# GUILTY OR NOT GUILTY.

By T. W. Poole, M. D., Lindsay, Ont.

## CHAPTER V.

Mr. McCoy's domestic arrangements were of the plainest kind. He lived in rooms partly over and partly adjacent to the store, and his house was "kept" by his sister, a maiden lady of uncertain age.

One day there was an unusual activity displayed in this household. If you had looked in you would have seen, that apparently as the result of a hot oven and an unusually red face, Miss McCoy's "help" had been accumulating platefuls of cakes and tarts; while that lady herself, with very commendable activity for her years, in addition to directing affairs in the kitchen, had brought forth and dusted her china and placed her best room in the primest of good order.

Evidently something was going to happen. No! not a wedding, dear readers, only a few female friends coming to tea and to indulge in a little pleasant gossip.

And in due time they came, each prepared to absorb and supply a fair proportion of the social enjoyment of the evening.

As each new arrival presented herself, the usual courtesies were enacted, and the stereotyped phrases repeated regarding the weather and its varying changes; then followed a discussion as to the general health, with Sunday special rehearsals as to individual ailments of more or less serious import, but of no interest to the reader.

In this connection the doctor's skill and reputation were severely questioned and as warmly defended: while the zeal and ability of the several clergymen and the good or bad qualities of their wives and families were discussed and commented upon with a freedom and an acrimony really surprising.

This engrossing occupation was in full tide of success when tea was announced, and Mr. McCoy, after the usual friendly greetings to his guests, placed himself at the head of the table.

"I was sayin'," said Mrs. Pettingrass, "how vera sick poor Mistress Fledgett has been, and what a time they have had, night and day, these sax weeks. The priest was brought over from Hopeton, just as if he could do her any good, poor soul!"

"The priest!" exclaimed a chorus of voices.

"Aye, indeed," continued the speaker, "the poor blind creatures, they're tarrible at prayin' and crossin' themselves."

Neil's eyes sparkled, and his face assumed an expression of comical amusement, mingled with surprise; but of this his guests saw nothing amid the preoccupations of the moment.

"We have too much neglected that family" said Mrs. Townley, pausing for a moment, and looking round the table, "we ought to have sent them some tracts."

"Or a bible" suggested another.

"They dar'nt read it," said the first speaker.

"Isn't it dreadful to think of it," chimed in a little Mrs. Harvey, whose husband was a loyal Orange Master. "Such heathens as we have right at our very doors!"

"Now ladies," said McCoy, taking advantage of a momentary silence which followed this ebullition of opinion, "I myself saw a bible the other day in the house of this very family."

"Aye, the Douay bible, perhaps" said Mrs. Townley. "Well that is one version of the bible, at any rate, for which there is a great deal to be said."

"How can you say that?" rejoined the lady, her eyes kindling, and the lace on her cap trembling with suppressed indignation. "Why it substitutes penance for repentance."

Mr. McCoy's thoughts flew to his recent female catechist, who seemed to rise up before his mental vision. He pictured to himself how her handsome face would smile, and he thought he knew what she would have found to say in reply.

"You ought to know, Mrs. Townley, that penance, as understood by Catholics, includes all that we mean by repentance, and more."

"Really now!" exclaimed that lady.

"Well! well!" ejaculated Mrs. Harvey.

Mrs. Pettingrass expressed her dissent by a vigorous shake of the head, her mouth being literally "too full for utterance."

"How do you know, Neil?" asked his sister, casting on him at the same time a deprecatory glance.

"I do happen to know," said he, "and I can prove it on the very best authority."

For a moment the ladies were silent.

"And let me ask you," he continued, turning to Mrs. Pettingrass "if it is not a highly commendable thing for a professedly Christian family to occupy themselves in prayer, when one of their number is ill, and death may be hovering over the household?"

"But who do they pray to?" asked the lady thus addressed.

"To God, I am sure," said Neil solemnly.

Hah! hah! laughed Mrs. Harvey, clapping her hands.

"To the angels and saints and to the virgin, you mean," said Mrs. Townley with vigor.

"And to pictures and crosses, and dead images, which are mere idols," added another.

"That reminds me of our minister, in that beautiful sermon, soon after he came here, you remember how he proved that the Papists were mere idolators, and were worse than pagans. Dear a me! to think we have such like in this Christian country!"

"Now Mrs. Slamen, after that, send up your cup," said Neil, good naturedly. No! Another cake, Mrs. Harvey. But I must tell you that you are quite mistaken. The Catholics honor the saints in heaven, and the blessed Virgin, and ask them to pray for them; but they offer true worship to God alone."

"The Blessed Virgin!" exclaimed a chorus of voices.

"Yes," said McCoy. "'From henceforth all generations shall call me blessed,' was her aspired prophecy. And all generations of true Christians have called her 'blessed' ever since. Why do we as Protestants fail to fulfil that Scriptural prophecy?"

The ladies were aghast.

"I declare you'll be turning Papist yourself next," said Mrs. Pettingrass.

"I would like to see Mr. McCoy down on his knees saying the 'Hail Mary'" said Mrs. Harvey, with a merry laugh, which became general.

"I might do worse," said he with a heightening color. "It would be no shame or discredit to imitate the angel Gabriel in that respect."

"And you approve calling her 'Mother of God,' do you?" inquired an elderly lady.

"I feel a reluctance to it," he said, candidly. "But I do not see anything wrong in it. If you admit that Jesus Christ was God."

"We certainly do."

"And that He was born of her—was her Son, and she His mother."

"She was the mother of His human nature, but not of His Divinity," said the elderly lady.

"Very true; but are you not the mother of your son," he asked, "although you are the mother of his body only, and not of his soul? Your son, composed of body and soul, is one person, and you are his mother. Our Lord had the Divine and human natures, united in one person, and that person was Mary's Son. He was God, and she was His mother as truly as you are the mother of your son. I do not see any escape from that."

The ladies were silent but not convinced.

"You had better cross yourself now" said his sister, annoyed at the part he had taken in the conversation.

"Ladies," said Neil, gravely, "these are serious subjects. The Cross is the sign of our redemption. What a lesson it preaches! Making the sign of the cross on one's self, is not only a profession of faith, but doing this in the name of the three persons of the adorable Trinity is an epitome of the Christian faith. We have taken the cross from our churches, and supplied its place, with a weather cock. Is there not something grotesquely significant in the exchange? Just observe the three weathercocks on the steeples in this village. From some cause, no two of them happen to point in the same direction; owing we might suppose to the varying winds of doctrine emanating from the respective pulpits."

Neil thought he had a little joke on them here, but somehow it fell flat on his present audience. The company having finished their repast, exchanged looks of wonder and alarm, and then rose silently and withdrew to the parlour, where finding themselves alone, they intimated, by uplifted hands and nods and signs, as plainly as need be, that their host was either going over to popery or else was going clear out of his head.

This was a development so new and strange, and would form so unprecedented an item in the gossip of Mertonville, that the dreadful secret burned in the bosom of each, till ere long, they withdrew, each bearing to her own immediate circle the awful discovery which the evening had revealed.

Then it was that the first ominous cloud of public distrust and dislike appeared upon the horizon of this man's life. Alas! another cloud of more appalling import was soon to follow; till in the gathering blackness which appeared for a time to surround him, it seemed as though for him the sun might as well have set at noon.

## CHAPTER VI.

Neil McCoy was a man of prompt and energetic action. He had set to himself the task of finding out for himself whether the Catholic Church was really guilty or not guilty of the heinous charges brought against it. Besides the books lent him by Mary Maloney, he had himself procured such standard and conclusive works as Milner's "End of Controversy," Balme's "Protestantism and Catholicism Compared in their effects on the Civilization of Europe," Burnett's "Path which led a Protestant Lawyer to the Catholic Church"—all able and temperately written works which left little, if anything to be desired in the elucidation of the great subjects of which they treat.

To say that the perusal of these made a profound impression in his mind as to the weakness of Protestantism and the strength of the Catholic theory, would be to state the simple truth.

This result was to him a surprise. His confident expectation had been to find a verdict of "guilty," against the Church of Rome. And he still clung to that hope, and sought everywhere for evidence that she was the corrupt and apostate Church he had held her to be.

It was true, that his confidence in Protestantism was shaken; but the prejudices of his early education, his family and social ties and even a regard for his worldly interests, disposed him strongly to remain in the faith which he had hitherto professed.

In furtherance of this desire, he honestly sought, with the aid of all the helps within his reach, to fortify himself in the Protestant religion and to repel and disprove the arguments in favor of the Catholic system which he felt had already begun to take a strong hold upon his mind.

With this view, the bookshelves of his friends and acquaintance were laid under contribution. Men and women of serious convictions were approached and sounded on the great subject. He said to himself, all these people are satisfied that they are right and the Church of Rome wrong. What has satisfied them on this point? Let me but catch the chain of argument and be satisfied too.

To his surprise and mortification he could find nothing tangible on which to lay hold. Apart from the great doctrines of Christianity, accepted in common by the Catholics and Protestants, he found, as regarded the remaining doctrines of the Catholic Church, that all the Protestant friends with whom he conversed on the subject, seemed to deal much more largely in misrepresentations of the Catholic doctrines, than in facts and arguments, by which these might be refuted. In fact this kind of proof, or rather this entire negation of proof—seemed to constitute the "stock in trade" of Protestant clergymen, as well as that of his more intelligent contemporaries among the laity.

It was in the midst of the perplexing thoughts thus engendered, that he found himself seated one evening in the parlor of the manse, intending to lay open to the minister the state of his mind; hoping, by a candid discussion of the subject, to free himself from impressions which he feared were not unlikely to crystalize into convictions.

The Rev. Mr. Dundee met him frankly and kindly. "I wished to have a little talk with you" said Neil. "I cannot get this question of religion and the churches out of my mind. It seems to me that we do the Church of Rome an injustice in charging her with opinions and practices which she repudiates as strongly as we do."

"To what charges do you refer?" asked the minister.

"Well the charge of idolatry, for one. The Catholic Church, in her catechism and books of devotion plainly forbids the offering to any creature or object the honor due to God alone."

"Perhaps she does, but that does not hinder the priest from making a wafer of bread, and afterwards bowing down to it and worshipping it as God. If you cannot see in that, an idolatrious act, as blind and stupid as anything in paganism, I fear you must be losing your reason," and he fixed on his Elder a searching look, as though he would detect the signs of a lurking madness in his eye.

Neil winced a little under this evident scrutiny, but soon recovered himself and looking at the minister in turn, said quietly. "I think that is not the whole case, Mr. Dundee. Suppose now, that a Catholic believed—really believed—that Jesus Christ was actually and truly present, though concealed, in this wafer, and worshipped God, there present to his faith, is it not in reality God that he is adoring and not merely the wafer. Can you then consistently call him an idolator?"

"But we know there is not and cannot be anything there except the flour and water" said Mr. Dundee, smiling.

"And suppose again," continued Neil, "that the Catholic really believed that he had the very words and authority of Christ Himself—imparted in the most solemn manner, and under circumstances of peculiar force, to sanction his belief in the doctrine of the Real Presence, and that the act of adoration was the natural result of this belief — that is to say, discerning the natural presence of God, on the authority of God, and worshipping Him, would not such an act of adoration assume a very different character from idolatry?"

Mr. Dundee did not reply directly to this. "Really," he said, "it seems so very stupid to imagine that a priest can first make God out of a wafer, and then eat Him."

"The Priest would certainly plead in justification of his act, first, the example of Christ, Who changed bread into His body, and then His command to "do this," "do as I have done," by virtue of the great powers delegated to those to whom He spoke."

"But you know the words of our Saviour here are purely figurative," said Mr. Dundee.

"Those who heard Him reiterating this doctrine, as He did, over and over again, as recorded by St. John, in the 6th chapter, understood Him literally, and many of them deserted Him in consequence. Would our Lord have allowed them to abandon Him to their own precious loss, when a word of explanation would have set them right? Besides, if the Body of our Lord be not there, why does St. Paul warn Christians against incurring damnation, "from not discerning the Lord's body?"

"But He also spoke of Himself as a vine, and as a door. If we are not to take these expressions in a literal sense, why do so in the other case?"

"There seems to be a difference," said Neil, "both in the solemnity and importance of the circumstances under which the phrases were used, as well as in the expressions themselves. He says: 'I am the true Vine,' that is evidently figurative. Had He said, 'I am *this* Vine,' or '*this* door,' it would be figurative no longer. Besides, there is abundant evidence that this doctrine was understood by the Church of the first centuries as it is understood by the Church of Rome at present: and not only by the great body of Christians of all times, but by even many or most of the sects who separated from time to time from the main body. Even the Lutherans adhered, as they do still, to the doctrine of the Real Presence. Against this general concurrence of opinion, I can find no recognized body of Christians voicing our Protestant views, till the comparatively remote period of the Reformation."

The Rev. Mr. Dundee looked at his Elder with an expression of surprise and annoyance. The subject, of course, was very far from being exhausted on either side; but each seemed to feel that a prolongation of the conversation would be useless.

"I am grieved that you should entertain these views," said the minister, with evident emotion, as he rose and paced to and fro across the little room.

"I am really sorry myself" said Neil humbly; "but somehow the old landmarks do not seem to suffice for me any longer. I wish to remain a Protestant and Presbyterian, but I wish still more to believe what is true. Oh! if I only knew what is God's truth" he exclaimed, with an apparent fervour which left no doubt, at least, as to his sincerity.

Through the open door of the parlour the voices had passed out into the empty house, so that Jennett, sitting at her knitting in an adjacent room had heard, if not the full measure of the conversation, at least enough to cause her genuine alarm.

She knew well her father's strong opinions, and how these, sufficiently rigid in themselves were intensified by his profession as a Minister. She saw with unspeakable pain that the man who of all others occupied the first place in her esteem, and who had appeared destined to a still closer relationship, was drifting away on dangerous waters, whither he must go alone since she could not follow.

Overcome by these thoughts, she found herself for the first time avoiding his presence, as with swimming eyes and heaving bosom she sought the privacy of her own room, there, if possible, to quell the new anguish which seemed to have taken possession of her very soul.

When at length Neil rose to go, he hesitated, as if expecting to see her, as had been his custom after his interviews with her father, to bid him good-bye, or on rare occasions to ask him to remain for tea. He looked round when in the hall, as though he missed her accustomed presence; but she came not, though he knew she was in the house, and even as he suspected, nor far away. Turning to the door with a sigh, he passed out, and strode away, apparently in ill humor with himself and all the world besides.

"What a fool I am?" he said to himself, as he passed down the quiet street, which led to the chief thoroughfare. "What a fool I am, that I cannot act and think like other men! Still, I cannot help it. And after all Presbyterianism and even Protestantism composes but a minority of Christian believers. If numbers count for anything the Catholics in the world outnumber all the Protestant bodies put together."

That night the Rev. Mr. Dundee had it in his mind to warn his daughter against his refractory Elder But on second thoughts, and not unaware of the perversity of human nature, he forbore, wisely judging that such a course might have a result the very opposite to what he desired: and perhaps shrewdly suspecting, besides, that Jennett was as ill satisfied with the Elder as he was himself.

He took the precaution, however, to write at once to his student friend, Mr. Portus, and invite him to spend a part at least of his holidays, and as he said, help to enliven his empty house — an invitation which was cheerfully and even gladly accepted.

TO BE CONTINUED.

# THE ISLE OF LOVE.

A TALE OF FRENCH CANADA.

"Bonjour, mademoiselle."

"Bonjour, Monsieur le Cure."

The genial cure bared his snowy head, pausing for a moment with hat in hand before entering the garden and passing amid the yellow sunflowers and stately hollyhocks which edged on either side the narrow footpath.

"How is my little Octavie this fine, bright morning?"

"Well, I thank you, holy Father. And you?"

Father Saucier shrugged his shoulders and laughed good naturedly.

"Helas, my child! Old age, I fear, is descending fast upon me; but as for thee, thou growest day by day more fair; thy cheeks more rosy; thy eyes more sparkling."

"You should not say such things to me lest you should make me vain, or is it that you wish to mock me, Father?"

And Octavie Labelle looked slyly into the old man's kindly face.

"Ah, roguish Octavie, thou knowest well that the praises of an old man such as I are harmless. 'Tis the tender words from the lips of younger men, I fear, may some day turn thy pretty head."

The young girl drooped her head, and the old man softly patted her glossy dark brown hair.

"No, no, my child, 'tis not to mock thee I have come, but to wish thee well and bless thee, remembering that this morning was thy fete. Ah, well! It seems but yesterday that thou wast born and I baptized thee, and to-day thou art a charming grown-up demoiselle."

"Yes, Father, a grown-up demoiselle; and to celebrate this, my eighteenth fete, the boys would hold a picnic this afternoon upon Ile d'Amour. They are to quit their work this noon, and every body is coming, and you, Father must be of the number to make my fete complete."

Father Saucier smiled as he answered naively, "Why should such a gay company wish an old man's presence? Nay, I fear my days for such enjoyments have long passed."

"But, Father, you will come. Promise me."

"Ah, well, my child, have thy wish. And now I must be on my way, for if I would assist at thy fete's celebration there are many duties to be performed before this afternoon. Adieu, my child, and I pray that the Bon Dieu may bless thee."

"Adieu, Monsieur le Cure."

The aged cure passed once more between the rows of hollyhocks and sunflowers, out through the garden gate and down the village street; and Octavie quickly disappeared among the raspberry bushes, where lay a large bowl filled to overflowing with the luscious, sun warmed fruit which she had picked in anticipation of this afternoon's celebration.

"Hey, bonjour, Octavie," called a loud voice from outside the fence.

The girl crouched close within the shrubbery, endeavoring the more completely to hide herself.

"Do not pretend, for I know well thou hearest me."

Presently the bushes were rudely pushed aside, and the burly figure of a man stood beside her,

"Well, Octavie, what hast thou to say? I have come to hear thy answer, for I ask thee once more if thou wilt marry me?"

Octavie turned with an affected little start and rose to her feet.

"Mais, mais, Raoul, how thou didst frighten me! Voila! Thou hast made me crush the biggest of my berries—the very one that I was saving to give Felix Leblanc this afternoon."

"Sapristi!" he exclaimed impatiently his homely, sunburnt features clouding with anger and his dark eyes flashing. "Felix Leblanc! Why dost thou always taunt me with Felix Leblanc?"

"Why should I not, since he appears to me as good as thee?"

"As good as me? Bah! He is a bad one."

"So thou hast said before, but t'were well if others attended Mass as regularly as he—'twould be a better world' sans doute.

"Evidemment, 'tis his fine airs and clothes that thou dost like."

"Perhaps; for assuredly he dresses much better than thou."

She looked askance at his checkered red flannel shirt, his purple socks and gray homespuns.

"Octavie, thou hast not answered my question yet."

"What question?"

"Thou knowest well. Answer tout suite. Wilt thou marry me?"

"Helas! So many have asked me that same thing of late that I am wearied with replying."

"Thy answer, Octavie."

"Eh bien. I like not a 'cavalier' who follows like a little dog."

"Thou shalt marry me yet, Octavie. I cannot lose thee."

When Octavie Labelle raised her eyes again she found herself alone.

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Courez, courez, courez, petite fille, jeune et gentille,
Courez, courez, courez, venez ce soir vous amuser!

sang the merry picnickers as the long line of hay carts passed through the village street and down the rather steep incline leading to the pier, where the vessel lay moored which was to convey the party to Ile d'Amour.

A gay, good natured crowd they were—laughing, singing and shouting as they went, plucking wild flowers from the roadside and vieing with one another in the decoration of the carts. At the end of the procession Father Saucier drove in his buckboard, smiling indulgently at the exuberance of spirits of his youthful parishioners.

Merriest of all the mirth makers was Octavie Labelle. Holding the reins firmly in her hands, she stood at the front of the central cart, with Felix Leblanc at her side.

"Which is it to be?" he whispered in her ear, as at last the long procession halted at the far end of the great wooden pier.

"Mais, figurez-vous, Felix, this is no time to ask me to decide."

"Why not, since our destiny is Ile d'Amour?"

"Debarquez, debarquez, il faut descendre tout suite. Vite, Octavie. Et toi, Felix. All aboard for Ile d'Amour."

The bustle and excitement of embarking now prevailed, and when at last all the well filled baskets of provisions were placed upon the ship, the ropes were loosed, the great, heavy oars plied for a short distance, the sails then set, and with the strains of music from an accordion on board the Marie Louise started upon her voyage.

A stiff breeze was blowing from the west, bringing with it a strong salt savor of the sea. The tide flowed rapidly in, and as the vessel plied her course the waters dashed recklessly against her sides.

"Thou art cruel, Octavie. Thou hast avoided me this whole voyage," said Felix Leblanc as the Marie Louise neared her destination.

Octavie had been standing for a moment alone at the deck side, gazing expectantly at the shores of Ile d'Amour.

"'Tis thy own fault," she said, without turning her head. "'Twas not my place to seek thee out."

"And may I now speak with thee?"

"Perhaps."

"Which is it to be, Octavie?"

"I told thee once before this was no time to ask me to decide."

"But, Octavie, I must know thy answer ere we reach the shores of Ile d'Amour."

He attempted to take her hand, but she freed it quickly and pushed him aside protestingly. His foot tripped upon a rope. He stumbled, endeavored to gain his balance again, then fell backward over the vessel's side.

"Mon Dieu! What have I done?" she cried in agony, the bright color fading from her cheeks, "Help, help! Felix has fallen overboard."

With one accord all turned in the direction of her voice and stood for a moment aghast as they saw Felix struggling in the water some distance back.

Vite, vite. Le bateau! Le bateau!"

But the moments occupied in lowering the vessel's sail and launching the small boat, seemed like centuries to poor Octavie.

"Mon Dieu! 'Tis an eternity they take. He dies, he dies! Helas, he cannot swim. Is there no one here can save him?"

Raoul Trudel stood for a moment irresolute, but one glance at Octavie's blanched face formed his resolution. Quickly throwing aside his coat and boots, he plunged into the sea and struck out boldly for the sinking Felix.

Eagerly the onlookers traced his course as he battled with the waves.

"Down upon thy knees, my children," said Father Saucier calmly, "and let us pray the Bon Dieu to succor us."

And as the little party of rescuers were launching their boat, those who remained behind dropped reverently upon their knees while the aged cure bared his snowy head and, uplifting his hand as if in benediction, prayed for assistance from above.

And thus they knelt until the rescuers returned with Raoul and the luckless Felix, little the worse for his involuntary dip.

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It is evening now.

The golden sun sinks gradually lower and lower beneath the horizon of the broad St. Lawrence, steeping the sky and clouds and water in a glorious glow of purple, crimson and gold. The crows, in flocks of threes and fours, and cawing incessantly as they go, fly to the shelter of their island home, where the thickly-wooded shores, silhouetted against the roseate sky, cast their dark shadows in the water below.

Down the village street through the gloaming a couple come arm in arm.

"And thou forgivest me, Raoul?"

"There is nothing to forgive, my little Octavie."

"So thou hast said. And yet this morning I called thee a little i d did taunt thee with the name of Felix Leblanc."

"And I called him a bad one."

She laughs softly.

"And I think perhaps thou wast right, since after his plunge in the sea this afternoon he has treated me most shamefully; for when I asked for his forgiveness he turned his back on me."

"But, Octavie, if thou hadst not pushed him overboard this great happiness might never have been ours."

"'Tis true, Raoul."

She turns and looks wistfully at the rugged outline of the island in the distance.

"Ah! 'Tis well named—the Isle of Love—for on its friendly shore two souls found happiness."

"Come," she adds "yonder stands the wayside cross. Let us go and say a prayer of thankfulness.

And as the last rays of the setting sun gradually die and the black outline of the rudely constructed wooden cross grows dimmer and dimmer against the darkening sky the lovers kneel.—Robert M. Macvicar in the Canadian Graphic.

# CARDINAL NEWMAN ON THE BENEDICTION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

I need hardly observe to you my brothers, the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, is one of the simplest rites of the Church. The priests enter and kneel down; one of them unlocks the tabernacle, takes out the Blessed Sacrament; inserts it upright in a monstrance of precious metal and sets it in a conspicuous place above the altar in the midst of lights for all to see. The people then begin to sing; meanwhile the priest twice offers incense to the King of Heaven, before Whom he is kneeling. Then he takes the monstrance in his hands and turning to the people blesses them with the Most Holy in the form of a cross, while the bell is sounded to call attention to the ceremony. It is our Lord's solemn Benediction of His people as when He lifted up His hands over the children, or when He blessed His chosen ones, when He ascended from Mount Olivet. As sons might come before a parent before going to bed at night, so, once or twice a week the great Catholic family comes before the Eternal Father, after the bustle and toil of the day, and He smiles upon them and sheds upon them the light of His countenance. It is a full accomplishment of what the priest invoked upon the Israelites, "The Lord bless thee and keep thee, the Lord show His face to thee and have mercy on thee, the Lord turn His countenance to thee and give thee peace." Can there be a more touching rite, even in the judgment of those who do not believe it? How many a man, not a Catholic, is moved on seeing it to say, "O that I did but believe it!" when he sees the priest take up the Fount of Mercy and the people bend low in adoration. It is one of the most beautiful, natural, and soothing actions of the Church.

# ELASTIC PRESBYTERIANISM

TESTIMONY AS TO CONDITIONS IN ONE "VERY FASHIONABLE" CONGREGATION.

From the New York Sun.

To the Editor of The Sun:

Sir:—The letters on Presbyterian doctrine have interested me very much as tending to illustrate more forcibly than any other means would do the many and various creeds the members of that Church adhere to. Being myself a member of a very fashionable church of the denomination in question, I cannot understand why others of the same faith should find fault so frequently, as of all the evangelical churches, none has such an elastic doctrine and discipline; none offers itself more freedom of thought, and, lastly, none approaches the so called primitive Church more closely and comprehends it more fully than this same Presbyterian Church.

Such a sweeping statement needs a clear explanation, and I give it willingly. My pastor, a noted theologian, is my authority for the same, and were it not for the fact that permission has not been granted me to quote him more fully I would give the name of the learned doctor.

On my official entry into the Church no one ever questioned me regarding my belief on any point of doctrine. I had expected to be badgered with all sorts of terrible and unpleasant matters; therefore, I expressed my relief to my future pastor and was informed by him that it should not have been a matter of any worry whatever, providing I had honestly decided to accept Christ as my master and guide, and further added that each individual had to be guided in a totally different manner, as there were no two alike in this world. If this matter is looked into seriously, it will be found that all of my three statements are essentially correct.

The question which has given other churches so much trouble—namely, the Westminster Confession of Faith — has never been encountered by me; in fact I doubt if it had an actual existence in the minds of our congregation. It was never mentioned in any sermon, and fully three quarters of us have never seen a copy of it. Nevertheless, we are a very model lot, and this is said in all sincerity.

Bailey Stokes.

New York, Oct. 31.

Long, long ago, a white merle flew out of Eden. Its song has been in the world ever since, but few have seen the flash of its white wings through the green gloom of the living wood — the sun-splashed, rain drenched, mist-girt, storm-beat wood of human life. But to-day, as I came through the wood, under an arch of tempest, and led by lightnings, I passed into a green, sun-splashed place. There, there, I heard the singing of a rapt song of joy! there, ah there I saw a flash of white wings!—Fiona McLeod.