Grand Trunk every morning to his office, returning by the same conveyance in the evening, having his mid-day meal in a restaurant near the factory much frequented by the railroad men and such factory " hands " as could afford to patronize it. It need hardly be said that of the numerous men, young and old, amongst whom young Morrison was thrown every working day—and, too often, even on Sunday as well,—there was little to spare on the score of strict morality, still less of religion. They were, for the most part, scoffers at religion and all its practices, even the so-called Catholics among them. Scarcely any of them were actually wicked or depraved, but still there were, unhappily, a few who came under that category, and these were, as generally happens, the most masterful of the tribe, and held the others in a sort of slavish subjection by force of covert sneers and open ridicule.

It so happened, therefore, that Morrison and his co-religionists were peculiarly obnoxious to these swagger-

ing, reckless men who took every occasion of parading their irreligion and unbelief.

Happily for Robert, there was one young Irishman, an overseer in the factory, whom he knew to be a practical Catholic, and to him he confided, a few days after, the queer New Year's gift his aunt had sent him, and his own disappointment in consequence, adding that he really did expect some little money from the old woman, "just to help a fellow over the holidays."

To Robert's surprise, Pierce Sullivan was quite of a contrary opinion, and told him he ought to be thankful to his aunt instead of finding fault with her.

"Why, how do you make that out?"

"Well! I'll just tell you. Any money you might have got would soon slip through your fingers, and perhaps do you more harm than good. But as for what your aunt did send you, it's altogether different. I've heard so much about that same League in the town below, where, I often go to Mass on Sunday mornings on account of hearing an English sermon,—that I had been thinking of joining it myself, only I felt a little timid on account of no one about here belonging to it. So now, Bob, if you'll take it up right off, I'll get enrolled and put in a Circle next Sunday morning."

Encouraged by this assurance—for Sullivan was a fine manly young fellow, well educated and of first-rate standing in the factory—Robert took him at his word and told him to go ahead. "And mind you, Pierce," he added, "although my folks at home all belong to the League. I'll go with *you* to the meetings and the monthly communions instead of with them."

"All right, old fellow!" was Sullivan's cheery reply;

" we'll set the ball rolling, and who knows how many of our men will join in before the new year is old?"

When Morrison went home and told his mother and sisters what had passed between him and Sullivan, their hearts were filled with joy, which they did not express, however, in its fullest extent. That very day they wrote to Aunt Isabel, telling her the good news. When her answer came by return of mail, it was simply—" A good beginning makes, as a rule, a good ending. Let us hope and pray, and, above all, persevere. I have great hopes of Robert."

So the two young men joined the League, and Mrs. Morrison, as it happened, having one more vacancy in her circle, Pierce Sullivan became one of her Associates, a fact which gave Robert the strength and encouragement he so sadly needed in the new path on which he had entered so hesitatingly and, truth to tell, somewhat reluctantly. For some little time the two friends had a certain amount of annoyance to undergo from their companions in the factory, in the shape of ridicule and sarcasm from the non-catholics, and contemptuous remarks from certain nominal Catholics on "fellows setting up for saints," "making old women of themselves," and such like absurdities. But as time passed on, and Sullivan and Morrison went quietly on their way, discharging faithfully the duties of their respective employments, making friends more and more every day, and, above all, practising the obligations of their religion with strict regularity, —laughing good-naturedly at the jokes made at their expense,— things around them began to change perceptibly. Even the Protestants and no-religionists were forced to respect their convictions and admire their steady perseverance and manly independence. As for the Catholic work-

men, the good leaven was soon seen working amongst them, and many of them acknowledged that, after all, Sullivan and Morrison were right, and taking courage from their example, gradually began to do as they did, entering steadily on the path of right and duty, so long neglected.

V.

It must not be supposed that Robert Morrison fell into line as a Leaguer all at once, or without a struggle. On the contrary, it required the full force of Sullivan's wise counsels and the benign influence of his example, aided by the prayers and gentle admonitions of his mother and sisters, to keep him up to the mark, as he said himself.

"It's confounded hard, Pierce," he once remarked to his friend, "for a fellow like me, you know, that never went in for that sort of thing before. You see, it's different with you that don't care a straw for what any one says, and knows just how to shut the fellows up when they go too far with their humbugging. But as for me, I can't do it for the life of me."

"Yet you are getting on famously, Bob! for all that," replied his friend. "It was only yesterday I heard you taking up Bill Somers mighty sharp when he began to quiz you about confession. I don't think he'll try it again; and I tell you I was proud of you, you answered him so well. You have only to keep on as you are doing, and by next New Year's, even your Aunt Isabel will have no reason to complain of her new Associate!"

Encouraged in this way by Sullivan's advice and example and—as the months crept on—by the moral

support of others of their young fellow-workmen who were joining the League in ever-increasing numbers, Robert persevered steadily and bravely in his new career, and before the year was out, both he and Sullivan were Promoters themselves, each having formed a circle amongst their comrades in the factory and the railroad men at the Station near by.

Mrs. Morrison and her daughters were overjoyed, as may well be believed, at the turn affairs had taken in regard to Robert, but they prudently refrained from saying much about it to himself. They had, indeed, an understanding with Aunt Isabel on that point, and acted all through on her advice.

"Don't make any particular fuss over his conversion, as we may truly call it," she wrote to her sister-in-law, about the middle of November. "He's on trial now, and if he keeps on as he's doing till the end of the year, well! we'll let him know how we feel about it."

Still, it was quite evident to Robert that the change in his way of living had greatly increased the happiness of his home, and the conviction that such was the case was in itself no small addition to the satisfaction he felt in following the dictates of his conscience. The daily routine of life at the Morrison farm went on with increasing smoothness and regularity, and the darkest days of mid-winter passed cheerily and pleasantly in the little family circle.

Christmas came round again, and Pierce Sullivan spent it with the Morrisons,—a welcome and a valued guest.

VI.

It was New Year's eve again. The Morrison family were about to take their places at the supper table, when Pierce Sullivan made his appearance, announcing his intention of spending the evening at the farm. Very cordial was the welcome the young man received, especially from Lizzie, for it was well understood in the family that these two cherished something more than friendship for each other, and that before the year was much older young Sullivan would be one of themselves. A prospect most pleasing to all concerned, for the Morrisons well knew what they owed to Pierce, who, on his side, valued at its full worth the prospect of marrying into a family so worthy of respect, so very congenial to his kindly, warm Irish heart, so full of the deep-seated religious fervor of his race.

The evening meal had just commenced, when a great barking of dogs and the sound of a sleigh sliding over the smoothly beaten snow outside bespoke another arrival, and Robert, hastening to the door, speedily ushered in Aunt Isabel herself, fur-wrapped and covered with snow.

"See who I've brought you, mother!" cried Robert, while everyone rushed to receive the new comer with sundry exclamations of joy and wonder.

"God bless my soul, Isabel dear, is it you?" exclaimed Mrs. Morrison, her still handsome face all aglow with glad surprise.

"And who else would it be, Nancy?" said a cheery voice from the depth of a fur trimmed hood, which Lizzie was untying as fast as her nervous trepidation

would permit. "Did you think I'd stay away from you all another New Year's? No, indeed, for I want this one to be remembered by you all when I'm dead and gone, as the happiest New Year's you ever spent. So here you are, all well and in good spirits as I see by your faces. But stay, who have we here, eh?" looking at Sullivan. The sly little woman probably knew well enough who it was, having heard so much of Pierce in the family letters.

Sullivan being duly introduced, and Robert having returned after putting Aunt Isabel's horse in the stable, and commending her driver to the hospitable care of Jenny in the comfortable kitchen, the girls having meanwhile taken their aunt to the room where she usually slept when at the farm, to unwrap herself, as she gaily said—the supper, thus pleasantly interrupted, was resumed. Such a merry, blithesome meal it was, too! And that important business despatched—not over hastily, indeed,—the whole party repaired to the cosy parlor, where a bright wood fire blazing on the open hearth gave ample light as well as warmth, making shadows here and there as fire-light will when it has the room all to itself.

"Did anyone bring in my package from the sleigh?" asked Mrs. Dalton, as she seated herself in the great armchair in the chimney corner. Yes, Robert had carried it in, and was told to bring it forward.

"I know it's only on New Year's morning—the *jour de l'an*, you know, that each of you gets my present." she observed as she rapidly undid the fastenings; "but as I'm here myself, and you know I'm a sort of fairy godmother, is it not? I don't want to keep the young people waiting till morning comes. So here you will see the presents that I have brought."

Then she distributed the gifts with her own fat, little well-ringed hands, for Aunt Isabel had a weakness for jewelry. They were still better than last year. Strange to say, Pierce Sullivan was not forgotten, and a very handsome satin scarf with a horseshoe pin of solid silver proved that Aunt Isabel counted on his being present.

Everyone waited anxiously to see if there was anything for Robert. Indeed there was, and a peculiarly benignant smile lit up Aunt Isabel's somewhat wrinkled face as she handed to her nephew a gold hunting watch with a vest chain, attached to which was a tiny medal of the Sacred Heart. Having waited a few moments to enjoy the surprise and delight of the whole Morrison family, Mrs. Dalton went on speaking: "Robert, my good boy, I have something more for you," and opening an envelope she drew out a paper which she handed to her nephew: it was his appointment to a lucrative position in a large wholesale house in Plattsburg, with permission to go home every week to his family from Saturday evening till Monday morning.

"This is all from the Sacred Heart, my dear Bob! as I have been putting that intention in the Box for some months past, ever since I found you were persevering in the great work of promoting the League-work all you could. I know the trial I imposed upon you last New Year's was a hard one, but you came out of it like gold from the furnace, and in the name of Our Dearest Lord, for whom you and your excellent friend here have worked so hard during the year, I bless and thank you both for all the good you have done to others as well as to yourselves. No thanks, now! Not a word! Let us talk of the year that is going from us and of what we can do of good in the year that will open for us to-morrow."

So the evening passed right pleasantly, and all having wished each other a Happy New Year, Pierce Sullivan, overjoyed at all he had seen and heard, was easily persuaded to stay over night. Next morning the whole party, young and old, heard Mass and approached the Holy Table together, as the first act of a year to be gratefully consecrated by one and all to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

A MONTH OF MARY IDYL.

MRS. JAMES SADLIER.

Dear to every heart that loves her,
All her children shall be blest ;
While she prays and watches for us,
We will trust and rest.

I.

"MISS Fitzmaurice, I hope you have no engagement for to-morrow evening. I have secured tickets for Albani's Concert, and if you will allow me to present you with one, I shall be very glad to be your escort."

The speaker was an exceedingly good-looking young Englishman of the fair Saxon type, the lately-imported manager of a well-known manufacturing house in one of our chief Canadian cities. The young girl whom he addressed was the type-writer of the establishment, Irish by blood as well as by manner and appearance, —the former modest and retiring, though sufficiently self-possessed, the latter uncommonly prepossessing.

A bright flush suffused the girlish face, and the blue eyes sparkled. It was only for a moment, however, and then Miss Fitzmaurice quietly answered : " You are very kind, indeed, Mr. Hilton, and I thank you very much ; but I *have* an engagement for to-morrow evening."

"You have? And may I ask what it is, if the question be not indiscreet?"

"Certainly not, Mr. Hilton! It so happens that to-morrow being the 1st of May, we shall have in our Church the opening of the month of Mary, which is continued every evening during the month."

"Then you are a Roman Catholic, I presume?" this in a tone of surprise and with some asperity.

"Yes, I am a Catholic"—quietly ignoring the word *Roman*—"and even if I were not going to church to-morrow evening," the young girl added with some hesitation and a heightened color, I could not avail myself of your kind and flattering invitation."

"Indeed? and why, may I ask?"

"I have always been taught, Mr. Hilton, that young women should not go out alone in the evening, without —some of their own family with them; and as I am all alone now"—here her voice faltered and her soft eyes filled with tears. She stopped short, but Hilton quickly finished the sentence:

"As you are alone now, you cannot go out with me, a stranger?"

"Oh no!" the girl hastily put in—"not a stanger, Mr. Hilton!—but you see how it is with me. I assure you I should have liked of all things to have heard our great Canadian singer, whom I never *have* heard, but under the circumstances, and for these two reasons, I must forego that pleasure, thanking you all the same."

"Oh! very well, Miss Fitzmaurice. I am sorry I placed myself in such a position. Be assured I shall not repeat the offence." And Hilton turned angrily away.

The tears sprang to Ellen Fitzmaurice's eyes as she looked wistfully after his retreating figure, and saw him

pause by the desk of another young girl, the stenographer of the house, who brightened up at his approach, and after a few words of pleasant chat, joyfully accepted the invitation which poor Ellen had declined. The latter had the further mortification of seeing this neighbor of hers, Miss Stedman by name, cast a glance of triumph on herself as she stopped one of the clerks just then passing, and told him in a loud, excited voice how she was going on the following evening with Mr. Hilton to hear Albani.

Poor Ellen ! it was a sacrifice, and she felt it keenly, on more accounts than one ; but she consoled herself with the thought that she had done her duty and could not have acted otherwise without incurring grave self-reproach.

It may be that Our Blessed Lady spoke some words of comfort to the girl's heart that evening when she knelt to say her Rosary at bed-time in the privacy of her own little room, where the photographs of her Irish mother and father, at rest in an old, old churchyard far away in Kerry County, looked down approvingly on their lonely child. Certain it is that her trouble ceased, and on the following evening when she joined the faithful children of Mary in the late gloaming before the radiantly-lighted altar of the fair Queen of May, there was no trace of sadness on her calm young face.

II.

It was, nevertheless, no small trial for Ellen Fitzmaurice on the day after the concert to hear Miss Stedman relating over and over to one and another of the *employés*, male and female, how much she had enjoyed the concert;

what a wonderful voice Albani had ; how enthusiastically she was applauded ; and how sweetly and tenderly she sang of her early days in this her own beloved Canada.

" I could almost have cried myself to hear her," said Sarah Stedman, a rather hard-featured individual, by the way. " To be sure it was all in French, but I heard some people near me explaining what it meant. Dear me ! I wouldn't have missed it for anything ! Don't you feel a little bit sorry that you missed such a treat, Miss Fitzmaurice ? "

" Not at all," said Ellen quietly,— " I had a greater treat myself, and one that I wouldn't have missed for anything in the world."

" You mean in church," sneered Miss Stedman with a toss of her head. " Well ! there's no accounting for tastes ! " And she bent over her desk, as though wholly engrossed by her work, for Mr. Hilton was just passing.

" I wonder if he'll stop and speak to that Fitzmaurice girl," she said to herself, and was much relieved to find that he did not. Whether Ellen was disappointed or not, she said nothing, and both girls continued their work in silence. But their minds were none the less busy, and strange to say, they both arrived at the same conclusion.

" That's the end of it for *her*," thought Sarah in gleeful humor.

" He must be very angry with me," soliloquized Ellen, " when he doesn't even speak to me. Well ! it can't be helped. Duty before pleasure." And she tried to think of something else, though, truth to tell, that one thought kept intruding itself on her mind, do as she would.

This went on for a whole week, and Sarah Stedman noticed with increasing satisfaction that whenever the young manager had occasion to address Miss Fitzmaurice in relation to her work, it was with even more then usual of his English reserve of manner. It is true he was just as distant with herself, but that she could overlook, so long as there was no distinction in Ellen's favor.

"He never took any particular notice of me—nor of her either, for that matter," said Sarah to herself. "I know his taking me to the Concert was only to spite *her*. I could see that. But it's all right now, any how!" And Sarah gave a funny little chuckle of sly exultation.

III.

That same evening—it was the tenth day of the month of Mary—Ellen Fitzmaurice repaired as usual in the gathering shades of twilight to the parish church where the devotions of the month were being carried on with much solemnity. It was a noble temple where the majestic statue of the patron Saint—a glorious Bishop of the early ages,—looked down from a niche over the high altar, with hand upraised in benediction over the crowd of worshippers below,—his own spiritual children, assembled round a side-altar where stood the statue of the Virgin Mother surrounded by lights and flowers. All was serene joy and heavenly peace, and the hearts of Mary's children were all a-glow with fervent devotion.

The spacious church was well filled with men, women and children, all intent on paying homage to the gracious Mother of Our Lord, whose benign face smiled down on her children from amid the lights and flowers that

graced her shrine ; then a priest in surplice and stole ascended the pulpit, and delivered a touching discourse on the loving devotion wherewith the Mother of God is honored by the Catholic Church of Her Son ; the boundless confidence which all true children of that Church have in Her intercession ; the unceasing proofs she gives them of her motherly protection ; and, last of all, he dwelt on the purifying and ennobling influence of her example on all those who honor her virginal purity—her prudence—her patience.

" A true child of Mary," he said in conclusion, " *must* be pure, prudent, patient and resigned—ever resigned to God's Holy Will ! " The eloquent voice ceased to speak and the priest descended from the pulpit. But his words lingered in the hearts of his hearers, and they stirred to its inmost depths that of a young man who stood by a pillar not far from the Virgin's altar.

" It is the voice of truth," he said within himself. " Those are something more than mere empty words."

Falling on his kness he prayed for light, and light was given him from above, as it ever is to the earnest seeker. And he could almost persuade himself that the face of the Heavenly Mother shone with a brighter radiance as he said his first prayer to Her to ask her aid.

Then the words of her own sublime prophecy recorded in Scripture recurred to his mind, and with a strangely new meaning : " Behold ! from henceforth all generations shall call me Blessed ! " Then came the startling question within his own soul : " But who are they who call Her Blessed ? " And the answer came from his inner consciousness, at first half-reluctantly, then with kindling enthusiasm : " Only those whom we are wont to call Papists and Romanists. They alone, over all the

earth and in all times past and present, have called her Blessed." He paused, and bent his head, then softly added: "I believe. O Lord! Help Thou my unbelief!"

Again he raised his eyes to the face of the Mother, and a blaze of light shone in on his soul. Even as the gracious vision of that Immaculate Virgin flashed before the astonished gaze of the young Jew, Alphonse Ratisbon, in that old-time Roman Church of San Andrea, and changed his whole nature, making of him on the instant a fervent adorer of Her Divine Son, inflamed with the zeal of a true Apostle,—so, in a measure, was this young man—by nature upright and well disposed—illumined by a ray of divine grace, prepared to follow whither the light might lead and to embrace the truth at any cost. Then he remembered a dearly-loved young sister whose death in far-off England had been his first real sorrow, and who had become a convert to the Catholic faith at a famous convent in York, where she was being educated.

"Now I see it all," said the young man to himself. "It is Alicia's prayers that have come to my aid and obtained for me the light of faith. We were all grieved beyond measure when she became a Catholic, but now I thank God with all my heart. O my sister, pray to Our Mother in Heaven to help me now!"

IV.

It was Hubert Hilton who thus prayed. Great was the surprise of Ellen Fitzmaurice when she saw him kneeling in a pew near Our Lady's altar during the Benediction which followed the sermon. Strangely enough she had been "haunted," as Gerald Griffin used to say,

all that gracious time by some snatches of sweet Adelaide Procter's exquisite "Shrines of Mary." Now it was :

"Each shrine has two consecrations,
One all the faithful can trace,
But one is for me, and me only,
Holding my soul with its grace."

Then again came to her as in a gentle whisper :—

"Long ages and generations
Have come there to strive and to pray ;
She watched and guided them living,
And does not forget them to-day."

She raised her eyes to the Mother's face with child-like love and trust, and murmured low within herself :—

"And I know, when I enter softly
And pause at that shrine to pray,
That the fret and the strife and the burden
Will be softened and laid away.

* * *

Thick mists hid the light of the beacon
And the voices of warning were dumb ;
So I knelt by the altar of Mary,
And told her Her hour was come ! "

While the echo of these gracious, hopeful words still lingered in Ellen's mind and heart, her eye fell on Hubert Hilton where he reverently knelt among the faithful clients of Our Lady in front of the little shrine which loving hands had decked in homage to their Queen. She could scarcely realize at first that it was the very same for whom she had prayed many a time, hoping even against hope that her prayers might yet be heard. But

presently he turned towards her just as the Benediction had been given from the high altar, and smiled as he noticed the bewildered look with which she regarded him.

V.

"Why, Mr. Hilton, who would have thought to see *you* here?" was Ellen's salutation as he joined her on leaving the church.

"Perhaps no one less than myself," he replied. "I had no idea of coming till an hour or so before I came."

"I suppose you were curious to see how we Catholics celebrate our month of Mary?"

"Partly that, Miss Fitzmaurice, and partly—" he hesitated, then added quickly—"that I might see for myself what there was in this evening service of yours to be preferred to Albani's concert."

"Oh! that was your motive!" said Ellen gaily. "And pray what is the result? Do you think my choice was best?"

"So much so, Miss Fitzmaurice, that although I was certainly one of the *fools* mentioned by the poet,—who came, if not exactly to *scoff*, at least to criticize,—I, like them, 'remained to pray.' I assure you I *have* prayed most earnestly, and I hope my prayer has been heard. But it may be," he added musingly, "that I did not pray alone." Ellen was silent, she was evidently waiting to hear more.

They were walking in a quiet street leading to the girl's home, and Hilton glanced around to make sure that no one was near enough to hear what he might say. Then he told briefly and simply of the dear sister who had

passed away from earth in the spring-time of her life, and who had had the happiness of embracing the Catholic faith only a little while before her death. "I am sure it was her prayers that brought me here to-night, and"—he stopped short, made a longer pause than before, while Ellen held her breath to listen. At last, Hilton spoke again as by a strong effort: "Miss Fitzmaurice, dare I flatter myself that I had a share in the prayers of *one* amongst the living? I am sure you know who I mean."

"I do, Mr. Hilton," said Ellen with the candor and simplicity of a pure heart. "I do know who you mean, and I am quite willing to admit that I did pray Our Lord and His Blessed Mother for you every evening since the month commenced."

What Hilton would have said on hearing this frank admission remained unsaid for the time being, as they had reached the door of Ellen's home, and she said gently:—"We part here, Mr. Hilton. This is my present domicile. So, good-night! Thank God yourself, as I shall, too, for the wonderful mercy He has vouchsafed you this night through Our Lady's intercession!"

Surprised at this summary dismissal, yet conscious that it was only what Ellen should have done, Hilton lingered only till he saw her admit herself by a latch-key, then turned his steps homeward, with a heart full of new-born hope and a mind illumined by the first clear ray of celestial truth.

VI.

During the remaining days of the month, Hubert Hilton was a regular attendant at the May services. He went alone, and took his station near the Blessed Virgin's altar, where he knew Ellen was sure to be, then, after the service, accompanied her home, always leaving her at the door. Sometimes they lengthened the walk by making a little *détour*, and it was during these promenades that the two young people arranged their plans for the future. They were engaged to be married, and by Ellen's earnest request, the ceremony was to take place in the last week of June, the dearest of months to the lovers of the Sacred Heart. She had explained to Hubert the great devotion to the Heart of Jesus, and told him the wondrous story of its revelation by Our Lord Himself, in an age not so far removed from ours, through the medium of an humble French religious.

Hubert was being instructed in the doctrines of the church by one of the priests of the church where he had first received the gift of faith—the same whose sermon on the devotion to Our Blessed Lord had been his first awakening from the lethargy of unbelief.

"Surely," said Ellen as they sauntered along through the moonlit streets, after the close of the last May service, enjoying to the full the tranquil beauty of the summer night. "Surely, Hubert, we are commencing our married life under the happiest auspices. Betrothed in the month of Mary, married in the month of the Sacred Heart, may we not hope for the special benediction of Our Blessed Lady and Her Divine Son on our union? A good beginning, you know, commonly makes a good ending."

Hilton's ready assent was followed by a silence of some minutes. It was broken by the young man's saying in a sort of dreamy voice, like one who is continuing aloud some inward train of thought. "I see now, Ellen, what it was that drew me to you from the first."

"And what was that, pray?"

"Because I found you so different from other young girls, so modest and retiring, so prudent and reserved—so self-denying where principle was at stake,—in short—in short—so good a Catholic, as I now understand!"

"Well! I ought to be a good Catholic," said Ellen in a thoughtful tone, "for I come of a race that was, above all, Catholic, and which numbered amongst its sons some of the most heroic leaders of the Catholic people of Ireland in their long struggle against English Protestant persecution in the evil days of Queen Elizabeth. The Fitzmaurices of Kerry—many of them alas! now fallen from their high estate!—were a branch of the Southern Geraldines who, under Gerald, the sixteenth and last Earl of Desmond, defied for many long years all the power of the Tudor Queen. Some day you shall read of what the grand old Earl and his noble kinsmen suffered and did—and what they lost for the Faith during the Irish Reign of Terror known as the Penal Times. Amongst the Catholic leaders of that awful time none shine forth in history with a brighter lustre than two brothers of my race, Sir James and Sir John Fitzmaurice. Oh yes!" she added, as she and her betrothed stopped at the door of her humble home. "It is little merit for me to be a good Catholic, when so many of my forefathers and my kinsmen lost life and land for the Faith in ever-faithful Ireland. But, pray forgive me, Hubert! if I talk too much for this once of

those glories of a long-past age. But I *am* proud of these dauntless heroes of my race—it may be all the more so that our glory has departed, 'Like the bubble on the fountain, 'tis gone and for ever!' But I promise you not to bore you with these old-time stories after we are married!"

"You shall make no such promise, Ellen!" said Hilton eagerly, as they shook hands on the door-step. "You shall tell me all about these brave Catholic champions of your race, and I will follow up their footprints in the records of that stormy time."

"Well! good-night now, Hubert!" said Ellen softly; they were, her last words at parting. "The month of Mary is over, and it has done well for us. Now for the month of the Sacred Heart!"

THE STORY OF TWO BROTHERS.

MRS. JAMES SADLIER.

PART FIRST.

I

IT was a great event in a popular watering-place of the Lower St. Lawrence when, one bright May day, some five and twenty years ago, Edward Halligan, one of the well-to-do farmers of the vicinity, brought home a bride to his well-plenished homestead overlooking a broad expansion of the great river. Edward was one of two brothers whose father had emigrated with his family from the south of Ireland in the first quarter of the century. The elder Halligan and his wife, after long years of hard toil, had succeeded in making an easy competency for their family, consisting of the two sons above named, and a daughter older than they by some years and well married in the neighborhood.

The old couple had died within a short twelve-month of each other, and slept side by side in the peace of God in the new cemetery adjoining the parish church. Richard Halligan, the younger brother, had recently purchased a good farm and built a commodious house where he had established himself with an elderly matron, a relative of the family, as his housekeeper, a few months

before Edward brought home pretty Bessie Wilson to the paternal dwelling as his wife.

Now, the Halligan family were known far and wide as zealous Catholics, as were also the married sister and her husband, Hugh Delaney. It was matter of surprise, then, and no small regret to the whole parish, when Edward Halligan took a wife not only from amongst the Protestant settlers, but a family noted for their anti-Catholic proclivities. The old people shook their heads and declared that no good would come of it, "for, sure, there was no Halligan married out of the Church since the memory of man," as old John Halligan and his wife, God rest them! used often to boast. But Edward had, apparently, no misgivings on the subject. His Bessie was gentle and engaging, and he was full sure she would make him the best of wives. As for religion, well! he could let her have her own way so long as he kept his. Some day she might come round to his way of thinking. And so matters went on month after month as smoothly as heart could wish.

II.

The first ruffle on the stream of Edward Halligan's wedded life was when, a year or so after his marriage, his wife presented him with a son. A fine baby it was, too, and much admired by relatives and neighbors. A day or two after the new arrival Ned announced his intention of having the infant baptised. His mother-in-law who, with one of her daughters, had just arrived, was highly indignant at this proposal. "I'm surprised at you, Ned! indeed I am," she cried in a raised voice: "Is it tired of

poor Bessie you are that you want to get rid of her? Don't you know she's not over strong as yet and that any excitement might kill her outright?"

"But surely," said Ned in a hesitating way, "it wouldn't hurt her to have the child christened, and we can put off the christening till she's able to be up and around." You know, Mrs. Wilson, we Catholics have the little ones baptised as soon as we can after the birth, for fear of any sudden change coming."

At this the old woman flared up.

"And do you think, Edward Halligan, that our Bessie's child is to be christened by the priest?"

"Why, who else would he be christened by?"

"Well! that's to be seen about later; but unless you really want to kill my poor girl, you won't hint such a thing to her now. When she's up and well you can talk the matter over between yourselves. The first thing now is to get her well again, for any one can see with half an eye that she's still very weak and nervous, poor thing!"

So the wily mother-in-law gained her point. Ned consented to wait till Bessie was "herself again," and Bessie, as matters stood, was in no hurrry to be herself again. The baby's christening was indefinitely postponed until one fine day, when Ned was absent on business at the market-town, the minister was brought by Mrs. Wilson, and quietly baptised the boy. So the next time Edward spoke of the baptism, he was told, in Bessie's sweetest accents, that the Reverend Mr. Dixon, her own minister, happened to drop in that day, just to see how she was getting on, and she thought they might as well have the baby christened.

Edward stormed a little at first, but his wife put forth her softest blandishments, and asked, with an innocent

smile, what difference did it make, anyhow. "So long as the child is made a Christian, Ned dear! it matters little whether Father Nolan or dear Mr. Dixon performed the ceremony. He's all right now, you know; and we called him John William, after your father and mine."

So poor weak Ned was fain to give in; and although his conscience reproached him at first for his criminal weakness and deplorable neglect of duty, he soon succeeded in silencing its voice on the plea of maintaining the peace of the family. Back of that, however, was yet another reason, perhaps more potent still. Old Billy Wilson—"Orange Billy," as his Catholic neighbors called him—was rich, for that locality, and as his family was but small, Ned had hopes that this, his first grandson, might come in for some of the old man's money. So the first Protestant Halligan appeared in the settlement in the person of Billy Wilson Halligan—the John, for his good old Catholic grandfather, was dropped before the end of the child's first year.

III.

When another son was born to Edward Halligan, the question of his baptism was more easily settled. Having once given way to his mother-in-law and his no less bigoted though more smooth-spoken wife on the former occasion, he made but a very faint resistance when the same specious arguments were brought to bear upon him, and readily agreed with kind Mrs. Wilson that poor Bessie's health was the first consideration. The dear soul must not be thwarted or annoyed on any account whatever. So Edward junior, with the addition

of Wilson to the paternal name, was duly baptised, like his brother, by Rev. Mr. Dixon, to the secret exultation of the whole Wilson tribe and the increasing indignation and disgust of all the Halligan connections and their Catholic neighbors.

So it went on until five children, sons and daughters, were growing up in the Halligan household, when the question of sending them to school came up between the parents. The father was at first strongly in favor of sending them to the Catholic parochial school, but this was strenuously opposed by the mother, who had secretly made up her mind that they should not go there. Sooner than consent to any such thing, she would leave the house with her baby and go back to her father and let Ned do the best he could with the others. This was a fearful threat to poor Ned; but when his wife added significantly: "We'll see where father's money will go then;—not to Roman Catholics, you may be sure, if they *are* his own flesh and blood!" He was fairly overcome, and at once agreed to let the three elder children go to Mr. Dixon's school. "And, sure, they say it's the best anyhow," said Ned apologetically, as a salve to his wounded conscience.

"To be sure it is, Ned!" said his wife complacently. "Every one knows that, and you may be sure you're doing the best thing for the children in sending them there."

Years passed on. Eleven olive plants surrounded the table of Edward Halligan. Stalwart youths were the sons all and the daughters fair to look upon. But each and all were staunch true-blue Protestants of the north of Ireland Orange type, such as old Billy Wilson's descendants ought to be: proud of their Protestant blood and

no little ashamed of their "Roman Catholic" father. To do that father justice, it was not without many a fruitless effort that he saw his sons and daughters grow up Protestants. But having forfeited all right to his children's respect and with no common basis of religion to support his authority, he had no influence whatever on their conduct, and with deep, though alas, ! late repentance for his sad errors, was fain to turn to God and practise his religion solitary and alone in the midst of his numerous progeny.

Thus, it came to pass that when Sunday came round, portly Mrs. Halligan might be seen marching with her tall sons and comely daughters to the conventicle where the Rev. Hamilton Dixon held forth on the errors of Rome to a highly-sympathetic congregation ; the while her husband wended his lonely way to the handsome church of Our Lady of Victories, beneath whose high altar good Father Nolan, the beloved pastor of his early years, had long since gone to rest, his faithful ministry in the parish commemorated by a fair tablet of Italian marble hard by Our Lady's altar.

Many a repentant tear did poor Edward Halligan—now a prematurely aged man—shed before that still memorial, as too faithful memory brought back to his mind the ceaseless endeavors of that good priest to save his children for God and His Church,—his oft-repeated admonitions and warnings to himself, all, unhappily, of no avail ! Now, when too late, the broken-spirited, sorrowing old man saw it all, and endeavored to make amends, as far as he himself was concerned, for his past errors and misdeeds by increased fervor and fidelity. But alas ! for the large family that God had given him and for whose souls he was accountable before Him !

PART SECOND.

I.

Edward Halligan was already the father of six children, the eldest of whom was fourteen years of age, when his uncle Richard, his father's younger brother, took it into his head to marry. Richard was verging on forty ; but of a lighter disposition, apparently, than his brother. With his fine farm well tilled and well stocked, and his comfortable dwelling, he had long been an object of eager speculation to the Catholic mothers of the vicinity as a most eligible husband for one of their daughters. Of course, after the sad experience of his brother, Richard's choice could only be amongst those of his own religion. That was a settled question, they all agreed.

Great, then, was the astonishment and sad the disappointment that awaited these Catholic mothers when the rumor went abroad, and was all too soon confirmed by fact, that Richard Halligan was following precisely in his brother's footsteps and taking for wife another Protestant, Sally Dawson by name, the portionless daughter of a widow who had lately come to live in the neighborhood ! Like the Wilsons, this Mrs. Dawson was a rigid Protestant, and her daughter had been brought up in the strictest principles of Scotch Presbyterianism. Here was another shock for the worthy parish priest and another grievous scandal for his flock. Indeed,so deeply-rooted and so wide-spread was the indignation of the Catholic people around at this most unaccountable act

of the younger Halligan, that, by common consent, not one of them assisted at the wedding. Even the groom's sister and her husband were notably absent on the occasion.

Whatever Richard may have thought or felt in this contingency, he kept it all to himself, and was, to all appearance at least, perfectly satisfied with the company of his brother Ned and his Protestant wife, with certain of the Protestant neighbors and some relatives of his wife from the adjacent town. In one respect, however, this marriage of Richard's was an improvement on that of his brother, as he had insisted on being married by the priest, and had gone to confession and communion all alone, in the early morning. Even this was a consolation to the good pastor otherwise so grievously afflicted by this second mixed marriage in the Halligan family.

One thing that made the affair still more gloomy for the priest and his people was the almost masculine firmness of character and demeanor that distinguished the new-made bride from all the girls around. She was tall, somewhat taciturn and dark-visaged withal, though sufficiently good-looking to account for Richard's choice, as far as appearance went. Such as she was, however, Sally Dawson became Mrs. Richard Halligan one grey October day, when the year was in the wane and her husband's crops all gathered from meadow and field into his capacious barns. As for the bridegroom, he laughed and joked as usual, with little care, it would seem, for the after-time.

II.

When brown autumn came again, in late September, a daughter was born to Richard Halligan.

"Now," said the Catholic neighbors around, "it'll be Ned's story over again. They'll have the minister christen the baby, and then there's an end of it! And more's the pity, for it's the same Halligans, that were the real old Catholic stock, breed, seed and generation!"

But things turned out very differently to what was expected. Those who talked in this way little knew Richard Halligan, gay and reckless as he seemed.

On the day following the baby's birth, Richard accosted his mother-in-law, who was in the kitchen preparing dinner: "Mrs. Dawson, we're going to have the little one baptised this afternoon. Father Dwyer will be in the church an hour from now, and my sister and her husband are coming here to take the baby. They are to be the sponsors."

"Oh! Richard, you don't mean it!" cried the widow, flushing red and stopping short in her culinary occupation.

"But I do mean it, ma'am, of course I do; so you'll please get baby ready without delay. We can't keep the priest waiting."

With a blanched cheek and a lowering brow, Mrs. Dawson began to protest, declaring her daughter was not strong enough for the excitement of the christening, and that she wouldn't answer for the consequences if it went on.

"Well! *I'll* take the consequences, Mrs. Dawson, be they what they may," replied Richard calmly; "so you'll please tell Sally, and then get the baby ready at once!"

Sally would fain have persuaded her husband to put off the baptism for a while, but Richard was firm, and the women were forced to give in.

"What name are we to give the baby?" asked Richard of his wife when the little *cortège* was starting for the church, Mrs. Delaney herself carrying the infant; Sally replied that she had no choice, they might call her what they pleased for her.

"Very well!" said Richard in his blithesome way, "*I* have a choice."

And the babe was baptised *Margaret Mary* by Father Dwyer in the Church of Our Lady of Victory. And a victory was then and there gained for God and His Church.

At first the young mother was disposed to be angry with her husband, and bitterly reproached him for his indifference to her wishes and his utter disregard of the possible danger to her health. Richard only laughed, telling his wife to keep cool and she would be all right. But to avoid any real danger from over-excitement or exertion, the festive celebration of the christening was put off for two weeks to give Sally time to recover her usual health.

It was with a heavy sigh and a downcast look that poor Edward Halligan wished his brother joy of the victory he had so quietly achieved. "If I had only had the pluck to put down my foot at the start as you did, Dick! may be things would have gone better with me. However, don't be too sure that the battle is won," he sagely added; "this is only the beginning of it, remember!"

Dick Halligan smiled but said nothing. He was a man of few words though of lightsome heart in the main.

III.

Edward's prediction was not justified by what came after. When the next arrival took place in Richard's household, there was only the very faintest attempt at remonstrance in regard to the baptism on the part of the mother and grandmother. The new-comer, a boy, was baptised John, after his paternal grandfather, and so the old order was re-established in the Halligan family for all Richard's Protestant wife.

So it went on for eight or ten years. All the children, as they came, were taken to church and duly baptised by Father Dwyer, their Catholic baptism being accepted as a matter of course and without disturbing the peace of Richard's home even in the slightest degree.

As the children grew older it was a pretty sight to see them going to the cemetery—the elder ones leading the younger by the hand — to say a prayer at the graves of their grandparents and place thereon bunches of wild flowers gathered by the way. Soon little Margaret Mary and her brother John, being ten and eight years old respectively, and regular attendants at Father Dwyer's school, were able to read the inscription on the white marble stone at the head of the carefully kept graves, and the little ones stood around in awe-struck silence while the simple record was read, telling how John Halligan and his dearly-beloved wife Bridget, natives of County Roscommon, Ireland, slept below, birth and death duly stated, and ending with the usual request to pray for their souls. Hearing those last words, the children dropped on their knees, and with clasped hands

and bowed heads besought God to have mercy on dear grandpapa and grandmamma."

"And on all the souls of the faithful departed!" was added first by wise, gentle Margaret Mary, and after her by all the others, some of whom could barely lisp out the words.

It sometimes happened that poor old Uncle Edward came upon this touching scene when he paid his lonely visit to that hallowed spot. On fine Sunday evenings, when the day was declining, Richard himself often accompanied his children in their visit of tender love and duty; knowing this, his brother made it a point to meet him there, and together they knelt and prayed for the dear departed parents who had done their best in their own humble way in their far American home to transmit the faith of St. Patrick to their own descendants. And as they all walked home together through the gathering shadows, Richard and Edward would tell the eager little listeners of the old churchyard in far-away Ireland, where generations of their fore-fathers lay in their quiet crosscrowned graves beneath the rich verdure of the Emerald Isle, awaiting the resurrection. In this way the little ones learned to love and reverence the land of their fathers, which the elder ones already knew as the Island of Saints.

What bitter sorrow filled poor Edward's heart as he thought of his own children, revilers and haters of everything Catholic, cut off from the holy traditions of their race and openly ranged with the enemies of that faith for which their ancestors for countless generations suffered and died. And,—saddest thought of all,—that even when he, their unhappy father, had been laid to rest in that hallowed spot with his venerated parents, no

prayer for him or them would ever be uttered by those ungrateful children who might not even rest near him in death !

IV.

" What is to be done about the children's prayers ? " said Richard Halligan one day to his wife, when some of the little ones were old enough to learn them, years before the visits to the cemetery began. " They ought to be learning them by this time."

" I know that, Dick ! " replied Sally, " but it's your affair, not mine. You don't want me to teach them *my* prayers, and I can't teach them yours, for the reason that I don't know them."

" Well ! you know, my dear, I haven't much time to teach them, but I'll tell you what I'll do : I'll get you a Catholic Catechism, and you'll find the most necessary prayers there. Would you mind hearing the children say them ? "

" Why, no, Dick ! I was often wishing I knew what prayers you'd want them to learn. Of course, Margaret Mary and Ned and Kathleen have learned them at school, but the little ones can begin to learn them at home."

" Very well, Sally dear ! I'll get you the Catechism, and you can teach the wee ones not only the first little prayers that you'll find there, but also the first chapter of the Christian Doctrine." To this the wife readily assented, and the matter was definitely settled.

Secretly rejoiced beyond measure, but wisely expressing no surprise, Richard procured the Catechism from

Father Dwyer, who was surprised and delighted at the happy turn affairs were taking.

So the children were taught their prayers by their Protestant mother, even the babe of three years, who could barely speak plainly, beginning to lisp the Holy Names. Then the Catechism was taken up, and by-and-bye, the mother, not content with teaching the very little ones the answers to the first questions, began of her own accord to hear the Catechism lessons of the elder ones in the evenings, preparing for school next day. Very soon she became so deeply interested in the subject that she began stealthily to read the few but well chosen doctrinal books of the little family library ranged on a few shelves in the best parlor. By the time she had got through Milner's "End of Controversy," "The Catholic Christian Instructed," Cobbett's "Reformation," and one or two others, her clear head and sound judgment did the rest.

One day she gladdened though hardly surprised her husband by telling him that she wanted to be a Roman Catholic like him and the children.

"You mean a *Catholic*, pure and simple," said Dick with a happy smile; "you must know, my dear Sally, that Catholic means *universal*, and that's what the Church is. She is neither Roman, nor English, nor French, nor any other, but simply *Catholic*, so it is just nonsense to speak of her as *Roman* Catholic. The Catholic Church she is and ever has been, and shall be as long as the world lasts. So you want to be one of us, Sally! Well! thanks and praises be to God! I knew it would come to that."

"And it's the Sacred Heart I thank for it!" he added, when informing Father Dwyer of the happy result of their joint prayers and judicious action in regard to Sally.

"How is that, Richard?"

"Well! doesn't your reverence remember that I was married on the first Friday of the month, though every one wondered at my choice of a Friday, of all days. But I kept my own counsel and said nothing of it to any one till I'd see what came of it. Then I called my first child Margaret Mary in honor of Our Lady and Blessed Margaret Mary, with the same intention—that my wife might one day become a Catholic, for I knew it was in her, if she did, to make a very good one. As for the children, I promised the Sacred Heart to look after them myself and see that they weren't led away from the One Fold."

"And you see how the Sacred Heart has crowned your pious wishes and intentions with fruit a hundredfold! Oh! how different from your poor brother's family will yours be, one and all!"

"Yes, father! it was the shame and the sorrow of Edward's miserable failure in regard to his family that gave me the idea how I must act in order to save mine."

So Sally was duly baptised, and became a most exemplary Catholc, and her family were known all the country round as the Catholic Halligans, while Edward's were "black Protestants," every one of them, and their father died of a broken heart, pitied by some, respected by none, least of all by his own children.*

* This is an "ower true tale"—literally true in all its facts. It was told me by a neigbor of these two families to whom I have given the name of Halligan. The name of the place, too, where these counter-dramas were enacted I have, for obvious reasons, kept concealed, like the real name of the family in question. "The Protestant Halligans" and "the Catholic Halligans," under their own proper name, are still living in one of the sea-side towns of the Lower St. Lawrence. The story, simple as it is, conveys its own moral.

ST. JOSEPH'S BASKET.

ANNA T. SADLIER.

THAT gray, old mansion had stood, as some averred, from distinctly pre-historic times, on the outskirts of a populous town. Others declared that it had been used as a Hudson's Bay Post, while others again asserted that it had been very famous for gay doings, balls, routs, dinners and theatricals, in times easily within the memory of living persons. All agreed that the gray ruin had a history, but whether of good or evil, there was no record in the tradition of the neighborhood, any more than in the dingy gray of the stone walls, the porch falling to ruin, or the door barely hanging by the rustiest of hinges. Some initials and a date once inscribed above this entrance had become illegible by the effect of time or weather.

Long tenantless, the mansion had at length found a tenant. A woman with her three children had been allowed to shelter there, either on the payment of a nominal rent or for her services as caretaker, for she was required by the lighting of fires to keep the elements from working a final destruction upon the desolate structure. The woman was regarded by the neighbors, inhabitants of a few straggling dwellings close at hand, with a species of awe whenever she passed in or out of the house. They looked at her as they might at one newly arrived from some foreign country. She was, she

must be foreign, living in an abode which was separated from them, not by the effect of space but of time.

The woman was totally undisturbed by their ingenuous curiosity. Like the house, she belonged to the past tense, and seemed to have but little concern for the present. She had been young. She had been beautiful. She had been the spoiled child of wealthy parents, and the wife of a once prosperous business man.

The latter had died bankrupt and heartbroken, having lost her inheritance with his own competence. So this woman had lost everything, but had kept in a marked degree her faith. She was constantly over-stepping the boundary line between this world and the next, and conversing, as it were, familiarly with those sacred personages, whom she regarded as intimate friends.

A stormy March morning signalized the eighth day of her occupancy of the old house. The wind howled about it, as if in baffled rage at the warmth within — a wild March wind, with the cold of January lingering in its fierceness. Mrs. Lanthier—her husband had been a French Canadian, but she was of Irish parentage—stood before a picture, which held a prominent place in the largest of the rooms which she strove to make habitable. It was the picture of an old man, of benignant aspect, clad in a brown robe and bearing in his hand a lily. Any Catholic would at once have recognized in it the dear and familiar figure of the Foster-Father of Jesus.

Mrs. Lanthier regarded the picture with a mournful air, in which there was a lurking touch of humorous reproach.

"Yes, St. Joseph," she said aloud, "we owe you this shelter and warmth, for the agent has given us plenty of fuel. But you are not going to let us starve. There is

nothing in the house. My last cent went to pay the rent where we were before, and I will not be paid for my work till Saturday. The children as soon as they wake will begin to clamor for food."

Here her voice broke, and she scarcely restrained a burst of tears. But resolutely she conquered herself.

"I'm just going to leave my empty basket here," she said with a curious earnestness. "You will fill it, I know, St. Joseph. And oh, dear Saint, I must leave the children in your care and our Blessed Lady's till I come back with my bundle of work."

So saying, she hurried away, having set down her empty basket before the picture. She was anxious that the children should not wake till her return. Mrs. Lanthier did sewing, tailoring, or whatever work came to hand. She never spared herself, and it was, indeed, a severe illness that had thrown her into such desperate straits.

"St. Joseph always helps me in some way," she used to say; "but if I did not work as hard as ever I was able, I should not dare to ask for his assistance."

II.

During Mrs. Lanthier's absence an event occurred, almost unprecedented in the later history of the old house. It had some visitors, a gay and brilliant party. They came to see if the ruin, as they contemptuously styled it, could not be transformed into a species of club house for summer use. If at all susceptible of repairs, it might make a fitting lounging place for artists, especially amateurs and dilettanti of all sorts, who could wile away there

the long dreary hours of summer, or exchange brilliant nothings over iced tea or lemonade. For in the summer time there was a beautiful view thence. The narrow, paneless windows, like eyes grown dim with time, looked out upon distant hills of green and rivers of blue, while ancient trees lent their mystery, as striving with kindly concealment to shield the old walls from the blatent youth and loveliness of nature.

The party of inquisitors wandered up and down and in and out through the mansion, making scoff of the plasterless walls and the bulging masonry and the cracked floors, till at last they found themselves in a large room, in which, to their delight, was a fire blazing upon the hearth. They grouped themselves cheerily around it declaring that whether it had come there by enchantment or not, it was precisely what was needed as an antidote to the March winds, through which they had driven thither. Whilst taking in the various impressions of the apartment, their careless eyes fell upon the picture before which Mrs. Lanthier had left her empty basket. The picture drew forth a fire of jests, in which all of the company, save one, joined most heartily.

"To what school of art does yonder relic belong?" asked one.

"And by what spirit hands was it here suspended?" This in a tone of mock solemnity from another, who was understood to be the wit of the party, and who not infrequently directed his darts against the latent spiritualism of certain of his friends.

Suddenly they were startled by the sound of little feet, and presently the door of an adjoining room opened, and there appeared on the threshold three tiny figures in white gowns, holding hands.

"Spirit children materialized," cried the wit in a tone of pretended awe.

"I should rather say fairies, elves," cried another.

"For mercy's sake, tell us who you are;" said a third.

"We're dust de little Lanthiers," said the eldest of the three, in a voice which showed his keen sense of responsibility.

"And who are the little Lanthiers?" was uttered in a chorus of all present.

To this the child made no reply. Evidently to his own mind the information given had been final.

"Please," explained the child with the same air of heroic resolve, "not to take dat basket."

This remark was addressed to one of the company, who had been idly examining the basket placed before St. Joseph, when the children had appeared, and who still held it in his hands.

"And why not?" asked the gentleman.

"Because St. Joseph is going to fill it, and we won't have any ting to eat till he comes."

At this information, the whole party save one stared in utter astonishment. That one explained quietly:

"I see how it is. That picture represents St. Joseph, Foster-Father of Jesus, to whom we Catholics pay special honor during the month of March."

"But what do these children mean about the basket?" asked some one.

"Their poor mother, in a spirit of faith, has left to St. Joseph the task to which she is unequal, of filling this basket with food. She has gone, no doubt, to beg or look for work."

"Suppose we fill it," cried an impulsive youth of twenty.

"What a capital idea!" echoed all the others, "but how?"

"Oh, I know the neighborhood hereabouts pretty well," said the youth, "and I will do the marketing."

"Then, all that remains is to pass round the hat."

So quickly and effectually was this done, that in a short time the gay young volunteer was back, followed by a man carrying a loaded basket, which he deposited upon the floor, close to that other basket which had been left in St. Joseph's charge. The children now drew near with that species of locomotion described by Dickens in one of his novels, by which these toddling mites seem to surmount hillocks and descend into valleys. The youth who had done the marketing knelt upon the floor, busy transferring meat, groceries, bread and fruit in somewhat bewildering profusion from one basket to the other.

To the inexpressible amusement of the company, one of the children, who had not yet spoken, looking earnestly into the young man's face, asked:

"Is oo St. Doseph?"

The ladies of the party now crowded around the children, lavishing upon them, both terms of endearment and more substantial benefits of bread, butter and fruit. Finally the sights and sounds of the old house and the pathetic interest awakened by the children having palled upon them, the gay company departed, promising each other to come again and see the end of the adventure, which perhaps they did, or perhaps they allowed this intention to pass into the realm of forgotten promises and broken resolutions.

But Mrs. Lanthier, coming home with her bundle of work, an hour afterwards, sank upon her knees in grateful prayer, at the sight of the well-filled basket, with

a $5 bill on top of it, standing in front of St. Joseph's picture. She had to listen to excited but not very intelligible descriptions from the children of beautiful ladies and gentlemen, and of one in particular, who had specially captivated their imagination.

Concerning him, the little one who had before inquired repeated her question, only this time cautiously into "mammy's" ear, for had it not before provoked a burst of merriment?

"Was he St. Doseph?"

To which her mother answered:

"St. Joseph sent him, dearie; and now my darlings will not have to go hungry to bed any more."

A new era of prosperity began thenceforward for mother and children. The mother was kept continually in work, and old friends came forward to interest themselves in the children's education.

But long after Mrs. Lanthier had left the ancient house behind her, she was wont to say, recalling half regretfully its dinginess and dreariness, that all her prosperity had begun there, being after all but the overflow of St. Joseph's basket.

ON GOOD SOIL.

MRS. MARGARET CHADWICK *née* SADLIER.

I.

LITTLE Agatha Tracey had just come from confession, and was making her thanksgiving at the high altar, where the red lamps glowed at the feet of Our Lord.

Dusk had fallen in the great church, and the peace and silence of the twilight hour rested upon the quiet worshippers who had "come apart with Him" out of the noisy world outside.

As Agatha prayed with innocent, up-lifted eyes and clasped hands, a strange little figure which had been prowling about in the gathering darknesss crept up to her, and pulling her by the sleeve whispered hoarsely, "Who's he?"

Agatha started, "Do you mean the statue?" following the direction of the questioning eyes—"Why, that—is—*Jesus—don't you know?*"

There was a world of sorrowful pity in the tone.

The strange child shook her head.

"Would you like to hear about Him?" Agatha whispered.

There was an answering nod.

"Then wait for me a second, and I'll come with you," and Agatha turned to the altar again. Her confessor's words of a few moments ago came back to her vividly:

"Remember, my dear child, that God has been very,

very good to you : He has given you every opportunity of knowing and loving Him ; try then to help those less favored than yourself." Inspired words they seemed. Agatha's heart gave a great throb of pity and zeal. " Dear Lord, help me to teach this little child who has never known Thee ! " Then she went down the aisle, her new friend following softly in her wake, with the queer, cat-like movement of a child of the streets.

In the great porch, seated on the steps, the young apostle began her story, the poor vagrant following her in fancy, from the high heavens and the fall of the angels down to the dreary day of Calvary, and the good seed fell straightway down into a heart, not spotless, perhaps, but eager to receive the good seed,—an earnest little heart, only awaiting the hand of the sower.

When they parted, Jess,—the only name she knew,—wore tucked under her ragged dress Agatha's scapular of the Sacred Heart, and a promise had been made of books, to be sent regularly in care of Mrs. Murphy, Ring Lane.

" I guess you'd better not come," Jess had said, in answer to Agatha's suggestion that she and her mother, should go to see her. " An' I'd rather not go to your folk's house ; I'll come here some other day though, and p'raps you'll be here again."

" I come every day at this time, Jess, and I will be *so* glad if you will ; and, Jess, will you pray for me, because I'm going to pray a great deal for you ? "

" Me pray ? " Jess gave an odd laugh ; was there a sob in it too ?

" Yes, Jess, pray that you and I may both be good and love God more and more every day."

" All right " Jess had said shamefacedly, and had disappeared in the darkness.

II.

Some weeks had gone by, and Mrs. Murphy, the nearest approach to a mother Jess had ever known, was leaning against her window after a hard day's work. The evening sun was making a glory of the distant roofs and church steeples, and on one of these the woman's eyes were fixed with an absent gaze; her thoughts were with times long past.

"Poor old father," she said at last. "You don't know, Jess, how partikler he used to be 'bout our goin' to church Sunday mornins, all dressed up ever so fine, and him and mother walkin' on in front of us; he'd be wild if he could see me now a-days, never so much as sayin' the name of God. Them books of yours, Jess, has set me thinkin' to-day over the tub; somethin' kep urgin' me to go over there to the mission," pointing to the shining spire; "but I'm awful afraid to, Jess. I've let it all go on so long; it doesn't seem any place for the likes of me—"

"Guess you'd better," said Jess, "*she* said no matter how bad you was, God'd forgive you if you was sorry. I'll go with you, if you like. Let's go to-night."

The woman shivered.

"What'll they say when they hear none of the childer's baptized?"

"Guess they'll say you'd better get them done right away, and *me* too."

"Well, we'll go to-morrow night, Jess."

"Oh, come on to night, Mrs. Murphy."

"Well, well," said Mrs. Murphy, tremulously. And go they did, and sat in the crowd, two pathetic figures,—

the woman with bowed head crying her heart out, as she listened to the sermon, Jess, open-eyed and eager, laying every word to heart.

"Will you wait a bit for me, Jess?" whispered Mrs. Murphy when the preacher had finished, and trembling and frightened she crept into a confessional near by.

It was late when she came back.—Jess had fallen asleep, but awoke to see the happiest of faces gleaming on her, though a moment later the poor woman broke into a silent passion of tears.

III.

Another weary day of drudgery was over, and Jess sat down on the kitchen table to rest, staring wistfully into the fire.

"I'm through," she said at last.

"*Are* you! Why, that's grand, Jess. Go out then, child, and get the air a bit. You are a fine worker, Jess, Sure I don't know what I'd have done only for you, all this time."

Jess's heart warmed at the praise, and she went cheerily down the wretched stairs to the miserable street.

"Guess I'll go and see if Tim's about, Mrs. Murphy," she called back.

"I wouldn't bother about the same Tim; sure he's the worst boy in the street, and they're all bad enough."

"He ain't any worse than the others."

"Well, I know he's your own flesh and blood, but he's a curse to you all the same."

Jess said nothing; Tim *was* awful, but he was all that she had in the world.

Air? Where did Mrs Murphy expect her to get a breath in this fetid atmosphere? Alas, alas! for the luckless dwellers in such places. The child lounged down the street listlessly, when a name caught her ear.

"Somethin' wrong at Briggs'."

"What's up?"

"Oh, that Tim, stealin' again."

Jess ran up to hear the worst.

Briggs, the grocer, was talking excitedly to a policeman.

"I seen Tim hanging about with his gang, and I told Pete to look out; but while he was serving a customer, that rascal Tim walks off with a bag of potatoes, under our very noses. I'll get him this time, though; you'll see if I don't."

Jess had stolen away and was round the corner in a flash; she knew Tim's probable whereabouts, and must warn him—hopeless wretch though he was; in all the wide world, she alone there was to look after him.

At a miserable rookery of a ruined building, Jess stopped.

"Tim!" she called softly.

"That you, Jess?" from above.

"Yes, yes; they're after you."

"All right, *you* cut away, or they'll know I'm about here."

"Can you get away?"

"Yes,—*oh, get out!*"

Jess obeyed, running swiftly in the opposite direction, fearful lest she might give a clue to the police. Blindly she rushed, heedless whither, and so blindly that crossing a crowded street she was knocked down under the horses' feet. What was it? Something had struck her,

someone helped her up, but she drew away, walking feebly to the sidewalk ; she must get further away, she thought, no matter how.

" Hurt ? " people asked her carelessly.

" No, *I ain't hurt ;* I'm all right," and she groped her way into a side-street, dizzily. " If I can get to that church, tain't far from here, I can *rest.*"

So long a journey, it had never seemed so long before ; but at last she crept up the broad steps, and painfully up the aisle. Wearily she sank down in front of the altar, then everything reeled about her, and all was darkness.

IV.

Agatha had been making her round of visits to the different altars, and was coming to say a last prayer before the Sacred Heart, when she came upon the motionless little form. " Why it's Jess, *poor* little Jess," she sobbed, bending over the still face ; then she hurried trembling to the sacristy, and presently came back with a priest.

As he bent tenderly to examine the child, her eyes opened, and she gazed wonderingly into his face. He beckoned to Agatha to come nearer. " Jess," she whisperd, " do you remember me ? " The earnest eyes smiled, — " *Guess I do,*" she whispered, then she made a feeble effort to disengage something about her neck. " Look," she said, smiling triumphantly ; it was the faded little badge. Agatha's eyes filled with tears as she saw it.

The priest had slipped away to send for a doctor, but he had come back and knelt down beside the prostrate form.

"I am afraid you are very much hurt, Jess," he said gently. "How did it happen?"

"Run over."

"Poor Jess—poor Jess. Try to listen to me. Perhaps God is going to take you home, my dear little child, out of all the trouble and misery you have always known. But tell me, were you ever baptized? Do you know what that is?"

"Not yet, the priest over at the other church was teachin' me—"

"Would you like to be baptized now, my poor child?"

A wonderful smile came into her eyes.

"Leave her with me a little," said the priest gently to Agatha, who fell on her knees in a dim corner, praying with all her heart.

And thus poor little Jess made her act of contrition and was baptized, lying at the foot of the altar, none too soon—the story of her years was very nearly told.

"You are not afraid to die, Jess?" the priest asked her.

She made a movement towards the communion cloth at the rail which impeded her view. Agatha understood, and drew it back, so that the child could see the statue. Jess's eyes turned brightly to the serene face above. "I ain't afraid now," she said gently. "*He'll* take care of Tim;" then she stole her hand into Agatha's. At that moment, the doctor came hurriedly into the church, but the priest solemnly raised his hand.

"Come, Agatha," he said, "come away; there is another saint in Heaven."

Yes, the patron saint of Ring Lane, upon which a blessing seemed to rest thenceforth, even upon graceless Tim, who by the beneficent influence of the good priest, who had baptized Jess, was drawn away from the evil influences surrounding him, and became a credit to the memory of the little sister, who had given her life for his sake.

Sad is My Heart
Joy is unknown
No gintle Voice
No tender smile
Soon with the Lost
Ones I'll sleep
Oh! Sad is My Heart
Joy is unknown

My Voice it May be
Husky and a Little
loud Perhaps. but they
Love the Fatherless with
Care

. Git up! "whoa!" haw!" Ge