

the sunshine. There's no sort of secret dealing about them. As to Miss Rita smoking—why, the gentry all do it!"

"Then how do you explain the terrible mysterious carryings-on in that library that I've just been telling you about?"

"Well, I can't pretend to explain them right off," cried the cheery Mrs. Dunkerley, "no better than you can yourself! But, I'll be bound there isn't much mystery after all. Otherwise would they risk you or any other body looking in at the window as you did, and them away for the day? Depend upon it, the thing can be explained. Why, for two pins," she said with still greater animation, "I'd ask Miss Rita myself the meaning—"

The good postmistress spared no effort to convince her visitor that her fears were unfounded. She succeeded sufficiently to restore Maria Jane's wonted calm before they parted. Yet, in spite of all her arguments, she herself was far from tranquil in mind, and was not surprised at her friend's fright.

Maria Jane was caretaker at a shooting lodge on the hill two miles away from the North Country village, and a tenant had lately come in the person of Captain Fausset, a retired army officer. He was a widower, with one daughter. Strange to say, the new tenant had not arrived until the shooting season was over, and, moreover, seemed little interested in sport. Most of his time, when not taken up with long walks in company with his daughter—always in the same direction ("though what can they find to admire in a cold hilltop as bare as the back of your hand?")—was Maria Jane's parenthetic inquiry, the summit of a rocky hill a mile or two away—was spent in the room called the library. Why "the library" was not evident; there were no books there, unless the one or two large boxes which accompanied the newcomers contained some. That both father and daughter had occupation there, was apparent; they spent hours in the room together, though Maria Jane declared that the place would be "silent as the very grave" while they remained there.

Then, suddenly, came Maria Jane's startling experience. She had always felt some curiosity about the mysterious library, into which she had never been allowed to enter all the four weeks previously ("and fancy, Mrs. Dunkerley, the dust and disorder of it!"; both her visitors were away, for the whole day, but they had left the door locked, as it always was when they were not within. She was a daughter of Eve. All the windows of the large room were covered by blinds—she knew that too well. But one window, looking upon a corner of the shrubbery, had no blind, because no outsider could gain a glimpse of the interior by reason of the thick growth of the surrounding bushes. But a stepladder from the stable-yard enabled her to view the whole of the lower portion of the room.

It was about noon and a bright sun lit up the place in spite of shrouded windows opposite. Right in the center of the room was a couch, and upon it lay stretched the form of a woman swathed in soft white wrappings. She lay with arms straight to either side, and in a posture so still that the frightened onlooker saw that there was no life in that recumbent body. The head was veiled, and the face turned away from the window, but the rigid pose and the absence or even the slightest movement in the bosom spoke of death.

No wonder Maria Jane came nigh fainting. Mrs. Dunkerley had been genuinely startled by her friend's exciting experience, but she was too wise a woman to tell that to Maria Jane. Cool consideration, however, brought what she thought a possible solution. The captain was probably an antiquarian. "He's travelled half over the world, and he's got hold of one of those buried mummies you hear talk of, and he and Miss Rita are interested in it, and are examining the thing. Not that I should make up to it," she told herself with a shudder; "but these educated gentry are different from us common folk! Naturally they wouldn't care to let Maria Jane know."

And there the matter rested for the nonce. But mysteries trod upon each other's heel. In less than a week Maria Jane came hot-foot to the post-office to unbosom her load of secret terrors.

"They've gone!" she cried breathlessly, as she greeted her confidante; "left this very day with no more than an hour's warning!"

And at once she proceeded to pour forth her astounding story. Maria Jane's defective faculty had led her again to investigate the interior of the mysterious library from her original peephole behind the bushes. She had not yet fathomed the mystery of the shrouded female form which had so terrified her, and on an afternoon when she knew that the captain and his daughter were both away for a long walk, she once more mounted the ladder to reconnoitre. No recumbent form was to be seen; but, seated in a chair, with her back turned to Maria Jane, was a lady in white trailing robes, her golden hair faintly visible under a white gauzy veil which fell in thick folds around her.

One glance was enough for the peace of mind of Maria Jane, and she speedily sought firm earth again and the shelter of her own quarters. Yet her curiosity was unsatisfied, and once again, when she knew that both the captain and Miss Rita were actually within the room, she ventured to peep cautiously from her point of vantage. This time she was still more mystified, for there, before her very eyes, sat Miss Rita herself, mounted on the edge of a table the voluminous gauzy veil shrouding her hair. She was seated sideways to the window, so that there was no possible mistake. Her fair face was plainly visible; she was reading a book, and—inconceivable evidence of identity—actually smoking a cigarette, and she had neither shoes nor stockings on the feet stretched out before her!

Here was a puzzle! Miss Rita had been certainly far away when Maria Jane had discovered the seated and veiled lady who formerly reclined—apparently lifeless—upon the couch. Now the veiled stranger had vanished, and Miss Rita had taken her place, alive as ever! As to the captain he was out of the range of vision, and, however, he might have been occupied, there was not even a sound to show.

The very next morning came a telegram, to be followed by the incontinent departure of father and daughter, with all their goods and chattels.

One picture in the Academy of Exhibition was never without its ring of admirers. It was a striking subject. Dark rocks filled the foreground; the higher peaks were just catching the earliest rays of morning light. On the center peak was poised the radiant figure of a beautiful girl.

She was garbed in diaphanous robes, and a floating veil—suggestive of a cloud against the silvery light which streamed upwards behind the figure—seemed to float in the quiet air. And bare foot—slender and beautiful—just touched the rock beneath her. The delicate hands were raised as though to thrust back the thin vapory veil which had shrouded the lovely smiling face and tresses of golden hair. The massive frame of the picture bore the one word, "Dawn."

"Upon my word, it's wonderful!" exclaimed a young man to his companion as they moved away from a lengthy inspection. "It's dawn breaking—one feels it. How did he manage about the scene?"

"Rita told me all about it," said the girl in reply. "They took a house near a rocky hill, and fitted up a studio. They used to go out in the early morning, and uncle would take sketches of the light effects. Sometimes Rita posed on the topmost rock, but generally they used the studio and the lay figure, except for the final touches. It's exactly like Rita, you know, and she does not dare come here until things are more quiet."

"I never thought her so actually beautiful," said the man. "But I suppose it's Rita idealized. It's unmistakably clever!"

"It's the making of Uncle Fausset," the girl declared. "He's sold the picture to an American for a perfect pot of money, and he'll make his way, you'll see!"

Mrs. Dunkerley and Maria Jane are still able to discuss in awed tones the mysterious happenings which thrilled them at the moment, and still provide an unending topic of interest over the tea-table. For artistic happenings do not affect their tranquil lives.—Catholic Fire-side.

ASH WEDNESDAY

It was a religious old Irish woman who counted her years by the Lenten she had kept. She counted those years lost in which she had not practiced Lenten mortifications in the spirit of Mother Church. Her reasoning was unquestionably Catholic. If, with all the special devotions and instructions and penances of Lent we are not stirred to consider the interests of our souls, these interests have little chance of obtaining a hearing during the bustle and bustle, and the unbroken succession of business and pleasure, which make up the remainder of the hurrying year.

Lent is "the appointed time, the hour of salvation" for the whole Catholic world. Mother Church, in her vivid symbolism, calls each of her children to the altar rail on Ash Wednesday and there preaches to them the sermon to be kept in mind through the Holy Season: "Remember, Man, that thou art dust and unto dust thou shalt return." It is a solemn warning against allowing the cares which we lavish on the body to end in the neglect of our immortal souls; a solemn warning not to lose eternal happiness by pampering a body which one day, in spite of us, will be merely a banquet for worms.

No good Catholic, on Ash Wednesday, can fail to be startled when he compares all that the world does for the body on the way to the grave with the little that it does for the soul on the way to an eternity of happiness or hopelessness. Compare the hundreds of meals for the body with the monthly Communion for the soul; the hours and days of rest and recreation for the body with the weekly Mass given grudgingly for the soul; the laws of sanitation and hygiene and the special clinics for the eyes, the ears, the throat, the teeth and what not, with the thoughtless minute of morning and evening prayer—and the necessity of a season of Lent, a season when soul interests come first, is self-evident.

Lent is a season of fast and abstinence and self-denial, in which we practice saying "no" to the food and pleasures that we love, in order to train our wills to be able, in the black hour of temptation, to cry "no" to the sins that we have cherished.

Lent is a season of prayer, public and private, that we may learn again to pray as loving children to our Heavenly Father, not as thoughtless subjects to a forgotten king. Real prayer is based on the twin considerations of our indebtedness to a generous God in the past and our utter dependence on Him in the present and for the future. To have time and opportunity for these basic thoughts during Lent, distracting worldly pleasures are laid on the shelf from Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday.

The movies, the theater and the dance hall must be abandoned before the Rosary, the Stations and penance can become the centres of our consideration and reflection. Can you imagine anyone saying the Rosary at the "movies" or thinking of the Way of the Cross in a theater, or whispering "Do penance or you shall all likewise perish" to a partner at a dance? The very juxtaposition of the ideas shows these worldly amusements, however legitimate at other times, to be diametrically opposed to any adequate observance of Lent.

Ash Wednesday is the portal of Lent. Every Catholic should enter it gladly, thankfully, and attend every possible service until he makes his whole-hearted act of contrition at the foot of the cross, God's picture of sin, on Good Friday, thus to merit the blessing of the Risen Lord on Easter Sunday. The ideal Lent, a real milestone on our pilgrimage to eternity; must begin with ashes on our foreheads and end with contrition in our hearts and our Eucharistic God in our souls.—The Mirror.

THE REASON FOR ALUMINUM

Because tea deteriorates very rapidly if exposed to air many tests and experiments have been made to find an efficient means of packing it so as to preserve the flavor. The "Salada" Tea Company first used lead packages but some years ago adopted aluminum foil, aluminum being more durable and lighter than lead, besides, of course, being absolutely sanitary and air-tight. This method of packing is admitted to be the most effective known to preserve the flavor of tea. All "Salada" is sold in air-tight aluminum packages.

HUNGERING FOR CATHOLICISM

The prediction that the church of the future will comprise Jew and Gentile, Catholic and Protestant, Mohammedan and Buddhist, and the adherents of other equally divergent religions and creeds was made by the Regional Conference of Community Churches in session in Boston recently. The prediction is not new. It has been made many times before, and it will be made many times in the future. For it is true. There surely will come a day when the church will comprise all nations and tribes, and peoples and tongues. Our Lord Himself uttered this prediction in different words when He prophesied that there shall be one fold and one shepherd. But the reunion of all the churches, the one fold under one shepherd when it does come, will not be brought about by any such methods as those who made the prediction in Boston have indicated, that is by making the basis of membership in such churches, principles and ideals, not creeds, work not theology, a new conception of fellowship, and a new program of education and service that will minister to the whole life of the people of the community.

Rather it will come as it did to the anxious inquirer who found himself in a large city on a Sunday morning. There he was led by the varied chiming from church bellfries to reflect upon the contradictory doctrines preached from the pulpits. He then turned to consider the all important question, "Where amidst these clashing creeds can I discover the One True Church that Christ established?" To the solution of this problem he brought his own unbiased reason and his Bible. Step by step these led him to the knowledge that the path of honest inquiry inevitably ends at the door of the Catholic Church. Safe in that haven of happy security, torturing doubts and perplexing anxieties forever vanished.

A perverse generation is always looking for a sign. And it looks everywhere but in the right place. Substituting meaningless words and phrases, such as fellowship, service, and ideals for Church, authority, and dogma will never bring mankind within the one fold. But accepting the Church that Christ founded, acknowledging her authority, and subscribing to her doctrines will. Some people are searching everywhere for the means of reunion, everywhere but in the right place. Instead of dismissing the Catholic Church's claim to be the True Church of Christ, why do not these eager crusaders for the one universal church investigate the Church that is known to all men as the Catholic or Universal Church.

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VIRTUOUS EXAMPLE

Education begins with imitation. It is as natural for the normal child to imitate as it is for the normal man to think. The child in fact is a more perfect imitator than the man. For he copies even the smallest details of the speech, gestures, and general manner of conduct of those with whom he lives. No man wants to copy with such exactitude. It would reflect upon his originality; it would be puerile.

But with the child it is different. Imitation is his only resource for development. He learns even the commonest actions, walking, for example, or speaking, by imitation. He accustoms himself to the persons and things of his environment by imitation; he prepares himself to copy with such exactitude, by imitation. No matter where he ends on life's road, he begins with imitation. It is the unconscious law of his nature. He does as he sees others doing; he follows directions literally.

How else could he learn? He is wanting in mental maturity; he lacks ability to guide himself; he does not as yet possess the discriminating and selective forces that characterize the adult. These things he must acquire by observation and experience which at this age is but another name for imitation. And where does he most naturally look for guidance in these matters? To the parents, of course. His future lies in their hands. It is the weight of their living and inspiring example, more than any "do this or that" that counts for everything in the moulding of the child.

This is a plain fact, though some parents seem to regard it as fancy. It is during the tender age when the child is under the parents' supervision that the instinct of imitation is strongest. This is the most fruitful time for inculcating habits of solid piety and industry. True, he will not appreciate until he is older the moral nature of such good habits; but the probability is that he will live to everlastingly bless his parents for their care and virtuous example in the impressionable years of his childhood.—The Echo.

LOURDES

The fame of Lourdes has already encircled the globe and is growing greater and greater with each succeeding year. This town in the south of France, under the shadow of the Pyrenees, has become the world's most famous place of pilgrimage and is a standing witness to the existence of the supernatural and the care of God for his creatures. The miracles that have taken place in this favored spot have been so numerous that the very mention of the name brings with it the idea of some extraordinary manifestation of divine power in the relief of distress.

The history of Lourdes as a special shrine began with the apparitions of the Blessed Virgin to Bernadette Soubirous. To this child was transmitted a marvelous mission in being selected by Mary to make known to the world the wishes of heaven. By means of her voice the entire world has come to know of Lourdes, which has become the land of prayer and miracle. In the name of the Immaculate Virgin, Bernadette asked that a chapel should be erected there. She has communicated to the entire world the desire, or may we almost say, the command of Mary: "I desire that people should come here."

She has preached penance and prayer for sinners; it is her fingers which disclosed the source of the stream of the miraculous water.

It is Bernadette who heard from the very lips of Mary herself the wondrous words, "I am the Immaculate Conception"—confirming the dogmatic definition pronounced four years previously. She has shown us the excellence of the Rosary as a prayer and has instigated the uninterrupted recital of the "Hail Mary" with which the valley of the Pyrenees re-echoes. A sublime mission, which has in a certain sense changed the face of the world and given marvelous supernatural enlightenment to souls plunged in unbelief and naturalism. Then, when Bernadette had so well fulfilled all the goods of this world, this little delegate of Mary, inspired by the whisper of grace, and was terribly constipated. I took Fruit-a-lives and this grand fruit medicine made me well!"

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clusion in the convent at Nevers. Bernadette left Lourdes and its miracles behind her, but she ever kept faithful memory within her heart of the heavenly expression, the smile, the sound of the voice of Our Blessed Lady, whom she thus described: "Mary is so beautiful that, having beheld her once, one would willingly die in order to see her again."

For thirty years she edified the community in the Mother House of the Sisters at Nevers by her virtue. When she died, crowds of pilgrims from the surrounding district came to kneel beside her mortal remains. Since her death her tomb is daily visited by numerous pilgrims. Favors received through the intercession of Bernadette multiply daily. The archives of the Mother House at Nevers contain numerous letters appealing for the intercession of Bernadette, and others testifying to belief in her prayerful power in heaven.—The Monitor.

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