## WROUGHT IN DARKNESS

2

edict looked at the little Mother Benedict looked at the little white-robed figure with some anxiety when, following the impulse of Sister Martha's hand, the girl entered the pew. Her thin fingers groped for the back of the seat in front of her, and, finding it, she moved slowly until Mother Benedict touched her, when she sank to her knees. The child seemed so frail-looking to-day, thought the good nun, and those blue eyes, in which it was hard to believe there was no sight, were dazaling. Far too bright, she told herself. Then the Sister lifted the cross of the roary to her lips and her gaze hereelf. Then the Sister lifted the cross of the rosary to her lips and her gaze sought the altar, where her Spouse reigned. But so torn was her mind with con-

reigned. But so torn was her mind with con-flicting emotions that she found it hard to concentrate her thoughts. In the dusk of the chapel Sister Martha's white face seemed illumined; her eyes were riveted on the tabernacle, her lips were parted. The girl face beside her, wistful, delicate, appealing, seemed very human beside the exquisite rap-ture which was so plainly mirrored on the countenance of the religions. Mother Benedict felt the tears in her eyes. Again her gaze went to the altar, but this time in contrition for her momentary abstraction. It was said that one glance at Sister Martha's face during Benediction could inspire de-votion in a heart of stone. Dae by one the nuns came in, dropped to their knees with a fluttering, noise-less movement, and then softly entered was so quiet that it seemed deserted. And consciously or unconsciously, as each religious entered her glance ingites form of Lolita Graham, kneel-ing with folded hands between their mother and the Sister Martha's fueved to be a saint-Sister Martha, ever busy as her prototype, but silent and contem-plative as Marty.

in the convent save herself believed to be a saint-Sister Martha, ever busy as her prototype, but silent and contem-plative as Mary. The affair was so strange, so odd that it had interested more than the good Sisters. Dr. Barstow was engrossed in it, and two specialists, who, after careful and prolonged examination, had asserted that no powe on earth could save the girl's sight. The gool priest, Father Lewis, was anxious as Mother Benedict herself, knowing the child's history. Lolita Graham had been left with the Sisters two years before, on the depar-ture of her mother and father for Europe. Mrs. Graham had been under instruction for some months, but in spite of this, and while agreeing to place their one child with the nuns, Ralph Graham stipulated that Lolita must be left perfectly free to make her own choice. If, after observing the Oatholic faith as it was practiced about her, she wished to adopt it, he would have no chind. her, she wished to adopt it, he would have no objection.

What she chooses of her own free

"What she chooses of her own free will she may have," said the father, who frankly confessed his own lack of any religious training. "But her choice shall not be made for her." Yet Lolita Graham seemed glited from the very beginning with the true Catholic instinct. "I should like to pray with you, mother," she said when she had been there a few weeks. "One feels so near to heaven in this house." Mother Benedict knew that Mrs. Graham could live only a very few years. The struggle was not so much to save life as to prolong it, and to this end Ralph Graham had devoted himself surrounding the frail woman with all that love and luxury cou d provide. Yet while the battle waged in the little town in Southern France Lolits, alone, save for the devoted care of the nuns, save for the devoted care of the nuns, entered upon a battle of her own. From the very first illness prostrated her, one sickness seizing her as soon as another had worn off, or even before culminating in the attack that had left better if he would come and take

"My dear little girl," Sister Martha had said, "the Sisters are praying to God's Blessed Mother, asking her to intercede for you and bring you back your sight on Christmas Day. You

intercent for you and bring you back your sight on Christmas Day. You must join with them and ask her, too, if that is God's wish for you." In her childish, tired way Lolits Graham acquiceed. Very gently the Sisters broke the news of her mother's death and told her of her father's wisher

"I would like to be baptized when ther comes," she said. "It will please im, I know, since he wants me to be a

him, I know, since he wants me to be a Catholic." So the matter had rested during the days that intervened. Lolits joined in the prayers with the greatest fervor. To-day, however, as she kneit during Benediction she was conscious only of fatigue-great fatigue. She never complained; she was cast in a patient mould, and constant illness had robbed her of much protesting. As she sank down beside Sister Martha her thoughts were confused. The priest came out in his robes, Sister Gervase's beautiful soprano thrilled through the ohapel; the music of the organ swelled and throbbed. There was silence then, with only the tinkle of the little bell to announce the great blessing. They had announce the great blessing. They had risen at the "Laudate," when, very quietly, Lolita put her hand on Sister Martha's arm.

"How many lights are there on the lessed Virgin's altar ?" she asked.

Blessed Virgin's altar ?" she asked. "Many, dear," whispered the nun, be-ginning to tremble. "Seven, fourteen, twenty-one, twenty-eight-the big can-delabra having been brought out for all "Yes, sister. I can see them I think."

"My dear child i" "Only a little, little light, Sister. I must wait. I must keep very quiet and I shall see better presently." The thrill that shook Sister Martha

from head to foot seemed to quiver through the whole assembly of nuns. Almost instantly each grasped the fact that the prayers of the community were about to be answered; that God meant signally to reward their faith in Him. Deep awe, overpowering adoration swept across each soul. At the close of the "Laudate" they knelt again, re-doubling their supplications, while the hush that filled the chapel could be felt, it was so fraught with silent

"I can see her orown now, Sister," said the tired little voice, which seemed to take no interest in the great event. "And the lights are so bright, so very

"And the lights are so bright, so very bright. They hurt me." "Be quiet, dear child, be quiet," whispered Mother Benedict. "Yes, mother. There—her hand is coming—the hand she points towards the Infant. And there is the other hand. And now the Baby's feet — His fingers—his head. I can see the Infant very plainly, Sister. Ah! There is the Mother's face. She is smiling at me. Is my mother there with you — somewhere—"

The little head fell softly against the Sister. The child had gone to sleep Mother Benedict leaned forward and

Mother Benedict leaned forward and lifted her in her strong arms, while Sister Martha drew saide to let her pass. The other nuns went out one by one, until only Sister Martha remained, a look of rapture on her calm white face. She hardly heeded the fact that a miracle

She hardly heeded the fact that a miracle had been accomplished. Here eyes were fastened on the tabernacle, and in that moment she saw what it was that the tabernacle held. The earthly covering fell away, and she beheld the God she fell away, and she beheld the God she worshipped. Her eyes were shining with a light that partook rather of heaven than of earth. Her thin hands were folded, the beads lying quiescent between them. She had reached the

state of pure contemplation which is given to the ravishment of a few favored souls. One of the Sisters came in and kneit beside her, but after a glance at her face rose again and moved as quietly away. "I did not disturb her, mother," she said. "I doubt if I could." Mother Benedict sat beside the child. The small face seemed less unearthly. She slept peacefully and Motner Bene-dict bent near to ascertain for herself

## THE CATHOLIC RECORD

8

"Why, we shall be delighted; it will be an honor." He smiled at the girl, who had been listening to their conver-sation without taking any part in it. "Your paps will be here soon now," said Mother Benediot. "But I want you to stay with us one more night. To-morrow morning Father Lewis will baptize you. You will want Our Lady's name, too, as well as your own ?" She patted the thin little hand lovingly. Lolita Graham's face flashed suddenly. "I don't know, mother. I don't feel sure of myself."

"I don't know, mother. I don't feel sure of myself." "Ia what way, my dear ?" "Please, mother, I don't want bap-tism. Not yet. I think I'd rather wait." Behind his glasses Dr. Barstow's eyes narrowed suddenly. Mother Benedict looked intently at the carpet before she spoke again.

spoke again. "And why, my dear? Do you not wish to become a child of God, a true daughter of that dear Lady who has been the channel through which your sight has been restored to you?" Lolits Graham besitated so long that

the nun turned a searching glance on "Please-don't look so disappointed, "Please-don't look so disappointed,

"Please—don't look so disappointed, mother," she said, then. "But I can't -not yet. I can't tell you how I feel about this, but it seems to me that I am different. Just different. I couldn't bear to be baptized yet. I must wait must wait.' Dr. Barstow went away, and Mother

Dr. Barstow went sway, and Mother Benedict said no more. She spoke to Father Lewis, however. To please her he had a talk with Lolits, trying to analyze the feelings which had taken possession of her. She could not tell him anything. She only knew that she no longer desired to be baptized, and became so excited and hysterical that all further quertioning was banned at once. When Ralph Graham came for her Mother Banedict had a long talk her Mother Benedict had a long talk with him. His wife's wonderful death

with him. His wife's wonderful death had impressed him greatly. " It was most remarkable," he said, quietly and revently. " I cannot mourn for her as I would if I had not seen it. You did not know her before her sick-ness, but she was always gay and light-hearted, even mischievous. Afterwards when she knew that her illness was to prove fatal, athe became so melanchely

when she knew that her illness was to prove fatal, she became so melancholy that every day she lived seemed a year. When we resched that little French town she put herself under the direction of an English Benedictine in the monas-tery there. She changed almost immedi-ately to her old, lighthearted, happy self, and was so familiar with death and the thought of it that she welcomed it as a dear friend. Her resignation was wonder-ful —beautiful. I cannot get over it. I thank God for it." " We thought Loliia rather inclined

"We thought Loliis rather inclined to be a Catholic," said Mother Benedict. "That is good."

"That is good." "But she is not quite sure yet. We will have to wait. We have told you of her blindness—it will interest you to have a talk with Dr. Barstow about it. He will give you all particulars. He is astounded—but then — being such a good Catholic himself—"

good Catholic himself—" "Another evidence of God's good-ness," said Ralph Graham gently. "Be-cause of it I must complete my studies under Father Lewis. I hope to be re-ceived into the Church before I go away." "You are going away ?"

"Back again. I do not like to feel she is all alone in a strange land." For an instant the veil lifted, and Mother Benedict realized with a gush of tender pity how this grave, reserved man was suffering. "I will take Lolita. You suffering. "I will take Lolita. You can trust her to me, mother." "Oh, I am sure of that; I am sure of that," said Mother Benedict. So Lolita Graham left the convent,

and the month following she and her father departed for the little French tather departed for the little French town which held the grave so dear to both. Kalph Graham saw to it that intercourse between his daughter and the nuns was uninterrupted during that month, but Lolita never spoke of re-ligion again. When they dwelt on the joy of answered prayer, as exemplified in the recovery of her sight, the girl

prayer and vigil and fasting. The call of a soul in darkness had come to her, and she could not let it pass.

"I have fallen in love with your daughter," said Verne Armitage to his friend, Ralph Graham. "And I am twice her age. Absurd, is it not? Yet it is hard to believe she is only eighteen the is so grave, so serious." "Oh," said Ralph Graham, " so that

is what has been the matter with you! I wondered. And the girl?" "But do you not think it a mad

dream ?" "Why should I ? Are you not Verne Armitage, the artist? And you are a good man. I often asked myself what kept you straight, for there have been many to tempt you from the narrow path and you have no anchor." "Have you?"

and you have no abono."
"Have you?"
Yes, my faith, my religious convictions. Before that my wife-I married young, you know-and my child."
"My ideals have kept me," said Verne Armitage. "My ideals embodied in that young creature down there." He pointed to the slim, girlish figure outlined against the tarquoise blue of sky and sea. Her back was toward them.
"She has a heart somewhere, I take it, but no soul. I cannot reach her soul. That is why I have never dared to paint her. I should fail miserably."
"You have never believed in a soul."
"Not until I saw what the lack of one

" Not until I saw what the lack of on

"You make me uneasy, Verne," "I am uneasy myself. What is the matter with Lolits?" "Hush!" said Ralph Graham. "She

is coming." The beautiful girl was approaching

The beautiful girl was approaching them. The color of perfect health glowed in her cheeks, her crimson lips. Every action was graceful, while the large blue eyes which now sought her father's face seemed like the glowing, shining petals of a pansy. "I was out there watching the sea," she said, "and a little mist seemed to rise before my eyes. And I grew tired all at once of this perpetual sunshine, this glory of color. Father, let us go home for Christmas; I want to see the gray winter of the North land. It may be"— she hesitated, then, catching Verne Armitage's intent glance, her cheeks flushed—" it may be for the last time."

"What do you mean ?' asked the

father. "When I saw that mist I knew there was no mist there," she answered simply. "That is the way my blindness came before, with that little mist. I want to go to our old convent to Benediction on Christmas Day. I want to leave the gift Our Lady gave me at the foot of her altar."

Verne Armitage was stunned. warm wave seemed to sweep over him from head to foot, leaving him cold, in-tensely cold. He knew the story of her blindness and what she and her father called her miraculous recovery. Leasing over now, he took her hand in his.

"Do you believe that, Lolita ?" he manded. "Look at me !"

"Do you believe that, Lolita?" he demanded. "Look at me !" She looked at him with steady eyes. "I am positive of it," she answered. "During the five years that I have been away from them I have never said a prayer. This morning I kneit at my bedside and began the Rosary. I was overjoyed. And then when I saw the mist I knew. The Sisters have started their novens for me, and I shall keep it with them. When I am blind sgain my soul can see."

soul can see." At the look that crept across the artist's face Ralph Graham rose

artist's face Ralph Graham rose and left them. Very gently Verne Armitage took her other hand in his. "Lolita," he said brokenly, "if—if that comes true will it matter that you can never see my love for you—my true, undying love for you, save as I can make it evident by lifelong devotion ?" She smiled at him. "I twill not matter, Verne," she said. "I will not meed my sight to under-stand." And then, as he would have

"I will not need my sight to under-stand." And then, as he would have put his arm about her, regardless of possible onlookers: "No, not yet. Come back with me. My gain may be yours as well. Try it." "I will, I will "' a will," he said fervently, "I will, I

**KATHLEEN** 

"Yes, Father—the dispensary doctor. He says one lung is all gone, or nearly and the other is pretty bad."
"My poor child !" I said. "Why, your mether toil me nothin 2 of this." A look of pain tinged with resentment crossed the girl's white brow.
"She doesn't know, Father, and if she did—well, it's only the 'pay envelope' they both seem to care for," said Kath-leen Mulcahey, a touch of bitterness now in her young volce. "But, Father," (she evidently wanted to put that phase of her life aside,) "you said some one was in trouble, and needed me. "Twas that brought me to-night." And she looked at me expectantly.
"God bless you !" I said. "I knew the one who is in trouble, Kathleen."
Taused, and she looked at me a triffe incredulously I must admit.
"An oneed, Father. Tim a good girl." 'No need, Father. I'm a good girl." 'A no ashe lifted her clear glance to mine. Meeting it fully, I knew she spoke the truth. But that "yet." and she lifted her clear glance to mine. Meeting it fully, I knew she spoke the truth. But that "yet." '' And she lifted her clear glance to mine. Meeting it fully, I knew she spoke the truth. But that "yet." '' And she lifted her clear glance to mine. Meeting it fully, I knew she spoke the truth. But that "yet." '' And she lifted her clear glance to mine. Meeting it fully, I knew she spoke the truth. But that "yet." '' Please God, Father 1 It won't be for long. But " (and she lowered her eyees and spoke almost in a whisper) " I wonder if anybody knows how hard it is ?'' I murmured an ejaculation. "We do indeed have strange experi-ences on the missions," said Father Rex. "I suppose if I were to write down some of the things that have really happened to me, people would say I was 'romancing.' And yet-"

-The old missionary paused.

say I was ' romancing.' And yet--" -The old missionary paused. "And yet ' there are more things ' in heaven and earth, Horstio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy,' mur-mured Mrs. Singleton, softly. Father Rex bowed in the direction of the white-haired lady. "Exactly, my dear Madame ! Shakes-peare never penned a truer line. And now don't be frightened, my dear people, young and old "(he turned to the group gathered about him,) "If I tell you a true story of one of my recent missions." So, amid a hushed silence, we lis-tened to a touching narrative. I was giving a two weeks' mission in a large manufacturing city not very far from a certain great metropolis. I was not exactly a stranger in the locality ; for at least three times in the past I had been on mission bands that had been sent to the parish of which I am speaking. Thus I happened to have come in contact with quite a number of the parishioners some of whom I knew fairly well. So when one evening I was called down to the parlor to see a cer-tain Mrs. Mulcahey, I greeted her more or less as an old friend. But Mrs Mulcahey was in dire straits that night ; for, in addition to the usual tale of a drunken husband and other troubles of a similar character, she had a new anxiety owing to the con-duct of her oldest girl, Kathleen, aged is ?" I murmured an ejaculation. "I'm not complaining of the work," she went on quietly ; "I'm used to that now. But—there are other things." I waited and she added, her cheeks

for it seems I have to have it all soon, anyhow" (her voice shook a little); "but for the other girls, hundreds and

other troubles of a similar character, she had a new anxiety owing to the con-duct of her oldest girl, Kathleen, aged nineteen. The exercises of the women's mission were just beginning, and Kath-leen had flatly refused to "make the mission." She had expressed a prefer-ence for the moving picture shows. "And 'tisn't that so much, Father," said Mrs. Mulcabey,dissolving into tears, "but she's taken to running 'round in the evening and coming in at all hours. Maybe it's thinking of getting married she is—if they mean honest by her; and they don't always, running wild like that on the streets, Father. And sure we need her earnings yet, anyway."

that on the streets, Father. And sure we need her earnings yet, anyway." This looked rather serious. Reserv-ing my own opinion of good Mrs. Mul-cahey, I questioned her further, elicit-ing the information that Kathleen was working steadily "in the shop" (the designation by which the great carpet mills of the locality were known;) turned in all her earnings excent a dol turned in all her earnings except a dol turned in all her earnings except a dol-lar or two every week; and was, in fact, as she had been since she was twelve years old, the main support of the family. I well remembered the girl, though I had met her only once,

this getting harder and harder as the years go on. They need so many more things than they used to. But" (and she pulled herself together) "I didn't mean to complain about this; I love the children, poor things. What's mine is thete." theirs. and that somewhat casually, about three years before. She was sixteen at the time, fragile and childlike in appear-I walted a moment, my neart wrung by the picture her few words had placed before me. A quick spasm of pain crossed her mobile features, and then she looked me almost challengingly time, fragile and childlike in appear-ance, and with a sweet, sky manner. Contrary to the provisions of the State law, she had already been at work four years, and faint lines showed sadly around the corners of her soft eyes-eyes of true Irish blue. Even at the time I was vaguely troubled about the girl's future. She seemed too frail, too gently attractive to be thrust forth thus to battle with the world. I safely enrolled her in the Children of Mary, however : and now and then at my straight in the eyes. "I'm not making the mission, Father. I suppose that's what you've heard about me—that and other things." Over the concluding words she flushed a little. I bowed my head mutely; it seemed best to let her go on. "And suppose the 'other things' were true, Father, what would you "" "That depends upon the nature of

enrolled her in the Children of Mary, however; and now and then at my Mass, all unbidden, seemed to come to my lips a special memento for Kathleen Mulcahey. But notitill the evening of which I am speaking had I heard any further tidings of her. "Don't try to coerce her into making the mission," I had advised the tearful Mrs. Mulcahey. "Perhaps she would come to see me?" I added tentatively. "Indeed, Father, she wouldn't," said Mrs. Mulcahey, conclusively. "That depends upon the nature of the 'other things,' Kathleen." The girl rose and walked away from me quite to the other end of the room. When she turned again, there were tears in her eyes. "I think I'd better go, Father. I don't believe I ever can explain things. And—and you've been so kind to me!" She put out her hand timidly to say

"Indeed, Father, she wouldn't," said Mrs. Mulcahey, conclusively. I pondered a moment, then an in-spiration seemed to come to me. I picked up a sheet of paper and scribbled some words like these: "Kathleen, one who is in trouble needs your help. Will you come to see me toomorrow

you suppose." She looked at me steadily for a mo-

She looked at me steadily for a mo-ment; then she said almost in a whis-per, and her face paled instead of flushed this time: "We're so fond of each other, Father --Brian and I; and now I--now I have

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"But sometimes God sends us a grace on a Thursday night which He with-holds from us on a Saturday." She seemed startled for a moment, and then she recovered herself. Tak-iug a little ribbon from under her cloak, she showed me her Child of Mary medal, tarnished a triffe from con-stant wear.

Mary medal, tarnished a trifle from con-stant wear. "She's been looking out for me all these years," said the girl, simply; "and I think she will take care of me till Saturday, Father." The next moment she had slipped through the door and was gone. My thoughts that evening I can hardly put into words. They swept a gamut of emotions. And my sermon—I happened to be the preacher that night —well, they tell me I thundered. A line at least three yards in length bom-barded the sacristy door at the conclu-sion.

barded the sacristy door at the conclu-sion. "O Father, what can we do ?" was the universal plaint. "We didn't know the girls were having so hard a time." "What can you do ?" I said. "Go home and build them a dance hall." The majority of my auditors gasped. "Yes," I repeated, "a dance hall... a good, decent, respectable place, as close to the church as you like-the closer the better-but with plenty of reasonable freedom. Then they won't be going to ruin on the streets. And clean your dirty homes and make them bright and comfortable. (I had caught a glimpse of my friend Mrs. Mulcahey on the outskirts of the throng.) That night I fell into a heavy slum-ber almost as soon as my head touched

ber almost as soon as my head touched the pillow. And so when my night bel the pillow. And so when my night bel: rang it was an instant or two before I realized what the hollow clamor meant. But I was fully awake in another mo-ment as a voice came agonizingly up the tube: "Quick !--hurry, Father ! Come to Mike Mulcahey's. Kathleen is dying and asking for you." You may be sure it did not take me long to respond to the summons. My messenger had gone on ahead; but it was a beautiful moonlight night, and I knew my way perfectly. I had to

"but for the other gift, hubdreds and hundreds of them, it does matter. Think what it is, Father, to be a young girl; to work steadily all day from 7 in the morning till 6 at night, and then to come home to dirt and drunkenness and

and I knew my way perfectly. I had to go out into a rather unsettled part of the town, but I calculated that I could reach the house inside of fifteen minutes at the most-long enough, though ! for a soul to have many times passed into

come home to dirt and drunkenness and quarreling and misery! They say we mustn't walk the streets at night. Why, where can we go to get a little peace, not to talk of a mouthful of fresh air and the bit of a good time every girl needs?" She paused, and I—well, I must con-fess, I had not words at that instant. "My home is like that, Father," con-tinued Kathleen. "If my father comes home sober three nights out of the seven, it's a wonder. I've about sup-ported the family—there are six younger than myself—since I was twelve; and it's getting harder and harder as the eternity. "Ab, Katbleen, Kathleen, why did you not do as I wanted you to do this

evening ?" I believe I breathed the words quite I believe I breathed the words quite audibly. At the moment I looked up, and there, distinctly before me in the bright moonlight, stood the figure of Kathleen Mulcahey. I was about to speak, but something sealed my lips. The girl looked at me with pleading, beseeching eyes. She bent her head slowly, and then like a fash I realized what I ought to do. I raised my right hand, a trifle unsteady perhaps, but my voice uttered the solemn words: " Ego te absolvo. . " As they, died away on my lips I found myself alone on the quiet street. I looked at my watch : it was five minutes to twelve. I continued on my errand (it seemed as if I must do so), and the town clocks were striking midnight as I knocked npon Mike Mul-cahey's door.

midnight as I knocked npon Mike Mul-cahey's door. "Ah, too late, Father—too late !" was the heartrending wail. "She died just five minutes ago." I stepped to the bedside and looked down upon the dead girl. Already the peace which seems to be death's own secret was settling upon her toilworn young features, and I caught a glimpse of the little silver medal upon her breast. I remembered it, and her joyons trust in its efficacy.

I remembered to, and the set of t -Marion J. Brunowe, in Ave Maria.

## GENERAL INTENTION FOR AUGUST

RECOMMENDED AND BLESSED

OUR CATHOLIC IMMIGRANTS

Owing to the peculiar position Canada is in to-day, the intention of the present month comes with singular appropriateness to the readers of The

her away. She had been completely

her away. She had been completely blind a month when his answer to their last letter saddened them all. "I may come at any time," he said, "for it is now but a question of days. I dare not risk an hour's absence."

It was shortly after that that the two specialists were called in. Mother Benedict heard their dictum from Dr. Barstow's lips with something like dis-may. The child would never see again. "Doctor," cried the nun, "why this is

"Doctor," cried the nun, "why this is awful! Mr. Graham's letter came last Thursday. His wife, Lolita's mother, is dying. Even now she may be dead. Do not tell us anything so dreadful, doctor—surely there is help—some--another specialist.'

specialist can do anything for

"No specialist can do anything for her," he answered gravely. "I can't believe it," Mother Benedict half whispered. "The Sisters must pray. Our Blessed Lady will help the rtunate child."

"I have seen what prayer can do," said the physician. "God is good. There may be some reason why He might choose to set aside the natural law. Nothing but a miracle will suced in this case, however." Mother Benedict read the letter

aloud. For some minutes there was a

"He will reach here on Ghristmas Day," added Mother Benedict softly, glacing at the letter, "and his little girl—is blind. Hopelessly blind?" Day,"

Sister Martha spoke then-Sister Martha whom the nuns so revered.

"Let us begin a novens to Our Lsdy," she said in her gentle tones. "And let us rejoice with her in the joy she felt at seeing her Son's face for the first time. It will end on Christmas Day."

"The day Lolita's father comes to take her." said Mother Benedict. And then, with a little unconscious sigh, "God's holy will be done."

"Amen, amen !" was the heartfelt response, for all felt what was in her mind.

mind. The Sisters spent an anxious week. The child seemed to grow frailer day by day, even hour by hour, so that Mother Benedict watched her almost fearfully. Now, as she preceded Sister Martha into the pew, it struck mother that she could not live. Probably God wanted her, after all.

that it was no shadow which see

still knelt upright. A conviction filled each mind that this favor had been granted to Sister Martha's prayers, and that this protracted contemplation of hers was in some way allied with it. Mother Benedict and Sister Marcelle were still watching when Sister Martha

" She has not wakened yet ?" she asked.

"She has not wakened yet " ane asked. But as if that voice had power to stir her, the girl moved and opened her eyes. "I dreamed," she whispered, "that I was oured. And it is no dream—it is the truth I can see! I can see !" She stretched out her arms to Sister Marthe mith a movement of abilities Marths with a movement of childish helplessness. Sister Marths, murmuring consoling

words, took the chair close beside her. One by one the good nuns came to pet and make much of the girl whom Our

and make much of the girl whom Our Lord had rescued from darkness. Their cup of happiness was filled to over-flowing. Mother Benedict sent for Dr. Barstow in spite of the day—the one day in the year when he refused all calls unless of absolute life or death calls unless of absolute life or death— and he set out at once for the convent. He examined Lolita's eyes briefly. "I will make a more thorough test to-morrow," he said. "It looks as if she has been given pow over altogether

has been given new eyes altogether. It is wonderful-but then I expected

This been given new eyes anogener. It is wonderful—but then I expected nothing else." His glance, by accident or design, rested on Sister Martha. "When is her father coming?" "At any moment now, doctor. He

sent a telegram this morning. The steamer got in late last night. The passengers probably could not get off until noon to day."

"He will take her away I suppose ? "Oh, yes. But she expressed a wish to be baptized when he came. She is thoroughly instructed. Will you and Mrs. Barstow stand sponsors ?"

ooked at them strangely and with mute

Perhaps no one took her going as hard Perhaps no one took her going as hard as Sister Martha. The good nun seemed to fall visibly for days after-ward. Her prayers and fastings were redoubled, and finally Mother Benedict was obliged to forbid many of them. Sister Martha submitted oheerfully enough, but the effort to relax seemed more of a drain on her strength than her penances had been. enances had been.

\* \* \* \* Lolita Graham had been gone three years. Frequently during that time she wrote to the nuns. Her letters were charming. She could describe bits of scenery as vividly as an artist. She gave one whole letter to the de-scription of a Corpus Christi procession which was a marvel of letter writing yet at its end Mother Benedict shoo

er head. "I wonder what has happened to the poor child?" she mused. "She de-scribes this as if she were as remote scribes this as if she were as remote from it as the stars from earth. She is merely a looker on. The heart of it has not touched her." She glanced down at the page. "And this artist—this Verne Armitage of whom she speaks. Evi-dently not a Catholic. If she marries outside the faith we shall lose her com-

letely." During Christmas week of that third

year Sister Martha received a short

"I am sixteen years old, and I feel sixty," wrote the girl. "In memory of the day on which I received my sight I want you to get this note. I am posi-tive that the blessing of vision came to am posime through your prayers. Pray now that I may receive my blindness back again. That darkness was bright with hope. Into this darkness no light can enter."

"Why, Sister," said Mother Benedict.

"Why, Sister," said Mother Benedict. She glanced at the nun, who had grown very pale and whose lips were trembling visibly. So acute was the pain on that spiritual countenance that mother for-bore further comment. After Vespers Sister Martha went into mother's little room, and kneeling beside her on the floor, spoke to her earnestly, eagerly, while mother listened with great atten-tion. The following day the ban was lifted from Sister Mattha's penances. Once more she took up the round of

And so, on Christmas Day, Lolita Graham knelt once more in the convent chapel between Mother Benedict and Sister Martha, while in the pew behind her were her father and her lover. There was a smile on her parted lips, a happy smile, and the dark blue eyes were luminous. The little mist that had told her so much still lingered before her vision.

her vision. But instead of deepening, it seemed to dissipate. The sweet face of the Mother smiled down upon her with new light; the Infant in those caressing arms seemed blessing her with greater tenderness. For Our Lady would not take away the gift she once had granted and as Lolits rose from her knees she olt this Gastinda anread through take away the gift she once had granted and as Lolita rose from her knees she felt this. Gratitude surged through every vein. In the parlor they stood silent—the two nuns, Ralph Graham, Lolita and her lover. Then, looking at Verne. Armitage's face, Lolita grasped the truth—that he was indeed willing to be one with her in faith, as they were one in heart and scul.

e in heart and soul. "Indeed another miracle," she said, which we had to cross the seas to gain There has been a greater favor granted this day than on that day five years ago

lear Sister Martha.' But Sister Martha knew. - Grad Keon in St. Anthony's Almanac.

An "Up to Date" Preacher

A Protestant minister of Brooklyn N. Y., Pastor Russell by name, who is a bit queer in many ways, is not only up to date but shead of the date in seeing to date but ahead of the date in seeing that his sermons get into print. Re-cently he started an around-the-world tour, and to make sure his sermons get proper publicity he left full reports of his movements and the addresses he would deliver in certain places. These were to be delivered to the daily press in America at proper dates, to appear as if sent by cable. With considerable en-terprise the Brooklyn Eagle has secured

in America at proper dates, to appear as if sent by cable. With considerable en-terprise the Brooklyn Eagle has secured papers from the points visited by Pastor Russell, and is printing in parallel columns the reports of what actually occurred alongside of the glowing ac-counts supplied to American papera. "The result," remarks the Watchman, (Baptist), "is amusing."—Sacred Heart Review.

Mrs. Mulcahey opened her mouth in amazement—perhaps in protest; but, fortunately, at the instant the bell rang and another caller was announced. And, after all, my note did produce the desired effect. Kathleen Mulcahey came to see me, but did not on the evening I designated. Had she come then-well, perhaps I should never have

had this story to tell. The good old priest paused, while a look of pain flitted for an instant across

look of pain flitted for an instant across his refined and gentle features. It was one evening toward the close of the mission. I had thought of the girl often, but had almost given up any hope of seeing her. I was ushering one caller out, and just about to close the hall door when I heard a light step ap-proaching. In another moment Kath-leen stood in the illumination from the hall light, and I knew her. She was changed in many ways, and yet it changed in many ways, and yet it seemed to me that, under any circoum-cumstances, I should have known the gentle Kathleen, whose name was so

often in my prayers. It was not, however, till we were seated in my office, directly facing each other, that I had my first good look at her. I suppose I could not conceal the surprise and distress which I felt.

"Am I all that changed, Father ?" said the girl, simply. There was a "You have been ill, child ?" "A little, Father," she replied much. I don't have the time."

"One should always take time to keep well," I said, a trifle clumsily I sup-

pose, for I was somewhat confused. Kathleen smiled a sad little smile, which it somehow wrenched my heart to see. Then a look of keen anxiety crossed her features. "O Father, you wou't give me away?"

she said, clasping her hands together. "If I can only hold out another six months, Patsy and Nellie will be sixteen-they're twins-and old enough to go to work."

And then, as I did not speak, she ex-

plained : "They would put me out of the shop if they knew, the laws have become that strict." "Have you seen a doctor ?" I asked

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quietly.

to die !" her lips trembled

waited a moment, my heart wrung

parent fingers interlaced. "Who and what is he, Kathleen ?" "Who and what is ne, Kathleen ?" A said, trying to keep my voice steady. "Nothing but a poor boy—poor as myself, Father," she replied, with simple pathos. "But we might have had a little home some day. He doesn't drink and he's good and kind."

good bye. "Don't Kathleen," I answered. "I can understand perhaps far more than

kindling now and her eyes beginning glow : "It doesn't matter so much about me

"And a so you have spent these even-ings with him ?" I said quietly. "Yes, Father," she answered. "There are so few left to us, Father. He knows I can never marry him now. The years in the shop have done their work

appropriateness to the readers of The Messenger. After waiting for nearly a half a century, that is, since the con-federation of the provinces, the Domin-ion is at last casting off her swaddling clothes; she is on the eve of taking her place as a young and vigorous nation among her older sisters of the world. Tae natural increase of her population, as shown by the last census, is a strong factor in this transformation, which we are well pleased to record. Thousands of native-born, future citizens are re--blighted our hopes." The bald simplicity of her statement was almost appalling. I looked at her --the frail, delicate girl-woman, for she was little more---and saw that the years in the vitiated atmosphere of the great factory, combined perhaps with insuffiof native born, future citizens are receiving their traditions, national and civic, from their sturdy fathers they will no doubt hand them down to those who come after them. These traditions, which are the basis of sound citizenship, factory, combined perhaps with insuffi-cient food, not to mention the home atmosphere of dirt and squalor and drunkenness, had indeed done their deadly work.

which are in our possess of sound citizenship, are in our possession for the moment; we have nothing to unlearn regarding them; we have merely to keep on in the well-beaten path of all that makes for civic housety and love of country. The same testimony must be given of our redeadly work. "Never mind, Kathleen," I said as gently as I could. "If Brian is a good boy, and you're both keeping out of mischief, no harm has been done. Try to prevail upon him for God's sake and ligious situation in Canada. Our churches are well organized ; our clergy your own sake to make the men's mis-sion next week."

is active ; our press is aggressive ; our various Catholic activities, both educa-

sion next week." She gave me one grateful look from her eyes of Irish blue. "Ah, Father," she replied, and ber lips dimpled into smiles, "but you're tional and charitable, are flourishing. All the higher Catholic interests are the coaver !"

assiduously cultivated; and, unless the unforseen happens, everything predicts a healthy and brilliant career for the the coaxer !" "Will you promise me this, Kath-leen? said I, also smiling. "And will you go to confession to-night and finish up the mission, like a good girl !" "I will—for your sake, Father. But Catholic Church in this great Dominion. And yet, during the past few years,

an element has presented itself which is bound to exert influence on our religious and civic future, and which tells us that I can't go to confession till Saturday night."

and civic future, and which tells us that we cannot rest satisfied with what has been done. This new element is the in-flux of foreigners which is increasing so rapidly that it threatens to outnumber the natural increase of our settled popu-lation. Hundred of thousands of stran-gers, hailing from the older countries of Europe, belo.ging to various races and nationalities, possessing ethnic ideals and points of view very often totally different from ours, are coming to live side by side with us. A vast number of them are filling up the vacant spots on Well, as you wish. But, somehow well, as you wish. But, somenow 1 should prefer you to go to night. Father Maurice is hearing out in the church now. He is patient and kind and would understand—everything." For a moment the girl looked troubled, undecided.

troubled, undecided. "Ah, leave it till Saturday night, Father," she said pleadingly. "And then 'tis to yourself and no one else I will go." And now something impelled me to

speak with the utmost seriousness.

them are filling up the |vacant spots on the outskirts of our large cities. Un-doubtedly, many of them have all the elements of sound citizenship lying "I hope you won't regret this delay, Kathleen," I said as gently as possible.