

Candlemas.

BY CARDINAL NEWMAN.

The angel-lights of Christmas morn,
Which shot across the sky,
Away they pass at Candlemas,
They sparkle and they die.

Comfort of earth is brief it best,
Although it be divine
Like funeral lights for Christmas gone
Old Simeon's tapers shine.

And then for eight long weeks and more
We wait in twilight gloom,
Till the high candle sheds a beam
On Holy Saturday.

We wait along the penance-tide
Of solemn fast and prayer;
While song is hushed, and lights grow dim
In the sin-leaden air.

And while the sword in Mary's soul
Is driven home, we hide
In our own hearts, and count the wounds
Of passion and of pride.

And still, though Candlemas be spent,
And Alleluia's o'er,
Mary is music in our need,
And Jesus light in store.

Pere Jean.

(The Messenger for January.)

(Continued from last issue.)

"It is grand here," the boy answered, digging his bare toes into the garden gravel, "her rheumatism is very bad to-day."

"And has not the doctor been to see her?"

"Oh, yes, Pere Jean, and he gave her some medicine, but she says she will not suffer so much if you will come to see her."

A moment later the two were walking, hand in hand, down the village street.

It was the hour so dear to the "Habitant," when, supper over, families congregate on the door-slopes, the men with their pipes, the women with their babies in their arms, and the older children playing near by. The sound of merry voices was borne on the sweet twilight air—the women's as they chatted gaily, the children's as they danced about and called to one another in their play.

When the cure passed by every hat was lifted; every woman curtsied, while many left their doorsteps for a word of greeting. One old woman, came up to say that she had just had news of her son in the city, who was getting on so well that he would surely soon be rich. A little further on, a buxom matron told him triumphantly that her daughter Rosalie was soon to make the best match in the village, and Rosalie, a bright-eyed girl of seventeen, followed to receive with shy gratitude the cure's good wishes.

Here and there a man stopped for a word of advice, or a child left its play for the smile and caress that never failed it.

The loving eyes that followed him caught no hint of the deep sorrow which lay heavy upon his heart. One or two thought he looked old and tired, and hoped it was the evening shadows which made him seem so. The doctor, a wiry little man, and a wise little figure as it passed, and then remarked to his friend, the notary, that it was high time that "Pere Jean" had a vicar—Sainte Barbe was too large a parish for one man. "He has worked so hard all his life," he said, "it must be made easier for him now."

"Grand-mère's cottage stood at the end of the long row. It was a neat little home, and the room where 'Grand-mère' lay was clean and bright.

It had indeed been a long day, and there would be no rest for her in the long night that was setting in, for the pain in her poor old body was unceasing. The withered face resting on the spoolless pillow was drawn and worn by suffering, but it changed wonderfully when the cure entered. A chair was placed at her bedside, and he asked her very gently about her suffering, and listened pityingly to her murmured answer that it was more than she could bear. Her face was very pale, almost happy when he left half an hour later, for, had not "Pere Jean" told her that all the pain she was enduring might be winning salvation not only for herself but for some poor sinner, and that when she arrived in heaven—perhaps very soon, for Bon Dieu would thank her for the soul she had won back to Him?

"Come and serve the early mass tomorrow, petit Paul," the cure said, as the little boy escorted him to the door, and the child, feeling very important, promised to be punctual.

It was now almost dark, but instead of turning homeward, the priest continued on into the country. That instinct of loneliness, which seeks rather than shuns solitude, made him long to be alone.

How calm and restful it was beyond the village, with the stars overhead, and the great silence of the hills around. But, with the peace of nature surrounding him, his own heart did not grow calmer!

An Ancient Foe

To health and happiness is Scrofula as ugly as ever since time immemorial. It causes blemishes in the neck, disfigures the skin, inflames the mucous membrane, wastes the muscles, weakens the bones, reduces the power of resistance to disease and the capacity for recovery, and develops into consumption.

"Two of my children had scrofula sores which kept growing deeper and kept them from going to school for three months. Ointments and medicines did no good until I began giving them Hood's Sarsaparilla. This medicine caused the sores to heal, and the children have shown no signs of scrofula since." J. W. McGinnis, Woodstock, Ont.

Hood's Sarsaparilla

will rid you of it, radically and permanently, as it has rid thousands.

There was still that deep sorrow that he had done so little for his Master. In his great loneliness and regret his thoughts flew with intense love and longing to his boyhood's friend. If only he could see him, just for a moment feel the warm clasp of his hand and read in his eyes the assurance that he understood what had not even been expressed.

It was strange that there came to him no sweet soothing message telling him that his life had not been the useless one he thought it, but an infinitely beautiful one in its humility and unselfishness. Quiet and peaceful it had undoubtedly been, but full of a devotion to duty, which had dignified and ennobled, raising it far above the plane of the commonplace to the level of the heroic.

The nameless, countless acts of goodness, of which in his humility, he was unconscious, had not been unseen by the recording angel, and the influence of his bright example would live on after he had passed away.

But the silence and solitude brought him no such cheerful tidings, and slowly and wearily he walked on.

But now he must turn homeward to tell himself; he would rest only a little while on this doorstep before retracing his way. He had been there but a moment when he was startled by a hand on his shoulder. "Come inside and rest—it is cold and dark there!"

To the priest's amazement he saw that it was the hunch-back who had spoken, and who now threw open the door of his tiny cabin, revealing a bright fire within.

"Thank you, Pierre, I shall come in and warm myself, for I am a little cold," the cure answered simply. "And tired," the man added briefly. "You are the very life!" He drew a chair up to the cure's blaze, but ventured no further remark when the priest sank into it and stretched out his hands to the warmth.

The cure noticed how bare and comfortless the room was, such a room as only a solitary man can have.

He realized suddenly how strange it was that he should be sitting there after having failed repeatedly in his efforts to plead with this man. Had he indeed softened? No; the dark, half-averted face was cold and grim as ever, as the cripple moved about among the remains of his scanty meal, seemingly oblivious of his visitor's presence. Then in a flash the priest understood it all! The man had suffered some cruel blow besides the maiming of his body, but he was desperately proud, so that any pity was to him intolerably galling. Nevertheless, had he not yielded to a generous impulse in offering hospitality to

the cure whom he had avoided for years?

If he could not let a tired man rest upon his doorstep without inviting him to his fireside, then, indeed, there was good in "le Croche" still. And as the cure sat there, watching the half-averted face in the shadow, he was conscious of a deeper pity than he had yet felt for this strange, lonely creature. The ache in his own breast was forgotten, and his heart went out to the other man in a rush of fatherly sympathy; still his voice was only quiet and friendly, when he said at last:

"You are too generous with this splendid fire of yours, Pierre, for you to give it all to me, surely there is enough of it for both of us. Come, draw up your chair, mon ami."

The man hesitated, then slowly, and with obvious reluctance brought a stool to the other end of the chimney, where he remained with his face still averted. There was silence. The priest was inwardly praying for light and guidance, for he felt that his presence there was due to no mere accident, and that he might yet win back his black sheep.

"Do you still care for apples, Pierre?" he asked suddenly; then, as the hunch-back turned a surprised and distrustful face towards him, he continued: "Why, don't you remember when you used to come to my house and beg for an apple off my tree? The frost killed that tree last winter, Pierre—and I have none for the children now."

"Yes, I remember," the other answered slowly. "I never never tasted apples like those."

"That is indeed a compliment," said the cure, brightly, "and one which I must repeat to Madame Latour, for she loved that tree as a child, and was quite heart-broken when it died."

There was a softer look on the man's face as he said, almost timidly, "I thrashed a boy once for stealing some of those apples; he was bigger than I was, but I made him throw them back over your gate." Then he added bitterly, "I could not trash any child now."

"Pierre, my poor dear boy, tell me all about it." There was such an eager, loving appeal in the cry of a father to a son, and in the outstretched hands, that the poor fellow could not resist it, and so sitting there while the fire-light threw its ruddy light around the little room, he told his sad life story. How he had gone away to the city full of life and hope, eager to make his way, caring little how hard he had to work. Promotion had followed—and love.

They were to have been married within a week when the accident happened—he had been caught up by the machinery and terribly mangled. He had been weeks in the hospital and then emerged—to be told that the girl he loved had become engaged to another man. "How could she marry a hunch-back?" she asked him, and so, embittered in spirit, and shattered in body, he had come back to spend his poor shackled life in his old home.

"Ah, Pere Jean!" he cried bitterly, "you do not know what it is to have a hope, which is part of one's very life, crushed; to lose in a moment the joy and independence of youth, and become instead a miserable outcast who can look forward only to the grave; who can never realize anything of what he had hoped for—to look back upon disappointment, to feel that the future holds only disappointments. God is not just, I tell you, or he could not let such things be. You, whose whole life has been so useful and happy—you cannot know how bitter it is to feel one is useless, wanted by no one—needed by no one—a failure—you cannot understand."

It was because he understood so well that the priest's face was so tender when he went over and put his arm around the poor crooked shoulders with almost a mother's touch? Surely, when he spoke there was that in his voice which showed he understood as only a fellow sufferer can understand. His words were full of the sympathy that does not hurt, and they brought a sweet comfort at last, for the man's proud face was buried in his hands, and all the years of bitter loneliness were washed away in tears of sorrow and repentance.

It was very late when the cure left the little cottage and turned homeward. His heart was full of a great joy and a deep gratitude that his wandering sheep had come home at last. He did not realize how long the road was until he stood by his own door, and saw the lamp placed at the window by Madame Latour's thoughtful hand.

But he must not go to bed just yet. He passed his own home and entered the church beyond. Under the red light before the tabernacle he fell on his knees. "My God, I thank Thee! I thank Thee," he repeated over and over again, and then—it was the prayer of a tired child. "Father, I have done so little, but I have done my best."

It was "petit Paul" who, coming in to serve the early Mass, and coming early in his desire to be punctual, wondered to see the curial kneeling, half leaning against the altar rail. He crept up softly

and touched the priest's arm. "Pere Jean," he whispered; then louder, "Pere Jean." But there was no response, and doubtful and afraid, he knew not why, the child turned and ran away. For during the night the summons had come, and the pale, upturned face wore a strange, sweet smile which told of peace eternal.

Sainte Barbe is so far off the beaten-road that the arrival of the mail is no small event. Twice a week a man goes to St. Clovis (Sainte Barbe does not boast of a Post Office as yet) and returns with the long brown sack. Then all the villagers assemble to talk over the contents of the letter bag and discuss the news of the papers.

To-day a little group is gathered in front of the doctor's house, and he has been reading aloud from his doorstep. Madame Latour is there, and the notary, and there too is le Croche—crooked still—but now a useful and respected man. It is wonderful what the hunch-back can do with his nimble fingers, which are seldom idle. He is always surrounded by little ones, clamoring for the tales he can tell so well, but he never seems to tire of them, and all the mothers think gratefully of the hunch-back.

Still it is a subject of speculation in Sainte Barbe "what could have changed 'le Croche'?"

There is much of interest in the now three days' old paper, but one item has a special significance for the good folks. It is an account of a little band of missionaries in China who were captured by some natives. The first victim, and old priest, who had long been noted for his great zeal and eloquence, was put to death amid great tortures, but his courage did not flag, and he died urging his persecutors to repent. So great was the effect of his words and bravery, that the captives were seized with awe, and released the other prisoners while many asked to be baptized on the spot.

There is silence for a moment after the doctor has finished, and then Madame Latour says with a little sob, "If Pere Jean only knew, he would be so proud of him."

"Perhaps he does know," the doctor answered, gravely. "The missionary died on the first Friday, our cure on the eve of it. Now, allowing for the difference in time, they died on the same day—perhaps at the same hour, who knows," he added—"the two friends may have appeared before God together!"

"And if they did," Madame Latour says quietly, "surely le bon Dieu did not let Pere Jean stand there unnoticed and sorrow all the glory upon the missionary. He was so good Pere Jean, so—"

but her tears are falling in earnest now. The Angles rings out clear and sweet, and from every heart goes up a prayer of loving gratitude for the dear priest who had lived so quietly among them, and who had so quietly passed away.

MARGARET HALE.

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MISCELLANEOUS.

Professor—heard of an old woman with epilepsy who had lived to seventy-nine. Curious to know the details of so unusual a case, he interviewed the widower. After inquiring about different symptoms, he asked, "Did she grind her teeth much at night?" The old man considered for a moment and then replied, "Wal, I dunno as she wore 'em at night."

Mrs. Fred Laiten, St. George, Ont. writes: "My little girl would cough so at night that neither she nor I could get any rest. I gave her Dr. Wood's Norway Pine Syrup and am thankful to say it cured her cough quickly."

A good story is told of Dr. Fitchett of the Australian Parliament. During a debate in Parliament on some educational question, a member of the Opposition became rather excited, and exclaimed, "Why, at this very moment I have a school in my eye where—"

"Not quite," interrupted Dr. Fitchett; "only one pupil I believe."

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"Mister," said the small boy to the druggist, "give me another box of them pills you sold father the day before yesterday. They're just about right."

"Are they doing him good?" asked the chemist, looking pleased. "I dunno whether they're doing father any good or not, but they're good for me."

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"They just fit my new air gun."

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Mr. H. Wilkison, Stratford, Ont. says: "It affords me much pleasure to say that I experienced great relief from Muscular Rheumatism by using two boxes of Milburn's Rheumatic Pills." Price 50c. a box.

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"Sir,—I noticed your advertisement for an organist and music teacher, either lady or gentleman. Having been both for several years, I offer you my service."

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Ebenezer Strick—Howdy, Si? How's all ther folks?

Si Hampley.—All right; only maw—she's complainin' ag'in.

Ebenezer Strick.—Wha's thet—got ther rheumatiz ag'in?

Si Hampley.—Nope; worse'n thet. She wants a new hat—only had this one seven an' a half years, tew.

Minard's Liniment relieves neuralgia.

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Eczema is one of the most torturing of the many itching skin diseases, and also the most prevalent, especially in children. The cause is bad blood, caused by inactive skin, inflammation, etc. It manifests itself in small, round pimples or blisters, which later on break, and form crusts or scales. The skin has an itching, burning and stinging sensation. To get rid of Eczema, it is necessary to have the blood pure, and for this purpose nothing can equal

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Mrs. Florence Benn, Marlbank, Ont. writes—"My little boy had eczema for six months. I tried ointments and salves, but they helped for only a short time when it would break out worse than ever. I then decided to give Burdock Blood Bitters a trial. It only gave him two bottles, and it is now two months since, and there is no sign of a return. I feel sure that as a blood regulator, nothing can equal it. I cannot say too much for what it has done for us."

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