

from the evidence which he knew she could give if he brought a charge against Ned, she was actually preparing to leave the castle forever.

The parish church was quite close to the lodge gates, and in summer and winter, in heat and cold, it was open all day long, from early morning to dewy eve, for all who desired to enter there and offer their supplications to the hidden king, who waited for them upon his altar-throne. Three Masses were said there every day by Father Cavanagh, and his faithful curates. If any one wanted advice, or help, or wished to obtain pardon of his sins in the way appointed by God himself, he had only to go to the door of a neat, small house, which adjoined the church, and ask for a priest.

It would be necessary to return to the times when priests were hunted, and masses were forbidden by men, though ordained to be said by God, before this present generation could appreciate, as they should, their many privileges. Ellie seldom missed hearing the eight o'clock mass. She rose early, and got forward with her morning duties, and thus had an hour to spare before she was required again.

She had gone to bed after the events of the night; sleep was hopeless; but she considered her position very carefully. She did not know that Mr. Elmsdale's feelings of love, if they had ever deserved so sacred a name, had been turned to revenge, and though she was by no means a model of perfection (who is?), she was quite good enough, and just wise enough to distrust her own powers of resistance, if pressed too hard. It must be admitted, also that her vanity was a little touched by the idea of a great gentleman offering to shoot himself dead at her feet; and if she ever had had a spark of affection for Ned Rusheen it was all gone now, since he had presumed to lay violent hands on her admirer.

A little taint of vanity is like a little drop of poison: it works on and on through the whole moral nature, and, if a remedy is not promptly applied, it discolors and distorts every object, so that the mind becomes actually incapable of reasoning correctly.

Ellie's vanity was touched, it was but

then one little temptation which the devil contrived to work into her mind. She did not see it, and, therefore, she did not resist it. She would have shrunk back with horror from a great temptation; but this little one escaped observation from its very insignificance, and yet we know that a very, very small leak will sometimes cause the destruction of a large vessel.

She put on her walking-dress mechanically, and set out for Mass. If she had met Mr. Elmsdale in her then state of mind, and if he had spoken kindly to her, it is impossible to say what the result might have been. But Ellie was a truly earnest, faithful Christian, and when she did not put herself in the way of temptation she might expect help, however tried. Happily for her, she met Father Cavanagh, just as she was about to enter the chapel. He would, in any case, have noticed her extreme paleness, and the evident sign which her swollen eyes gave that she had spent the night in tears, but he was already informed by Ned of what had happened at the Castle during the night.

Ned had met the priest an hour before on the road, as he was returning from a sick call, and told his story not omitting his own share in the transaction. Father Cavanagh tried to suppress a smile, even as he rated him soundly for his violence, and suspected what was the truth, that he would never have heard a word of the affair out of the Confessional from Ned, if his anxiety about Ellie had not prompted him to give the information. "And if your Reverence thinks well of it, I am sure Ellie McCarthy would be better out of that; for there's neither peace nor safety for a poor girl like her when a fine gentleman's wanting her company."

But Father Cavanagh had not quite made up his mind on the subject, and as he expressed no opinion, and Ned could not exactly venture to ask for one, he was left in a by no means enviable or amiable frame of mind.

"Crying, Ellie, eh? What's amiss now?"

A burst of tears was the only reply. Father Cavanagh saw she was very much distressed, and changed his tone for one of kindly sympathy. He motioned her to follow him to his house,