

A LITTLE SAINT.

You may have seen it. A low, rambling stone house, overrun in places with clinging masses of woodbine that have brought the small windows into a nearer resemblance to the dull, deep-set eyes of the aged, and converted the niche over the door holding the white stone image of the Virgin into a small bower into which the purple, yellow-eyed blossoms and scarlet berries nod at every dash of the irreverent breeze.

It is a Catholic institution of some sort, where the very good are permitted to do their holiness of prayer in what is known as a "Retreat," I believe, and also to which some of those, for whose refractory souls solitude and penance are supposed to be of vital benefit, retire for a season; and Daisy Butterfield and I stumbled upon the place during a summer ramble.

Of course his real name is not Daisy. On the contrary, it is something very much more dignified and respectable; but he is such a fresh, innocent child—such a blooming and harmless flower of the field—that no other name seemed in the least to fit him, therefore the soubriquet.

The old stone house, in spite of its picturesque air and pious character, we might have passed if there had been nothing to attract our continued attention save the stone image above the door, but there was an attraction more "fixing," at least for Daisy, and the first intimation I had of this fact was a convulsive jerk upon my coat-tails and a command to "Look!" in a voice that I recognized as that of my companion, in spite of its agitation.

I meekly obeyed orders. I wheeled about. I looked. I have been thankful ever since that I did so.

The door of the old house had been opened, and upon its threshold stood a young girl clad in the quaint, disfiguring black robes of some one of the Sisterhoods, and under the dragon of a muslin head-rigging there appeared a face fairer than any Madonna pictured by the old masters, because it was filled with all modest intelligence, gaining thus in all saint-like qualities what it lost in insipidity.

Only for a moment did this fair vision beam upon us, disappearing then again within the gloomy old house; but in that moment the fate of Daisy was settled.

In vain did I lavish argument and ingenuity to get him out of the neighborhood. Night found us domiciled in a small wayside tavern in the immediate vicinity, and there I was condemned to listen, with only the small compensation of a bowl of spiced clover-leaf rum, to whole volumes of French philosophy upon the subject of wife-taking, which would have brought tears of affliction to my friendly eyes only that I knew Daisy to be subject to attacks of this kind, and that the great conservator of the little fellow's liberty had thus far been some trifling omission of steadfastness in his composition, and the fact that his passion never kept even in the running with his impressionability.

A series of skirmishes upon the following day developed a history for the "Little Saint" that should have taken some of the ardor out of the pursuit upon which Daisy was bent, but—it did not.

She was called Anna. Such other name as the accident of birth might have accorded her had been lost in the generally obliterating "Sister" of the Order under which she lived. Her mother had done humble service to the Sisterhood as laundress up to the time of her death, and when the child she left arrived at a suitable age, the good women, who had charged themselves with her up-bringing, consecrated her, not to the service of Heaven, but to the clear-starching of the establishment. Of a father there was no record.

At this abrupt termination of our researches, it was natural that Daisy should have fallen upon my sympathetic breast and there poured out his disappointment in briny, bitter tears. It was the thing that I expected, but human nature—especially Daisy—is never what a man expects it to be, and, to my utter confusion, the little chap at once addressed himself to supplying such trifling omissions in the way of name, romance and career in the previous history of this medieval laundress by the substitution of his own proper cognomen in the first instance, his courtship in the second, and a most marvelous future as part and parcel of his joys and impedimenta in conclusion.

Poor infant! He had always had a weakness this way, but the last is always the most "fetching."

I looked upon him in compassion, and suggested a B.-and-S., to be followed by a six weeks' tour with a circus company; but, smiling placidly down upon me from the heights of his high resolve, he calmly "sat upon" my remedial institutions, yet opened his mind to me with a reassuring candor intended to soothe the disturbed current of my friendly solicitude.

"Teddy, old man," said he, "this is what I have been searching for since the obligations of manhood to the next generation first dawned upon my youthful soul. A man must marry, and, if he be a man of inches and quality, he should not abridge his usefulness to the country and age in which he lives by deferring this important duty. He owes it to himself, to his ancestors, to the unmarried ladies of his acquaintance, to settle in life as early as is at all consistent with the grave considerations of making a suitable choice. As you may have observed, this question of choice is one to which I have

devoted myself with unparalleled assiduity, and—in spite of many discouragements in the way of finding the majority of the sex 'unavailable,' for reasons that the sex and those who know my exacting heart will appreciate—one in which I have persisted until yesterday P. M., when the ideal creature whose image has hitherto inspired my search resolved herself into the living, attainable woman, and stood before me.

"Love is the slave of no time or condition. I saw Anna, and immediately I adored her. In her I recognize all those elements of perfectibility which are essential in my wife. In the sacred retirement of these cloistered walls she has grown up, unspotted by all those vanities and emulations which assail women from the cradle to the altar. She is now the virgin soul—the breathing impulse to which it shall be my proud task to give form, shape and direction. Intelligence and innocence shine in every lineament of her saint-like face. She is in everything a child, a beautiful child, Teddy, and when her childhood ends she will be my wife."

I am not easily "spilled," but this speech of Daisy's was a "facer." The length of the address was not so serious, because he was given to expressing himself at greater length than point, nor that he seemed in dead earnest gave me no great trouble, because the little chap had a way of adding to his inches by being impressive upon the slightest occasion; but, the thing that crushed me was a series of observations I had made on the second occasion of our meeting with the little saint which had occurred in the parlor of the old stone cloister into which Daisy had dragged me, and where he had behaved with as much solemnity as the remarks above would indicate.

My observations were first, in corroboration of my first impressions, in regard to the exquisite loveliness of the girl both in face and figure. I then concluded that she was honest and all simple sweetness in character and disposition, that she had both sense and intelligence, neither of which had travelled beyond the homely limits of her daily life, and, most fatal of all her dangerous presentiments, I saw that she also was deadly earnest in her nature, not knowing a joke from a practical lie, and utterly without that other more graceful quality which protected my Daisy from serious damage by enabling him to adapt his feelings to circumstances, however mutable Fate might show herself.

I foresaw danger, and, therefore, in some trepidation, I ventured to insinuate:

"She is well gone in her childhood now, Daisy."

"The childhood which I intend shall only merge into wifehood, Teddy, has nothing to do with years or stature!" answered he, with a magnificent air of condescending enlightenment.

"But," I modestly hinted, "would it not be well to take a little time to furnish your 'child' with a beginning before you make an end of her, just by way of satisfying inquisitive friends, you know? Anna is a pretty name—but, I say, there is the church register to be considered. I think it takes two to do the business handsomely there!"

"My dear Teddy," answered this precious infant, "you talk as if the inquisitiveness of friends were to have weight in a matter of this kind. If the forms of the marriage contract require two names, the most convenient one may be borrowed for the moment. No man would object to lending his name for such a short time. It is not at all in the way of an endorsement, you know. Beyond this, I am proud that my wife should have no name except that which she receives from me. That she has no relatives insures me against one of the terrors of the married state, and that she will have no history, save that which I shall write upon the book of her experiences, is something that a man may be devoutly thankful for. Teddy, in these corrupt times, I tell you, old man, there is a providence in these things. I shall take my wife as a direct dispensation from Heaven, and only as my wife shall she learn the meaning of earthly love."

I was troubled. A tide had set in the affairs of my artless Daisy which, too evidently, I could not stem. With the aid of several bowls of the clover-leaf rum I got him safely into bed, and then betook myself to my own rest, from which I awoke next morning unrefreshed, having dreamed that the lovely Anna was avenging herself upon my unhappy head by flattening it in with a hot smoothing-iron, having previously disposed of Daisy by running him through the mangle.

Upon arising I found that my friend had disappeared. I resigned myself, and having diverted my mind as successfully as might be with a newspaper some months past date until about noon, being then about to present myself at that unholy twelve o'clock meal, known in the rural districts as dinner, the cause of all my inquietude walked in.

His air was unusually serious. "All is arranged," he said, looking as majestic as his five-feet four and innocent countenance would permit. "Has she—has she—ceased to be a child?" I gasped, overcome with the fears that assailed me. With every feeling, from the kindly reproachful to the melancholically astonished, expressed in his countenance, he looked at me for a moment and then said:

"Teddy, I thought you knew me better!" I prayed for patience and a better understanding, with the handles of a pair of wheezy bellows in my nervous clutch.

After a moment's reflection this philosopher and friend continued:

"You have not encouraged my confidence by any sympathy in this matter, Teddy. Nevertheless, the sentiments of friendship which I have professed shall not be chilled nor turned aside by the little differences of opinion that must from time to time occur between men. You know what my character has ever been, Teddy, and to show you that my intentions are as honorable as becomes a man under these circumstances, I now tell you that I have provided for the continuance of Anna under the care of the good Sisters for the next three years. They will instruct her in all things necessary and proper to her future condition upon a plan that I have been occupied this morning in arranging, and to the end that my bride-elect may preserve her virgin purity of heart and mind, I shall neither visit nor correspond with her during this time. In three years I shall attain my majority, when I shall return here to take my wife, unspotted and uncontaminated from the world, to my arms. Until then behold in me a model of human excellence, under the glorifying influence of a great anticipation. Teddy, you should see the error of your ways, and marry before you do your courting!"

I threw down the bellows and embraced this moral example. To the eyes of my experience there was no further occasion for alarm, and with the exception of announcing himself engaged to every one we met, and swearing me by hair-lifting oaths to observe the sanctity of the old stone cloister, Daisy behaved like a cosseted lamb during the remainder of our journey.

I must confess that I was a little "phized" as the years went by, to see, that Daisy kept up the romance of his engagement, but as he amused himself pretty much after the old fashion, and seemed in no immediate danger of canonization, I concluded that he used the thing as an article crossed between a counter-irritant and a safety-rope in cases where either of these agents might be useful, I ceased to think of the affair as anything more than *pour passer le temps*.

The three years were nearly done when I chanced into a studio with one or two men, among whom was Daisy. Figures were the artist's "forte," and there were two or three about which a good deal had been said. While absorbed in the contemplation of a cabinet portrait in imitation of the style of Sully, and not half a bad thing in its way, I heard a prolonged and pathetic whistle issue from the lips of Daisy.

Instantly I felt that there was trouble brewing for the infant, and made my way to where he stood, his hat jammed hard on the back of his head, both hands crammed in the lowermost section of his pockets, his feet widely separated and acting as blocks to his braced legs.

Helpless dismay rested upon every feature of his ingenuous countenance, and with all my sympathies called into quick array, I looked from Daisy to the picture before which he had struck this magic pose.

It was just a panel, representing a deep stone doorway, above which there was a little niche, holding a small stone image of the Virgin. In this doorway there was the figure of a girl, with a face more beautiful than Correggio's "Madonna," but with something of the "Venus Victrix," done in color in it.

"The Little Saint, by Jove!" said I.

"My Anna!" murmured Daisy.

Then we looked for a moment into each other's eyes, and for the first time I understood what it is to be a boy, and to have worshipped long and with a secret kindling of purest passion at the shrine of an ideal woman who may one day be clasped in the flesh.

The same thought had touched us both, and I managed to carry the other men off, leaving Daisy to hunt out the story of the strange, new expression we had both detected upon the painted face of the "Little Saint."

It was quite dark when Daisy came to my rooms, and I was sitting in the gloaming as was sometimes my fancy. I arose to light the candles, but with a motion of his hand to prevent it, Daisy sat down quietly and said:

"It is all right, Teddy; she is married to that artist fellow. It was a case of love at first sight—mutual, you know—and as the old Sisters made a row about it, they ran away."

Nothing more was said for a long time. I somehow found myself holding the lad's hand in a strong clasp, but at last he turned his face so that the firelight shone for a moment upon it, and I saw a tear where I never saw one before.

"I hope she is happy, Teddy!" he finally said, and I, thinking Daisy Butterfield's the softest, truest and honestest heart in all the world, only answered:

"God bless you, Daisy—I hope so."

HEARTH AND HOME.

ECONOMY.—To a poor man, an economical wife is a treasure. It is astonishing to see how well a family can live upon a small income when the wife and mother is handy, industrious, and economical. The husband may earn but a pound a week, yet they make a far better appearance than their neighbour who earns twice or thrice as much. This neighbour does his part well, but the wife is good for nothing. She will even upbraid her husband for not living as nicely as her neighbour, while the fault is entirely her own. The difference is, that the one wife is a neat, capable woman, while the other is selfish and extravagant.

AUTOGRAPHS.—If those flattering friends who send to an author for his autograph would only take the trouble to pay the post, their incense would burn less smokingly on the altar of his vanity. One other hint: authors, like comets, are erratic, and a letter may follow them all over the country, and reach them at last, taxed with a dozen postages, although the first may have been fairly paid. Considering that fame is the greatest share of most authors' profits in their vocation, this is rather hard. It is another evidence, however, of the verity of the Scripture, which saith, "From him that hath not, shall be taken even that which he hath."

SELF-CONFIDENCE.—There are certain obstacles in every path that can be overcome only by the presence of self-confidence. There are outward hindrances to encounter, opposition to meet, difficulties to surmount, prejudices to sweep away, the very presence of which will terrify and appal the wavering and despondent, while they will melt away before the firm dignity of self-respect and self-reliance. There are also the innumerable obstacles from within, inclinations to curb, passions to restrain, desires to guide, temptations to resist; these also need not only the power to deal with them, but a confidence in that power that can alone make it effective.

TEMPER.—Temper is like the jagged bit which saws a horse's mouth; the more you irritate him with it the more ungovernable he becomes. Boys get a great deal of temper and selfishness and the spirit of bullying others knocked out of them at public schools; girls, however, especially those who never leave their homes, are accustomed to have it "all their own way," and fancy life is always to be all *coulour de rose*. But, when they marry and leave their luxurious home, and the spoiling and petting of silly and absurdly fond parents, and are launched on the world, to stand or fall by their merits alone, what becomes of them? Alas, too often, like leaves dropped from the branch, they are driven by adverse winds, until their very existence seems a failure.

LITERARY.

THERE are about 490 newspapers, magazines, &c., in New York city.

THE last issue of the *Winnipeg Daily Times* has appeared. It is understood that it has been sold to the proprietor of the *Tribune*.

GOETHE once presented a set of his works to Harvard College Library—a fact which has just been brought to light in making a new catalogue of the German literature of the library.

MR. TENNYSON—of whom it has before been stated that he was a Spiritualist—is said to have so firm a conviction as to personal immortality that he cannot bear the slightest contradiction on that subject.

MR. ROBERT BUCHANAN has written a poem of about 800 lines, which will appear in *The Contemporary Review*. It will be called "Justinian," and is the story of a child of that name who has been brought up without religious ideas of any kind.

THE Pope's new paper, the *Aurora*, sells for twenty centesimi, or four cents, and is printed on whiter paper than any other journal in Italy. The leading articles are written by men of European reputation and refer chiefly to social and political topics connected with religion.

BARON RAYLEIGH, who has been elected Professor of Experimental Physics at Cambridge, is the first peer who has been a professor in the university. Lord Rayleigh is a man of vigorous intellect, and is the author of the most elaborate treatise on sound in the English language.

AMONG the useful papers promised for the February *St. Nicholas* will be one on the Audiphone, that recent and admirable invention by which persons, so deaf that they have never heard a sound in their lives, can be made to hear music, the human voice, and all the beautiful sounds of nature. This paper will doubtless be of interest to old and young.

THE success of recent numbers of *Scribner* has been so marked, that the edition of the February number has been placed at 125,000. This number will contain the first part of Eugene Schuyler's illustrated life of Peter the Great, which is said to be graphic and interesting to an unusual degree; also Mrs. Burnett's new story, "Louisiana," which will present some strong contrasts of character; a rollicking paper on bicycling, entitled, "A Wheel Around the Hub," and other features.

AFTER the numerous discussions of Mr. Edison's Electric Light, it will be interesting to see exactly what claims for it Mr. Edison himself is willing to endorse. A paper is announced to appear in the midwinter *Scribner* by Mr. Edison's mathematician and assistant, Mr. Francis R. Upton, which, besides the writer's intimate connection with the invention itself, has the further voucher of a letter from Mr. Edison, certifying that it is "the first correct and authoritative account." It is said that the paper will contain much that has not and will not be elsewhere published.

Consumption Cured.

An old physician, retired from practice, having had placed in his hands, by an East India missionary, the formula of a simple vegetable remedy for the speedy and permanent cure for Consumption, Bronchitis, Catarrh, Asthma, and all Throat and Lung Affections, also a positive and radical cure for Nervous Debility and Nervous Complaints, after having tested its wonderful curative powers in thousands of cases, has felt it his duty to make it known to his suffering fellows. Actuated by this motive and a desire to relieve human suffering, I will send free of charge to all who desire it, this recipe, in German, French, or English, with full directions for preparing and using. Sent by mail by addressing with stamp, naming this paper. W. W. SNERAB, 149 Powers' Block, Rochester, N. Y.