felt her way down the stairs, and carefully she reached toward the little button which would turn on the light.

Just at that moment there was a click, click, click—a noise evidently made by some blunt instrument on the shutters outside the sitting-room. The child paused in wonderment. The sound was repeated, and presently, the window was thrown open. Veronica stood stock still, with her eyes glued on the window opposite. The next moment it was thrown open and a man entered the room. Surprised, but by no means frightened, the child hid behind the big newel post at the foot of the staircase. The newcomer glanced around the room and paused as if to hear some sound.

After that he pulled out a little dark lantern from his pocket, and, opening up the slide, sent a narrow cone of light towards the little safe. He got down on his hands and knees, and, drawing some heavy instrument from his pocket, began to pick the lock of the old-fashioned safe. For more than five minutes he kept this up, and presently, with a grunt of satisfaction, he pulled open the door. The child had remained as motionless as a statue during this performance, but as the thief reached for the bag of money a sudden resolution seemed to shoot through her frail frame. She reached over towards the button, and, giving a push, flooded the room with light. The man jumped to his feet instantly and turned with an oath on his lips. He had pulled a pistol from his hip pocket, and was prepared for a battle to the death. But when he gazed upon that little night-gowned figure the desire to fight seemed to ooze through the tips of his fingers. He looked around the room suspiciously, as if to see some one else present, but no, he was alone in the room with the child. Strange to say, the little one was the more self-possessed of the two. She was the first to speak. She did so with a sound of reproach in her lisping tones.

"You were going to take that money," she said.

The man did not know whether to laugh or cry. The situation was so novel that he lost his customary cleverness in adapting himself to circumstances.

"Now, don't deny it," she said in a voice of authority. "I saw you reach in for the money."

"Well," he said, finally, wondering all the time just how he should act under such peculiar conditions, "what of it?"

"What of it?" she exclaimed, her shrill voice ringing. "Why, a good deal of it. That money belongs to the orphans."

"To the orphans?" he muttered, weakly.

"Yes," she answered, "to the poor orphans who have no parents to provide for them."

A curious change began to come over the man. He remembered in a vague sort of way that he had a child who was an orphan. When her mother died five years before he had placed the little one in an asylum under the direction of the Sisters of Charity, and then he had gone his way, selecting crime as the easiest method of obtaining the money he needed to gratify his passions. But during all these years the face of the child was before him like an accuser, and a well remembered voice rising in his ears in the night and at times when he least desired it. Now the whole thing flashed up before his mental vision. His long continued silence seemed to irritate Veronica.

"Why don't you say something?" she said. "Surely you don't intend to take the money that belongs to the orphans?"

"Why not?" he said feebly, and this time his voice trembled in spite of himself.

"Why not?" she echoed. "Why, if you do, the orphans will have no roof over their heads, they'll have no clothes to wear and no food to eat."

"Is that so?" he answered with a sickly smile.

"Yes, that's so," she replied. "And more than that, you'll be taking the money that was given to the orphans by people who are poor themselves. They gave it in the collection to-day. I know it because uncle told me all about it to-night."

During this time the man had been reviewing his whole life. He wavered for an instant. It was one of those moments which are decisive, whether it be in a battle of armed men or in one man's struggle with his own conscience. It was a fight between the lower and the higher natures. It was a test between the natural and the supernatural. The man passed a grimy hand over his tear-dimmed eyes, and his next action announced the result of the conflict. He went down on his hands and knees and put the bag of money back in the safe. As he closed the door of the little receptacle he turned to the child and said:

"Little one, you have won. The collection for the orphans will not be disturbed."

He started towards the open window and waved his hand at Veronica.

"Good-bye," she called.

Something in the tone of her voice halted the man. He came back and looked at the child with searching eyes. The confiding glance that she gave him was strangely familiar. He grasped her by the hand and cried excitedly:

"What's your name, little one?"

"Veronica," she said simply.

The mention of that name made him feel faint; he could feel his heart thumping at his breast.

"Veronica what?" he asked.

"Veronica Clancy," she replied proudly. He dropped her hand disappointedly.

"Clancy! Clancy!" he repeated mechanically.

"Yes," she said. And then, as an afterthought, "I only got that name a year ago."

Once again he began to show signs of agitation.

"What was it before that?"

"I don't know," she said, with a bewildered look.

"Where did you live before your name became Clancy?"

'At the asylum."

He took her little hands in his own trembling fists. He gazed long and earnestly into the innocent face. Five years make a wonderful difference but the eyes and the features of the infant were there.

"Did you ever see my beads?" she asked, with a curious lisp.

"No," he answered.

She pulled at a string at her neck and drew up a rosary. "They were mamma's," she said. "I always wear 'em."

He recognized them with a dart of pain. The man was on his knees now, and the tears were streaming from his eyes.

"Oh, what I've lost!" he moaned.

"What, the money?" she asked.

"Something more precious than money," he answered. "But I'll leave you; that will be my sacrifice, my atonement."

He turned to her as he reached the window.

"Good night," he cried, good night, little one."

"Why," she exclaimed, "you are not going without seeing uncle, are you?"

He hesitated on the threshold.

"Wait a minute," she cried. "I'll call uncle." And the next instant the childish voice rang through the corridor. A few moments later Father Clancy was hurrying down the stairway, buttoning his cassock as he descended. The child called to him before he reached the landing.

"Uncle, here is a man who wants to see you."

Astonishment was depicted on the priest's face. He looked at the child and then at the man, and finally his gaze rested understandingly on the half open safe. He spoke angrily:

"A thief—and with the orphan's money."

"I have—a—child in the orphan asylum myself," murmured the thief, in broken tones. "I have not disturbed your collection."

Father Clancy looked at the man searchingly. He was evidently telling the truth. Still, such a person should not be at large. He was a menace to society. Reasoning it out this way without any personal feeling, the priest walked over toward the burglar alarm. He reached up for the knob of the contrivance. The thief stood motionless, awaiting developments. Suddenly Father Clancy felt a plucking at his cassock. He turned around and beheld Veronica. The innocent little face was quite pale, but the look of intelligence showed a thorough understanding of the situation.

"Don't, uncle," she cried. Don't."

"Why not?" he asked, curiously.

"Because he has a child in the orphan asylum," she said simply.

Father Clancy looked the intruder squarely in the eyes. The man squirmed uneasily under the prolonged stare. He moved a step forward and laid his pistol on the table.

"Go ahead," he said hoarsely, "go ahead and ring. I'm prepared to take my medicine."

Veronica stood looking pleadingly into her uncle's eyes. Father Clancy halting, pointed to the weapon on the table.

"Why did you do that?"

"I didn't know I was breaking into a rectory. I'm not trying to excuse myself, only telling the truth. It's the first time I ever carried a pistol, too—and, I hope, the last."

"Why," the priest exclaimed, "you seem sorry."

The thief looked in the direction of Veronica before replying. Her return glance of confidence brought the mist before his eyes. He uttered two words. They came from his very heart:

"I am."

"You have reached the parting of the ways, my friend," said the priest firmly, but not unkindly. "Why not take the right road here and now."

Veronica listened with wide open eyes. The next moment she saw her uncle putting on his stole and seating himself in a chair in the corner of the room. After that her thief went down on his knees and began pouring the story of his wicked life into the ears of the priest. There was a confused, unintelligible murmur of voices for some moments. The priest blessed the kneeling man, and then both arose. Father Clancy walked to the window, which reached to the floor of the room, and throwing it open, waited for his strange visitor to pass out.

The man hesitated.

"I've one request."

What is it?'

"Let me kiss the child."

"Go ahead."

He rushed over and gave Veronica a convulsive embrace.

The gray mists of the sky were beginning to give way to the rosy tints of the morning, and the reflection lighted up the face of the departed thief as the priest exclaimed in his cheery voice.

"God bless you; don't forget your purpose of amendment."—Philadelphia Standard and Times.

TO ROME BY A NEW ROAD.

'HOW ONE CONVERT WAS LED INTO THE CHURCH BY A DANCE.

You often hear it said that "all roads lead to Rome," writes Rev. Thomas J. O'Hern in the Catholic Universe. "The wider one's experience becomes, the more one is convinced of the truth of that statement. I met a man in Howard (Ohio) who said he was a convert and added: 'Father, what do you suppose brought me into the Catholic Church?' I said I did not know. He replied: 'A dance.' I was naturally surprised, because among the many reasons given I had never heard that one before, and asked him to explain. He said: 'I lived in one of our great cities, and had belonged to two different Protestant churches. One evening I escorted a Catholic young lady to a dance. It was Saturday night, and at 12 o'clock she said she would dance no longer, so I escorted her to her home. Before I left she asked me to accompany her to church on the following morning. When I asked her the hour and she said 8 o'clock, I thought that an ungodly hour for Sunday services, but promised to accompany her. I returned to the dance hall and remained until 4 a. m.

"After a couple of hours sleep I kept my promise and went to church. That was the first time that I had ever entered a Catholic Church, in fact, the first time I had ever been invited to do so. I was very much impressed by the solemnity of the service, as well as the prayerful attitude of the worshippers, but of course it was all very strange and unintelligible to me. When the next Sunday came I felt drawn by some strange power to that same church, and went alone. I continued to go for some months every Sunday. I then presented myself to the pastor and asked to be instructed only however, on condition that I make my decision about joining the Church after the instructions were concluded. The pastor said that was perfectly satisfactory, and when he had finished the instructions I wanted to be a Catholic.'

"He never saw the girl again, but that little incident in his life had made him a Catholic.

"This only goes to show how a trifling circumstance may be fraught with deep significance, and teaches us how much a little zeal on the part of our Catholic people can do toward removing the obstacles that stand in the path of our non Catholic brethren."

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AN IRISH CATHOLIC BISHOP ON JUSTICE TO PROTESTANTS.

A fine spirit of tolerance and neighborliness as regards the relations of Protestants and Catholics in Ireland informs the Lenten pastoral of the most Rev. Dr. Dwyer, Bishop of Limerick. Referring to the working of the land purchase act and the many economic evils which will be abated by the passing of the soil into the hands of those who till it, Dr. Dwyer says that he is convinced that something better still will flow from the new order of things. He says:

"The religious separation of the landlord class from the Catholics of Ireland, was fenced round, and intensified by the opposition of their material interests. It was hard for Irish Protestants to give even a fair consideration to the claims of our religion on their acceptance. It was identified in their minds with all the hostility of those who were their strongest opponents in almost every sphere of life. All that is gone, or going, and I am not without a hope that sooner or later in religion, as well as in the land, we shall see the undoing of the evil work of the penal times, and the whole people of this country drawn together first in the promotion of her material welfare, and then reaching a higher and holier union when we all once again, as in the olden days, kneel before the same altars.

"Surely this is a vision that one may love to contemplate; it may seem to be a dream, but it is one of those that God may yet realize for us.

"But if it is to come about, much under God's grace depends upon our own dealings with our Protestant fellow-countrymen. We must exorcise from our hearts every spirit of ill-will, or distrust, and act and feel towards them in the broadest and truest charity. Whether our hopes and longings are ever realized or not, it is our duty now in every phase of life, in private relations, as well as in municipal and political affairs, wherever we Catholics are in a majority to treat our Protestant countrymen, not only with absolute justice, but with generosity, and make them feel that we regard them as our fellow-citizens, whose rights and privileges we are prepared to defend as strenuously as our own.—Sacred Heart Review.

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THE CHURCH AND NATIONALITY.

THE FAITH OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IS NOT FOR ANY PARTICULAR RACE BUT FOR THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD, HER UNIVERSALITY DWELT UPON BY A LEARNED SON OF ST. IGNATIUS.

The Rev. Father Gwynn, S. J., in a sermon at St. Francis Xavier's Jesuit Church, Dublin, Ireland, recently, discussing the relation of the Church to nationalities, said: "One thing alone remains ever the same—the Faith of the Catholic Church. She is a Church not for Celt or the Teuton or the Slav, but for the nations of the world. Look at the countries who dwell within her fold, and see were they less national than those who had left. We in Ireland had not far to go to apply the test." By national he did not mean a mad, insatiable desire to trample on and crush other races. We had often been told of the danger of the denationalizing influence of the Catholic Church. The warning had come mostly from those whose history was mainly made up of efforts to trample to death the nations around. When the warning did not come from them it came from those whom he would trust less, for he would rather see a nation dead than see her disgraced.

The gifts and the works of the Almighty did not stand in opposition, and it was God's finger which traced those furrows which divide the human race into nations. They are too deep, find too ready an acceptance in man's heart to be mere conventionalities, or the result of chance; and are too evident a link with the working out of the Divine plan in human history to be a mere by-product of some higher scheme. As every individual has a right to individual existence and to recognition of those claims and obligations which that existence imposes on others, so, too, nations have a right to national existence, and to everything, be it language or education or moral training, or due material prosperity, or whatever else without which its proper development would be impossible. Solemn was the obligation the Catholic Church imposes on her children to love their home and to honor their parents; and like to it was the command she gave to each to honor and love their fatherland. To no one, be he priest or layman, did she leave it a matter of free thought or free choice to love his country. The Catholic Church would not pull down the boundaries which God set up between the nations, but she preserved them and strengthened them by weakening and destroying what would inevitably undermine them, a nation's faults and a nation's vices.

MSGR. TAAFFE'S BEARD.

Msgr. Taaffe, pastor of St. Patrick's Church, Brooklyn, left recently for Ireland on account of ill-health.

Of recent years, until this illness, Msgr. Taaffe has been hale and hearty, but years ago when traveling in Egypt he experienced trouble with his throat and on the advice of a physician he left Egypt for Rome to consult a specialist. The Rome specialist treated the Monsignor and commanded that the Brooklyn prelate should grow a beard. Msgr. Taaffe demurred, saying that it was not the custom of the regular priests of the Catholic clergy in America, and that before adorning his face with the patriarchal beard he would be obliged to obtain permission from his superior, the Bishop of Brooklyn.

"Oh, very well," said the specialist, and Msgr. Taaffe, believing the episode had come to a pause, dismissed the matter for the time being. Two days later the specialist visited Msgr. Taaffe upon his own invitation and he handed the Monsignor a document upon which there were official seals. The gist of it was that the Cardinal-Vicar of Rome, having been appealed to by an eminent Roman specialist in diseases of the throat in behalf of Msgr. Taaffe, unhesitatingly concurred in the specialist's opinion that Msgr. Taaffe should safeguard his health by growing a beard, and exercising his right as Cardinal-Vicar to aid a brother priest he decreed by special dispensation that Msgr. Taaffe might cultivate a beard forthwith. The Monsignor, who had had no knowledge of what the specialist was going to do, was greatly astonished when he read the document from the Cardinal, and he readily complied with the commands of the specialist.

In due time Msgr. Taaffe wore a luxuriant beard and was so changed in appearance that but few of his congregation who chanced to meet him immediately upon his return from abroad recognized him. The Sunday following his return the Monsignor entered the pulpit in his church at High Mass and prefaced his sermon on the gospel of the day by saying that the wanderer had returned to introduce himself to his own congregation.

Father Hecker and the Conversion of America.

When Isaac Hecker was at the Redemptorist House of Studies, at Witten, Holland, his superior, in view of his evident inability to study, asked him to declare in writing his opinion regarding his future vocation, and the answer of that 'stupid' student was: 'It seemed to me, in looking back at my career before becoming a Catholic, that Divine Providence had led me, as it were, by the hand, through the different ways of error, and made me personally acquainted with the different classes of people in the United States and their wants, in order that, having made known to me the truth, He might employ me the better to point out to them the ways of the Church. That, therefore, my vocation was to labor for the conversion of my non-Catholic fellow countrymen.—Missionary.

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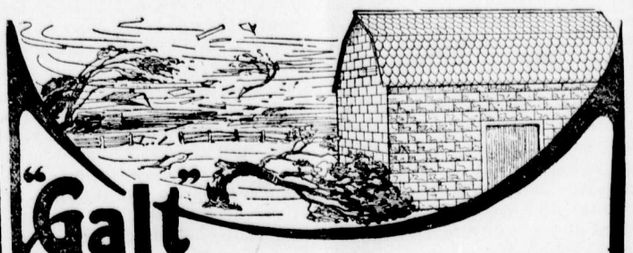

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