

A Christmas Tale from Newfoundland.

Christmas Eve, and the snow falling fast; but cosy warmth in the library of Acton Hall, where, gazing thoughtfully into the glowing coals, sat a young man in the dress of a Divinity Student. He started, and rose respectfully to his feet, as the door opened and a white-haired priest entered, his coat sprinkled with snow, and his aged form bowed with fatigue. "Did you think I was never coming, my boy? Thank God, there were many at confession to-night, and I could not leave the Church earlier." "The time has not seemed long to me, Father. I have had much to think of. If I live, where shall I be next Christmas?" and he glanced at the crimson sash he wore, marking him as set apart for missionary work. "As long as you are working, ay, or even suffering for our dear Lord, Cyril, it does not much matter—not that I shall not be glad to have your strong arm to lean on going to the convent to-night," he added, with a kind smile and affectionate pressure of his hand on the young man's shoulder. Then, drawing a chair to the fire, he sat down, and stirring the coals into a bright blaze, said thoughtfully: "The cold and the snow and your red sash have reminded me strongly to-night of an adventure that happened to me many a long year ago on Christmas Eve; would you care to hear it?" "Indeed I should," said the young student with an interested look, and his uncle resumed.

"I had not been ordained priest many months, when I was sent out on the mission to Newfoundland, a lovely country in summer, but cold, desolate and dreary through the long winter. But if the outer aspect of things is dark, the Faith and love of the people are warm and bright, and it seemed to my youthful enthusiasm as if the early days of Christianity had returned, when I saw the fervent Faith, implicit obedience, and humble trust in their priests, of these simple Newfoundlanders. An old college friend of mine was stationed at a distant out-harbor, and thither a week before Christmas the Bishop sent me in his own catamaran, a small sledge like an Irish car set with runners. I was two days on my journey, sleeping each night at some out-harbor Presbytery, and meeting always with a warm welcome and hearty hospitality. Very lonely these priestly dwellings appeared to me, but when on the third afternoon I neared my destination, it looked the very acme of desolation. The village, composed of small wooden houses, was built close down on the harbor, but the Church and the Presbytery were perched half-way up the hill some two miles distant, and seemed to stand quite alone. I learned afterwards that this was to put them within reach of two other villages, four and five miles off. At the sound of sledge-bells the door of the Presbytery was flung open, and in another moment I was standing in front of a blazing fire and clasping the hand of my dear friend, Cyril Northcote. It is fifty years since, but I can see, as if it were yesterday, the tall slight figure, the bright brown eyes, and the fair cheek colored with an almost hectic flush, and his clear voice speaking words of welcome and encouragement.

"With the daily Mass and the work to be done for Christ's flock, we could not be dull, and it was very kind and thoughtful of the Bishop to let us be together; left alone one did sometimes get a trifle depressed. The hours kept in Newfoundland are early, and by ten o'clock I found myself in my little bedroom at the back of my friend's; he had given it to me, he explained, as the warmest. We had said night prayers in the tiny oratory, at which the solitary domestic, a nice old Irish woman, Bridget McCarthy, had assisted, and now my friend only lingered to see that I had all I wanted, and I faced with a half desire to say something particular, but at last he contented himself with reminding me that my room was over the kitchen, and that therefore I must not be surprised if I heard knocking for a 'sick call' during the night, and with an earnest 'God bless you,' he left me to repose.

"I watched the slow dying of the embers of the fire kindled in honor of my 'first night,' and fell asleep about eleven. Always a light sleeper, I was sure to be specially so in a new place, but it seemed a very short time before I started up quite awake with the impression of hear-

ing some noise outside. I listened and distinctly heard a knocking at the kitchen door just below me. I lay back with the ejaculation, 'A sick-call; poor Cyril! what a night for him to go out into!' for it had begun to sleet disagreeably before going to bed. I knew he would not let me go, so thought it was no use to stir. I was very tired with my journey. The knocking continued, and I shortly heard a woman's step come out of the opposite room, descend the stairs, and open the kitchen door. A short parley followed, and then Bridget, as I supposed, mounted the stairs again and spoke to her master. I heard him go down and cross the yard to the little stable, bring out the sledge, and evidently put to the horse, as I heard the soft jingle of the little bells, with which the harness of a sledge is always provided in Newfoundland. Then the vehicle ground for a minute on the stone paved-yard and the bells chimed merrily as the sledge glided away over the snow. I listened till all was perfectly still again and then dropped into a deep sleep that lasted till Bridget's tap at the door.

"It had been arranged the night before that I should say Mass in the Oratory, so Cyril and I did not meet until breakfast; then he inquired anxiously if I had slept well. "Yes, but of course your sick-call awoke me," I replied. "My sick-call," he said slowly and enquiringly. "Yes, what is the matter? I heard you harness the sledge, and never heard the bells sound so sweet." A look of the deepest sorrow came across his face as he said hesitatingly, "I had no sick-call last night; you must have heard the Ghost, as the people about here call it, whenever a fresh priest sleeps in the house, he hears the sounds. Alas! for the poor souls by reason of whom they are heard." "You think it then," I said, somewhat awed by his manner, "a mode in which some poor souls are begging our prayers to aid them in their sufferings for a fault committed here." "Some sick-call neglected while on earth," he said quickly, his eyes shining with compassion. "I have said Masses, prayed, and as yet in vain, but," he added with a bright smile, "I think our Blessed Lady will obtain for me that I may help them at last. I have tried to find out any story or tradition that could possibly throw a light on the matter, but as yet have discovered nothing. You will give them an intention, won't you, Stephen?" I promised I would do so, and going out into the village with him, tried to get over the weird, uncomfortable feelings which the events of the night had left in my mind, but was constantly reminded of them by the questions of the people, who were most anxious to know whether or no I had heard the 'Ghost.'

"The week passed quickly in parish visiting, devotions, composition of sermons, and long confidential talks. It seemed to me that Cyril had attained to heights of holiness, in the short time we had been separated, that placed him far above me, but he tried in his humility to place himself beneath me, and to defer to my judgment and opinion. The only thing that grieved me was the extremely delicate state of his health; his cough was frequent, and I heard of terrible night perspirations from Bridget.

"On the morning of Christmas Eve as we were sitting at breakfast, a boy on a rick pony rode up to the door and demanded to see Father Northcote. Cyril went out, brought him in to the fire, and gave him a cup of coffee and a hunch of bread and butter. He was a bright-faced sailor lad and said he had come to fetch the Father to see Mrs. Donovan at West Cove. 'But I thought Mrs. Donovan was a Protestant; I'm sure she told me so,' remarked Cyril. 'Yes, Father, and a werry black-un, I've always heard, but she's took bad now and says she won't have the Parson and must see you.' 'Let me go, Cyril,' I broke in. 'I shall do for this as well as you, and you have more to do to-day than you have strength for.' 'Reg pardon, Sir, but Mother Donovan said as how nobody but Father Northcote was to enter her doors,' interrupted the boy. 'There, Stephen,' said Cyril, cheerily, 'you see you won't do as well as I; but I will ask you to do other things for me if you will.' I assented gladly, and after receiving his directions saw him depart for West Cove on nearly as rough a pony as that of his guide.

"In the dusk of the evening Cyril returned and came into the sitting room, as I was taking a few minutes' rest. He looked weary, but there was a suppressed excitement in his manner, and he said abruptly, 'Stephen, I've found out the mystery of the midnight sick-call, and have permission to reveal it. Thirty years ago a young priest was stationed here and lived alone with his mother. One Christmas Eve, Mrs. Donovan, the woman I have been to see to-day, sent for him in haste to her dying husband, who, once a good Catholic, had fallen into bad company and bad ways. As death approached, Donovan became terribly frightened, and made no opposition when his wife insisted on sending for the priest. It was an awful night, and bitterly did the priest's mother resent his being disturbed, and pleaded the importance of the next services. To the point, however, of preparing the sledge, and setting forth, the young priest was firm, but as they came out into the open and felt the whole force of the terrible snow storm, his courage gave away, and, alas! he returned home. All through the night Mrs. Donovan watched and waited, trembling at the sound of her husband's groans, and vainly trying to elicit acts of Contrition. 'Wait till the priest comes,' was all he would say, and so, unrepentant and unabsolved, as morning dawned he passed away.

"In the course of the day the priest came over, but Mrs. Donovan cursed him to his face, and from that time to this, abjured her Faith and was thought to be a black Protestant by the people in West Cove, where she moved from Lord Bay. The priest never held up his head from that sad Christmas Eve, but pined away into a sort of decline and died within the year, and ever since—' Cyril paused and hid his face. We each murmured a 'De Profundis,' and then I enquired if Mrs. Donovan had come back to the Church. 'No, all my persuasions were unavailing. 'She would have no more to do with a Church that had let her husband die like a dog,' she said; 'but I cannot help hoping she may send for me at the last, and that might be to-night,' he added eagerly, 'and perhaps—' he paused and I added, 'God might accept the sacrifice and pardon the guilty.'

"I did not know then how entire a sacrifice would be required. Cyril's cough was incessant, that evening, but he would go to the confessional and was detained there until '10 o'clock. Then he acknowledge himself worn out and let me put him to bed and give him a warm drink. I left him asleep, breathing more quietly and with a brow relaxed and peaceful as a child's. I too was soon asleep, but was aroused, while it was still quite dark, by a knocking at the kitchen door. At first I shuddered and said a prayer, dreading to hear the tinkle of the mysterious sledge bells, but soon recognized the sound as very human knocking, and the shouts as being for 'Father Northcote.' I threw on my dressing gown and met Cyril on the landing. We went down together and found the same fisher boy as had come yesterday from West Cove. 'Mother Donovan is going fast, please, Father, and is calling out fearful for you,' he said with chattering teeth, 'but, oh my! ain't it cold?' I had drawn him in and shut the door; the cold air had already made Cyril cough as if he would never stop. 'Mother says it's downright aggravating of her not to have made up her mind this afternoon, but it's just like women,' he added contemptuously. 'Oh! and please, Father, may I stop here till Mass time to-morrow?' 'Certainly, my boy,' said Cyril kindly; 'you shall have my bed; it's past twelve, and I mustn't offer you anything to eat.' 'No, thank ye, Father.'

"Cyril, I said, 'are you sure you must go? don't you think this time I might do? I shall never forget his look in answer; it was an expression I could imagine on the face of a martyr, and yet full of exultation. 'Dear Stephen, no, I must go myself; you will say the first two Masses early, and the last at ten in case I may not be able to return, and pray for me.' 'But must you go alone?' 'Yes, with my Guardian Angel,' he said with a smile. I made him muffle his mouth in my warmest comforter, and my heart was heavy, you may be sure, as I watched him ride away.

"Such a night I have never seen in Newfoundland; the wind blew, the snow drifted, the sky was dark with heavy clouds, and Cyril had five miles to go and to return. I had heard numerous confessions, given Holy Communion to crowds of devout worshippers, and said my third Mass, when, just as eleven struck, Cyril entered the Church. He looked fearfully exhausted, and a crimson spot burned on each cheek, but the most perfect peace and thankfulness were on his brow. He said his short

confession to me, and smiled happily, as he spoke of the deep contrition, forgiveness and faith in which Mrs. Donovan had died. 'The course is removed, I trust,' he added, 'and now I am going to say my Mass for the poor souls.' He could hardly speak, and his breathing was very short. I helped him to vest and served his Mass; when it was completed he turned as if to begin the second, staggered and fell back insensible. I hastened to his side, and we carried him to the first bench we could find, and threw water in his face. His eyes opened wide and turned to the altar; he said once, 'Jesus,' and then, as I gave him the Absolution and Blessing, dropped back dead.

"Three or four strange priests came to the funeral and slept in the house the night before it, but neither they, nor any others ever again heard the ghostly sick-call, and we may truly hope that the faithfulness of the one priest even unto death, had atoned for the weakness of the other.

"And now, my boy, you know another reason why I persuaded your mother to call you Cyril, and rejoiced when you told me you desired to become a missionary."

"God Grant I may follow the example set before me," said the young Student earnestly.

"Hark!" said the old man, rising and resuming his cloak, "the chimes are beginning for the Midnight Mass;" and taking his pupil's arm they went together through the snow to kneel in the Convent Chapel, and thank God for His great Gift, the origin and source of all Faith and all self-devotion.—H. M. Lushington, in St. Andrew's Magazine.

Notes for Farmers

Following are 12 leading varieties of Indian corn for 1902:—

	Tons.	Pounds.
Eureka	32	460
North Dakota Yellow	31	1800
Saltzer's All Gold	30	60
King Philip	28	820
Early Butler	26	1020
Thoroughbred White Flint	26	860
Mammoth Eight Rowed Flint	26	140
Country Gentleman	25	1700
Superior Fodder	25	900
White Cap Yellow Dint	24	1500
Sanford	24	1280
North Dakota White	24	840

Thirty-six varieties were tested, compared with 37 last year. Superior Fodder, Early Butler and Thoroughbred White Flint are three varieties that were among the 12 best last year.

Twelve varieties that have given good results for an average of from 8 to 7 years with their yields are:

	Tons.	Pounds.
Early Mastodon	21	690
Cloud's Early Yellow	19	1001
Yellow Cob Ensilage	19	657
Thoroughbred White Flint	19	184
Selected Learning	18	1210
Early Butler	18	928
Mammoth Cuban	18	626
Giant Prolific Ensilage	17	1976
Pride of the North	17	1141
Champion White Pearl	17	1054
Angel of Midnight	17	257
Mammoth East Rowed Flint	16	1536

Thoroughbred White Flint, Early Butler and Mammoth Eight Rowed Flint are the three leading varieties in 1902 which appear among the best for a period of years.

It is noticed that the past year was an unusually good one for test plots of corn. The 12 best varieties range from 24 1/2 tons per acre to 32 tons, while in 1901 the yield was from 21 to 24 tons.

The test for 1901 was as follows. Twelve of the best from 37 varieties tested are given:

	Tons.	Pounds.
Superior Fodder	24	840
Early Mastodon	24	400
Early Butler	23	1800
Thoroughbred White Flint	23	200
Extra Early Huron	22	1760
Cloud's Early Yellow	22	1540
Giant Prolific Ensilage	22	1540
Selected Learning	22	1120
Red Cob Ensilage	22	460
Evergreen Sugar	21	460
Champion White Pearl	21	460
Rennies B. B.	21	460

These lists show farmers the importance of selecting their seed. In 1901, varieties yielded as low as 8 1/2 tons. Those that yielded less than 10 tons are Saltzer's Earliest Ripe, Extra Early Syclopedia, Yellow Six Weeks, Mitchell's Extra Early.

Low yielding varieties chosen from the best of seeds tested for an average of from Long Eared, 14 tons 1,887 pounds; Kendall's Early Giant, 14 tons 1,787 pounds; Black Mexican, 14 tons 1,127 pounds; Extra Early Huron Dent, 14 tons 1,004 pounds; Extra Early Syclopedia, 12 tons 789 pounds; Mitchell's Extra Early, 11 tons 1,042 pounds; Yellow Six Weeks, 10 tons 1,574 pounds.

Farmers having these varieties in stock would do well to supplant them with others.

Corn is an important crop, and the area under corn on most farms is increasing every year. Silos in this part of Ontario are numerous and good results are obtained from them. It would be unwise to expend money on silo structure and other incidental expenses in connection with corn cutting, and neglect the salient point of sowing the best seed. It is frequently the case that farmers blame poor land and poor seasons, when the real cause of the small yields is sowing inferior seed.

The Eastern Ontario Dairymen's Association has arranged for an important convention in Ottawa on January 7th, 8th and 9th. It is expected that 1,000 dairymen will be present. The meetings will be held in the Normal School. Subjects of much importance will be dealt with by some of the best authorities in the Dominion, assisted by eminent Americans.

The manufacture of butter and cheese is essential to the most profitable management of every farm. It will therefore be to the benefit of all farmers to attend this important convention, the best of its kind ever held for Ottawa.

Among the leading dairymen who have been invited to speak, and most of whom have already consented are the Hon. Sydney Fisher, Dominion

Minister of Agriculture; Hon. John Dryden, Minister of Agriculture, Ontario; Prof. Jas. W. Robertson, Commissioner of Agriculture and Dairying; Mr. J. A. Ruddick, chief dairy division, Dominion Department of Agriculture; Prof. C. C. James, Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Ontario; Dr. Connel and Superintendent J. W. Hart, Kingston Dairy School; the instructors of the Dairymen's Association, and many others. It is altogether likely that Major Alvord, of Washington, D.C., chief of the dairy division, United States Department of Agriculture, will be present. He has been invited, and replied that he hopes to be able to be present.

The citizens of Ottawa will attend an open meeting Wednesday, the first day of the convention. A musical programme will be added to the list of speeches.

The other special sessions will include one for cheese makers, one for butter makers, and one for patrons of cheese factories.

Reduced railway rates have been secured.

The district covered by the Eastern Ontario Dairymen's Association extends from Toronto to the eastern limit of the province. The convention at Whitty last year was very successful. It is a departure from previous custom to have the convention in a town so far north as Ottawa. If dairymen in this district take the interest that they should take, Ottawa will soon be given the consideration that it deserves. The success of the recent cheese boards banquet has done much to give the Capital a reputation.

Professor J. W. Robertson, Dominion Dairy Commissioner, is doing much to assist the enterprise. For the promotion of dairying in Ontario, the Eastern Ontario Dairymen's Association expend in the neighborhood of \$10,000 annually.

St. Edward's Shrine.

One very queer feature of English Protestantism is that it has invariably commenced by abolishing and uprooting everything distinctively Catholic, and then, just as invariably, attempted to revive that which it had destroyed in a form that merely indicated a degree of meaningless imitation. Take for example the recent action of the authorities in connection with Westminster Abbey, who have sought to erect an altar to the honor of St. Edward, the royal Confessor, to replace that which had been destroyed generations ago. In the west end of the Abbey, at the shrine of St. Edward this strange kind of altar has been erected by those now in charge of the edifice. The remarks of a London Catholic organ, on the subject, are very pertinent. It says:—

"In former days it is certain that an altar did stand on this exact spot. It was erected by no less exalted a client of the great English King-Saint than Henry III. himself who spent a huge sum of money preparing what has been described as a jewelled shrine for the relics of the Confessor. The present altar, which has been put up by the Protestant custodians of the Abbey, is utterly out of place with the style of the surrounding structure. It is composed of a slab of heavy black marble, standing on four plain marble legs, which bulge in the middle, and sagged beneath and in front with black marble to match. In still worse taste probably is the gilded frieze which has been plastered on the shrine itself to carry the nails bearing the curtains that have been removed from the rear of the altar. As some one has written, 'a piece of gaudy Axminster carpet sewn into an antique, silk Persian rug could scarcely be more incongruous.'

We fail to see what the object of such an altar can be. It is neither intended for a sacrifice to be offered thereon—the general purpose of an altar—nor yet does it seem to be intended as a monument. According to the description we would take it to be a very funeral-looking table with a marble cover. However, it is not our concern and we need not trouble ourselves, any more than does St. Edward, about it.

CATHOLICS AND PUBLIC DUTIES

"To take no part in public affairs would be as wrong as to bestow no care or labor for the common good, and the more so because Catholics are admonished by the very doctrines they profess to be upright and faithful in the discharge of office; but if they remain inactive, men whose opinions give but small guarantee for the well-being of the State will easily seize the reins of government."—From Encyclical of Leo XIII. on the Constitution of States.

Why, what is it Susan Garvey? sitting there a breakfast for the utes! Christmas you after coming after frying the pies just for you mas! I'm sure ming Adeste Fidei dressing and G "Thanks be to eleven years since you've never sun never told you Father Martin h you back to the he only the Sun do wish Susan v the Christmas m is home," says he days and that re 'that Susan has choir since Hele how you sang th shall never forgo to Father Marti ther! Susan has her ways. You was at that Mas ven days after M way to our grie down and mope nobody ever had in the world but what I told him the truth. Of co the front door a improvements w place—five good store rooms and everything ren'd clear. Yet, it se ourselves are all and out. It's C and here we sit. Not a living sou happy Christmas when we begrud small share of it upon us. You proached you or may as well tell hard thoughts of at first Mass whi dren singing a Here her voice of her face in her h and fro with the emotion.

The younger s dark-haired wom five years, rose o to where her sist hands beseeching frightened way, suddenness of h Mary, come back sing in the choru Oh, yes, I mean cried as her sist much surprised t with her wraps them on.

"I just took a a longing, to jo explained Susan or, as he came f hands and wish mas.

"So good of y said, handing h which he held w expected her, S and with fast-burning cheeks, "

When Mass wa walked home to changing a word "We'll be two dinner now," sated the house, py, Susan, that eat the finest di cooked."

"Never mind th san. "Let us si talk to you."

"But the bres cleared. I'll jus way."

"Oh, never min Susan picked up and sat down, c close to her sist ly: "Mary, we morning that we up inside and simple truth, b dear, as you nig I in my blind se shrivelling. And tell you why I di mean to. I was