

me to be his wife, I gladly said 'yes.' 'Why, Dorothy, how charmingly romantic! And to think that I never guessed! You are to be married soon?'

The girl shook her head sadly. 'It is all over, Margie. My love affair is but a beautiful dream of yesterday—a yesterday that has sunk into oblivion forever.'

'But why—I can not understand.' 'That night, I knocked at uncle's study before I retired. I wanted to tell him of my good fortune, fondly believing that he would rejoice with me.'

'Dorothy,' he whispered, 'dear little girl, have you forgotten your mother?'

'I shook my head in dismay, a great fear clutching at my heart that told me what was coming. 'Child, twenty years ago, she came to me, just as you have come tonight, asking my consent to her marriage with a non-Catholic and I had not the courage to be firm and refuse her the happiness she craved, and I have never ceased to blame myself for what followed.'

'But, Father James, you should not feel that way about it. No doubt, they would have married anyway despite any and all objections.'

'I do not think so,' he answered. 'She was a very gentle girl and ever obedient to her sister and myself. And, Dorothy, dear little girl, though I love you dearly and want to see you happy, I dare not commit that fault again. I do not ask you to give him up, that you must do of your own accord, but I beg of you to remember your mother and the tragedy of her life, and pray, pray unceasingly for strength and courage to do what is right. And if you decide that this man is more necessary to your happiness than my blessing, I will still think kindly of you, but I can not, dare not marry you.'

'I could not answer for the tears welled up and rendered me speechless. Miserable beyond expression, I crept up to my room and fell upon my knees before a statue of the Blessed Virgin, pouring out to her the anguish and sorrow that filled me. And then, I opened the locket that I always wore, and gazed upon mother's sweet face. Oh! how I longed for mother that night! I wanted to creep into her arms and feel the tender touch of her cool hand upon my fevered brow, and with my head upon her shoulder, whisper the cause of my suffering and have her kiss away the tears. And, at last, when overtaxed nature would stand no more, I fell into a sleep of exhaustion, from which the Angelus bell awakened me.'

'After Mass, I sat down to breakfast with Father James, no longer wavering between right and wrong, but strong, firm in the determination to give up this man, though I feared that with his going, all happiness would flee forever from my life. 'I am going away,' I told my uncle. 'I am glad that Mother Celeste insisted upon me taking stenography in addition to the academic course, for I shall have no trouble obtaining a position in the city. I have written a letter to the man whom I have promised to marry, breaking the engagement and asking him to call upon you for the reason. Uncle James, I want you to tell him the story of mother's life.'

'Uncle promised and I came away; and, although I received a weekly letter from him, he has never mentioned this man. Either he was so hurt because I ran away that he never came for the explanation or, receiving the same, could care for me no longer.'

'But, Dorothy, if you care for him so much, why didn't you ask him to become a Catholic, as this girl that my brother is to marry has done?'

'I did not know that one could become a Catholic simply to please another. All the converts I know, and I have met many at the convent, studied for months and some of them were years in deciding this vital question. I never dreamed of asking him to embrace the Catholic Faith.'

'But, Dorothy, dear, you will be sure to meet him again and be reconciled.'

'That is the way your stories always end, Margie, but in real life, I imagine things do not run so smoothly. There is ever a cross to be carried and always a shoulder to bear the burden, however irksome the load may be.'

'Nonsense, you are too young and pretty to entertain such gloomy forebodings. I am willing to wager this check that in less than a year not only a solitaire but a little hoop of gold will adorn the third finger of your left hand.'

'You mean that he will become a Catholic?' grimly. 'No, at least I hope he will not unless he is sincere in his belief. I mean that you will—'

'That I will do as mother did? 'I mean that you will be willing to accept him as he is. If he is good, honest, noble, as you say, what difference does it make whether he be Catholic, Jew, Protestant or a worshiper of Mohammed's God?'

'That is what my mother tried to think.' 'You did not mention his name.' 'Courtney—the same as your own—John Courtney. Since I became so fond of you, I often hoped that he might be some distant cousin, but you shattered that idea by declaring that you had no living relatives except your brother.'

'None that I know of, and since my brother is a Catholic and will soon be married, I expect it could not be he.'

'Hardly!' Dorothy laughed, then

jumped up quickly. 'Two o'clock! 'Tis high time I packed my grip. I wish you were coming with me, Margie.'

'To the convent? 'Of course, to the convent! Why not, pray? You speak as though it were some secluded place where people dared not tread. 'Would I be welcome? A stranger?'

A merry peal of laughter burst from Dorothy. 'A stranger, indeed. Why both Mother Celeste and Father James know all about you. They read your stories as fast as they come from the press. My letters to them are full of your doings and sayings, even your very whims and fancies! They have often expressed a desire to meet you. Will you come?'

'Really, Dot, dear it does not seem exactly right for me to go, but I believe I would like to, and—'

'You darling! Where's your suitcase? Toothbrush? A waist or two? Good! We're playing a game, now, Margie. 'Running away from John' is the name of it. 'Running away from John?'

'Of course, your John and my John! If we were to continue to think of them, it would only spoil our holiday and make us miserable, so we will not mention them at all. 'Really, Dot, it is not a bad idea at all.'

Margaret Courtney stood at the window of St. Mary's Convent. How quiet and peaceful everything seemed. The trees stood still as though the mischievous breezes dared not approach the branches that bent low with the burden of scintillant whiteness and the snow, as yet undisturbed by marring footprints, covered the earth with a blanket of downy purity. Not a sound disturbed the mystic stillness of the early dawn.

'Christmas morning!' she murmured. 'Peace on earth to men of good will.' 'A holy, happy peace, a peace beyond my powers of comprehension has invaded this place, as it did the poor stable of Bethlehem nearly two thousand years ago. Can it be that they are right? Does this faith draw them so close to their Maker that they are filled with a heavenly peace unheard of, unknown outside the cloister? If not, what has drawn these women, intelligent and refined beyond the ordinary, away from all the world holds dear? And what keeps them here? Why doesn't the novelty wear off after a year or so, as it does with all worldly pleasures? 'Running away from John,' indeed! Running to John is more like it, for every crucifix and statue, the serene countenance of each nun, the chapel and its white-haired priest, all seem to draw me closer to the religion my brother has embraced. If it is the true—'

She sprang away from the window with a gesture of impatience. 'Of what am I thinking? Let John be a Catholic, if he will, but thank God! I, at least, am not such a weakling that the outward semblance of perfect happiness that fills this Convent can influence me in any way. 'Good morning, Miss Courtney; merry Christmas.' Mother Celeste stood at the door. 'Are you coming to Mass with us this morning?'

'No, Mother, I think not. One glance at the face of her guest told Mother Celeste the truth, and she knew that she was fighting, fighting all the old prejudices that held her captive, and struggling with the great truths that sought to tear aside the barricade her education had raised against them.'

'God and His Blessed Mother help her!' was the prayer that came from Mother Celeste's heart. Aloud she said: 'One of our little ones was taken ill during the night, Miss Courtney, and while the physician is not certain that it is anything contagious, we thought it best to establish a quarantine, as many of the children did not go home for the holidays.'

'Oh! I am so sorry. Could I be of any help?'

'Thank you, but there is nothing we can do just now but pray. Sister Mary Eunice has been with her all night, and we will make no change until the doctor reports. He will be here soon bringing the anti-toxin serum with him.'

'You fear diphtheria? 'Yes, Miss Courtney. You will pray for the child won't you? Margaret was surprised. Was this nun, this woman who seemed so near unto God, asking her prayers? Did she consider them worth while?'

Mother Celeste continued: 'It is a very sad case. Little Marian is just six and has been with us since September. Her father, a devout Catholic, died a year ago, and her mother, an invalid is not of our faith. One day, shortly after her entrance, the Sister in charge of the little ones missed her, and after quite a search we found her in the chapel before a statue of the Blessed Virgin, murmuring over and over 'Mother Mary, please make my Mother 'Lisbeth a Catholic.'

'You see, she explained in childish innocence, 'Mother Mary lives up in Heaven where my big daddy-man is, and Mother 'Lisbeth is really, truly, earthly mamma, and I love them both so much and think of them so often, that I have to say 'Mother Mary' and 'Mother 'Lisbeth' to tell them apart. After that, whenever the child was absent, we knew where to look for her. A month ago, the mother took a change for the worse, and the child went home. The sorrow of the little one at the loss of her mother was lessened considerably by the sweet, consoling thought that she became a Catholic before her death and had

gone to join 'Mother Mary' and 'Big Daddy-man,' as she always called her father.'

'She returned to the Convent several days ago, undoubtedly contracting the disease while away. The hospital is about two hundred feet beyond the chapel to the left. You will avoid that vicinity, please, Miss Courtney?'

'Of course, Mother, and I trust it will not prove as serious as you fear. 'God grant it may not be, Miss Courtney. I will see you again after Mass.'

'What a womanly woman she is,' Margaret Courtney mused as Mother Celeste departed. 'This community living, instead of destroying, seems to have heightened all worth-while qualities in its members. I wonder if they are really satisfied or if this appearing calm is but a mask—'

'No! It is no mask, of that I am sure. Right or wrong they are at peace, perfectly satisfied and happy; at peace with the world, their Maker—and would that I could say the same for myself—at peace within.'

'What am I saying? Of what am I thinking? Why—I if I continue to indulge such thoughts within a week, I'll be begging them to invest me with their somber habit! Of course, I am not so sympathetic with them or their mode of living. I am just critical, and I think I had better go away.'

'And I will go, too, go at once, before I have a chance to change my mind.'

To decide was to act with Margaret Courtney and in a few minutes she was walking down the stone steps, wrapped in furs, her grip in her hand. A note to Dorothy and Mother Celeste hinted at the necessity of immediate departure.

'I believe I'll run over and view the outside of the chapel once more. It is a splendid piece of architecture, and I may want to describe it in one of my stories.'

At the chapel, she paused, then irresolutely, went up several steps. 'I won't go in! No, I won't! There seems some sort of witchery about that tries to draw me closer and closer, but, thank God! I am strong enough to resist the temptation.'

She walked away, down the path, a prey to the most conflicting thoughts. 'Mother! Mother!' A cry broke the morning stillness and Margaret started violently. A hasty glance around told her the truth. Forgetful of her promise to Mother Celeste, she had taken the left road and stood in front of the hospital.

'Mother Mary, please bring my mother 'Lisbeth to me,' the childish voice rang out in delirium of fever.

A great wave of pity swept over Margaret Courtney. Perhaps, she could comfort the little one, render her sufferings less acute, or assist the nun who attended her.

Headless of danger, she hastened into the building, and ran through the corridor, guided by the baby voice. Quietly turning the knob, she paused to survey the interior of the room. On the bed lay a little white robed figure with flushed face and unnaturally brilliant eyes. Without thought of possible consequences, Margaret dropped her grip to the floor and placed her coat and hat upon it, then she closed the door behind her and advanced to the foot of the bed.

'Mother 'Lisbeth! I knew Mother Mary would bring you to me!'

The nun turned in surprise. 'Oh! Miss Courtney, you should not be here. Have you not heard?'

'Yes, Sister, I know, and I have come to help you.'

'But, the danger! The doctor has just left and our worst fears are realized.'

'Mother 'Lisbeth, come to me!' wailed the child.

'Please, Sister, I am not afraid, and I would not be permitted to leave now. I might carry the infection elsewhere. You must let me help you!'

'Mother 'Lisbeth, dear! Mother 'Lisbeth!' begged the child.

'She seems to have forgotten that her mother is dead,' explained the Sister.

Margaret dropped on her knees beside the baby, and slipping an arm underneath, drew the little body close, until the child's head was pillowed on her bosom.

'Baby, my dear, dear baby,' she murmured soothingly.

'Mother 'Lisbeth, I knew Mother Mary would bring you to me, 'cause I jus' kep' prayin' an' prayin,' an' all the time I'd say 'Dear Mother Mary, Mother 'Lisbeth will love you as I do and like Big Daddy-man up in Heaven does, soon as she knows all 'bout you.' Won't you, dear Mother 'Lisbeth?'

'Yes, sweetheart!' Margie thought not of the words she uttered. Her one wish was to comfort the child.

'An' you'll say the rosary every day, won't you, dear Mother 'Lisbeth, 'cause Mother Mary just loves you to say them?'

'Every day, my darling, every day,' promised Margaret.

'Here, I'll give you mine, 'cause I have 'nother pray.' Her hand felt among the pillows and at last brought forth the object of her search, a little white rosary.

'Every day, Mother 'Lisbeth, every day, remember.'

'Every day, 'baby dear, every day,' repeated Margaret, taking the Rosary and unconsciously pressing the cross to her lips as she had seen Dorothy do ere she started her prayers at night.

'Is there no hope, Sister?'

Margaret formed the words with her lips rather than uttered them.

Sister Mary Eunice shook her head sadly.

'Her throat is really better, but the heart grows perceptibly weaker. The doctor says it can not stand the strain.'

Again the child opened her eyes and pressed her soft baby hand against Margaret's cheek.

'Dear Mother 'Lisbeth,' she murmured, 'I'm so happy 'cause you promised to say Mother Mary's beads an' I know you will, 'cause you're so good—and—I—love—you.'

She was not looking at Margaret now, but staring towards the corner where a statue of the Blessed Virgin stood, her little arms outstretched, a smile of wondrous sweetness illuminating her face.

'Why, dear Mother Mary, you've got my Big Daddy-man an' my dear Mother 'Lisbeth, an'—I'm—comin'—too!'

The arms dropped, the little head turned over so slightly, and with a tired, sobbing gasp, the baby eyes closed forever on earth, to open in that great Heaven of Eternal Bliss where Big Daddy-man, mother 'Lisbeth and Mother Mary eagerly awaited her coming.

'It was New Year's Day. 'Oh! Mother Celeste, is it true? Will Margie be with us to-day?'

'Yes, dear. Everything has been thoroughly fumigated and disinfected, and the doctor says both Miss Courtney and Sister Mary Eunice may leave the hospital to-day.'

'Oh! I am so very glad, Mother. I have missed her so, isn't she lovely, Mother? I wonder why she decided to leave Christmas morning and then changed her mind?'

'She must explain that part of it, Dorothy. She is a splendid young lady, and I had hoped to see quite a good deal of her. I am sorry she wandered into the hospital and had to remain until the danger was past.'

A Sister drew near. 'Father Weston is here, Mother, and also wishes to see Dorothy.'

'Oh! I am so glad!' Dorothy fairly danced in delight. 'Now, he will meet Margie.'

'Yes, indeed!' Mother turned to the waiting nun. 'Please go to the hospital and tell Miss Courtney that a gentleman awaits her coming in the parlor.'

'See, Mother, Father James could not wait patiently for us. He is already in the corridor.'

'Oh! Uncle James, I'm so very glad to see you,' she continued. 'Dorothy, dear,' Father spoke 'feelingly,' 'you are wonderfully like your mother; is she not Celeste?'

'Very like our little sister, indeed! I have very much to say to you, dear,' Father continued, 'but I will have to wait, for there is some one else who impatiently awaits your coming.'

'Some one else?' Dorothy repeated in surprise.

For answer Father James took her by the shoulder and pushed her gently into the parlor, closing the door behind her.

A broad shouldered, handsome man came quickly towards her with outstretched arms.

Dorothy drew, won't you say I am welcome?'

'You here? At the Convent? With Father James?' Dorothy seemed to disbelieve her own eyes.

'Yes, Dorothy, I have spent much of the past six months with Father Weston studying the Catholic religion.'

'Then you are a Catholic! Oh! I am so glad.' She could no longer refuse the invitation of his eyes and arms. 'Why did you not let me know? It would have made me so happy.'

'Because, for a long time, I was not sure. Dot, I knew that you would not want me to embrace the Catholic religion unless I was thoroughly sincere, and I could not run the risk of making you suffer as your father had made your mother suffer, and so I waited. I was baptized and received my first Holy Communion Christmas morning. Father Weston and Mother Celeste had arranged this little surprise as a Christmas present for you, but we are a week late owing to the illness of that little child. Are you not happy, dear?'

'Happy, John, I did not know there was so much happiness in this whole world as has come to me to-day. My heart is singing with gladness.'

The door opened and Margaret Courtney entered.

'Why, brother John—Dorothy! What can this mean?'

'Come! John Courtney took a hand of each of the girls and drew them to a settee beside him. 'Let me explain!'

'Don't be so surprised, Dorothy, didn't you ever guess that Margie was the sister of your sweetheart?'

Dorothy shook her head, still too stunned at this unexpected turn of affairs to speak.

'And, Margie, didn't you recognize Dorothy in my description of your new sister-to-be?'

'Indeed, I did not! You never mentioned her name and I thought I hated her because she had made you become a Catholic, and, you know, I just love Dorothy!'

'Margie, this is a strange ending to our little game,' Dorothy giggled.

'Game? What game?' asked John.

'We came here playing 'running away from John,' because Margie's John had displeased her by becoming a Catholic and my John had made me unhappy because he did not become one.'

'And John ran right after the both

of you, didn't he? The man laughed happily.

'Isn't it splendid, Margie? Now, we will never be separated. You'll live with us always.'

'Dot, dear, I am not going back! 'Not going back?' repeated Dorothy.

'You know the words, dear, and a little child shall lead them? Well, it was little Marian and her splendid belief which shattered the last obstacle that stood in my path and brought me to accept the knowledge and beauty of the Catholic faith, much of which I had learned from you, Dorothy. This week of seclusion I have spent in prayer and study, making good use of the legacy the little child left me—she held up the white rosary. 'Tell me you are both glad for me!'

'It is all too wonderful, Margie. So many good things have happened to day, I can scarcely believe I am not dreaming.'

'Ah! my dear sister, I well know that you could not live with Dorothy without her planting the seeds of truth and religion in your life as she did in mine.'

'And, my dear brother and sister, after I have been received into the Catholic Church, I shall become a novice here, and devote my life to good works as the gentle nuns do, and try in my poor, weak, inefficient way to follow their noble example.'

That evening Margaret Courtney stood on the broad steps of the Convent and bade them farewell, those two she loved so well, brother John and the fair girl so radiantly happy beside him.

At the crest of the hill they turned once more to see her standing there so calm, peaceful and happy, and even as they watched she turned away, back to the cloister of the convent walls, away from the turmoil, the meaningless toil and conflict of the world, full of the peace that thrilled within her, a spring of perfect peace brought from Heaven and transplanted here on earth.

DIVIDED HOUSES

There is one hopeful sign amid the present social unrest. It is the growth of repugnance to the evils of divorce. Thinking people who have at heart the future welfare of the country, who know how to extenuate the awful evils of to-day, who know their history and hence can draw the conclusions as to the manner of fate that will overtake us as it destroyed earlier states of civilization, are becoming very Catholic in their denunciation of divorce. To do so means, of course, the getting away from a fundamental Protestant principle. For if there is anything for which the children of the Reformation have stood it is the privilege of private judgment not only in mental conclusions but also in moral practice. Is it so long ago when divorce was a cardinal doctrine of Protestants? If you were not a Catholic you must thereby be in favor of the divorce principle. Go over much of the controversial literature of the past and what will surprise you is the prominence given to the arguments in favor of the dissolubility of the marriage bond. It was always insisted that Catholic opposition to divorce was a violation of the liberties gained by the religious revolt of the sixteenth century. Bible texts were twisted in the effort to prove that in defending divorce, which was so mixed up with the beginnings of Protestantism, they were defending Christianity itself. The Catholic Church was in their minds convicted of error against an inviolable right of man, and hence an anti-Christian state, if it tyrannized over the people in forbidding them this right, what would it not do in other things?

And so Protestantism and the right to divorce have been interchangeable terms. But now there is even with many strict Protestants a right-about face. It isn't that they have changed their faith, it isn't that they are willing to admit that the principle was wrong from the beginning and hence a proof of the evil of individualism in religion; no, they will not go that far. They still maintain that divorce is right in principle but has become nauseous in many ways because it has been abused. But as we have often said the magnitude of the abuse has nothing to do with the principle. If the divorce principle can be justly claimed by one man, what is to prevent a million men claiming it on the same grounds as the one man. And for that very reason the divorce evils have grown and will grow, as long as men are taught that they can make their own laws, or what is practically the same thing, can interpret the laws of God to suit their own convenience. Hence the whole thing is a muddle of principles and all the disgust at accompanying evils will never check the abuse. The remedy lies elsewhere.

Yet in spite of being obliged to recognize the fact that it is all a mere cleansing of the outside of the cup, we should be glad to see even that being done. It is essentially a justification of our position and in time it may be able to draw the attention of a multitude to the filth of the inside of the cup.

And when one finds such a staunch defender of the rights of private judgment as Lyman Abbott attacking divorce, it gives hope that many are willing to sacrifice those Protestant principles that are now found to bring disorder. 'Trials for murder,' he writes, 'are full of brutalities, but the divorce cases bring more loathsome details to light; violations of honor, relations between men and women from which the spiritual has

been wholly eliminated, so that their relations become appalling profanity of human personality, vulgarities which are rendered more repulsive because they are unconscious. These revelations of the divorce courts are made by men and women who strip themselves bare in the eyes of the world, and yet they do not know that they are naked. There is no death so terrible as this living death, and to lose the sense of purity, of honor, of spiritual integrity and not know it, is a living death.'

So it goes, one condemning divorce the other commending it, or at least excusing it. It is a house divided, quite as divided as the family into which the disease of divorce has come. Will they never learn that if the evils which disgust them are to be remedied the only clear way is by returning to the proved position of the old Church toward marriage as a wonderfully sacred thing?—Boston Pilot.

GATES AND DOORS

There was a gentle hostler (He is in Heaven tonight!) He opened up the stable (The night Our Lady came, Our Lady and Saint Joseph, He gave them food and bed, And Jesus Christ has given him A glory round his head.

So let the gate swing open (However poor the yard, Lest weary people visit you And find their passage barred, Unlatch the door at midnight And let your lantern's glow Shine out to guide the traveler's feet To you across the snow.

There was a courteous hostler (He is in Heaven tonight!) He held Our Lady's bride And helped her to alight: He spread clean straw before her Whereupon she might lie down, And Jesus Christ has given him An everlasting crown.

Unlock the door this evening And let your gate swing wide, Let all who seek for shelter Come speedily inside. What if your yard be narrow? What if your house be small? There is a Guest is coming Will glorify it all.

There was a joyous hostler Who knelt on Christmas morn Beside the radiant manger Wherein his Lord was born. His heart was full of laughter, His soul was full of bliss When Jesus, on His Mother's lap, Gave him His hand to kiss.

Unbar your heart this evening And keep no stranger out, Take from your soul's great portal The barrier of doubt, To humble folk and weary Give hearty welcoming, Your breast shall be tomorrow The cradle of a King.

—JOYCE KILMER

PROTESTANTISM HAS NOT ADVANCED ANY

HALLAM

(Lit. of Europe, part II, ch. II, 14, 15)

'The prodigious increase of the Protestant party in Europe, after the middle of the sixteenth century, did not continue more than a few years. It was checked and fell back, not quite so rapidly or completely as it came on, but so as to leave the antagonistic church in perfect security.'

MACAULAY

(Essays, vol. IV, pp. 348, 349)

'We think it a most remarkable fact, that no Christian nation, which did not adopt the principles of the Reformation before the end of the sixteenth century, should ever have adopted them. Catholic communities have, since that time, become infidel and become Catholic again; but none has become Protestant.'

LECKY

(Hist. of Eur., vol. I, pp. 185, 186)

'In the sixteenth and to a certain degree in the seventeenth century, Protestantism exercised a commanding and controlling influence over the affairs of Europe. . . . During the last century all this has changed. Of the many hundreds of great thinkers and writers, in every department, who have separated from Catholicism, it would be difficult to name three men of real eminence and unquestionable sincerity who have attached themselves permanently to any of the more conservative forms of Protestantism. Amid all those great semi-religious revolutions which have unhinged the faith of thousands, and have so profoundly altered the relations of Catholicism and society, Protestant churches have made no advance and have exercised no perceptible influence. Of all the innumerable forms into which the spirit of dogmatism crystallized after the Reformation, not one seems to have retained the power of attracting those beyond its border. Whatever is lost by Catholicism is gained by Rationalism; wherever the spirit of Catholicism advances.'

Do not expect too much from others, but remember that all have some ill nature whose occasional outcroppings we must expect, and that we must forbear and forgive, as we often desire forbearance and forgiveness ourselves.

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