

cheered Her sanctuary and home. Its calm twilight thus exercised its soothing influence on the innocent child's spirit, and associated her afflictions with the holiest that earth had ever witnessed. She felt as though she suffered in company with the noblest and blessedest among women; and the total darkness which had before overspread her soul, was lighted up by a cheering ray, mild, serene, and pure, as that which tempered the shadows of night within that sanctuary. She felt that she could return to her desolate home, with resignation at least, after what she had contemplated.

But before she rose from prayer, she had made an offering to the Almighty through the hands of the Blessed Virgin, which she did not tell to her mother for some time after. She felt as though it was accepted, and she was comforted.

Let it not be thought that we have described conduct or feelings beyond the age of such a child. In the world we ordinarily have no idea of the maturity of grace to which children brought up under the Church's wings, are sometimes brought by Him who 'out of the mouths of babes and sucklings bringeth forth perfect praise.' We hear often amongst us of precocious talent, seldom of precocious virtue; yet one is as natural in its own order as the other. But not only do the lives of Saints, as those of St Rose of Lima, St Mary Magdalen de Pazzi, St Catharine of Sienna, present us with instances of intelligence and spiritual illumination in even an earlier age, but at this day are yet such examples to be found, and that within the compass of our own knowledge. And if parents, mothers in particular, knew how to train their children from the cradle for God; if, instead of fondling their infant humours, and caressing their very passions and caprices, they turned the first dawn of their reason to the knowledge and consideration of the Divine goodness; and shaped their lips to utter as first sounds the two sweetest names in human speech, many who now have to weep over the follies and vices of their offspring, might be thanking God instead, for having blessed their family with a Saint.

But to proceed: when the mother and daughter returned home, they were far better able to encounter the melancholy of their cottage than when they left it; nor did its gloom appear so deep, especially to the latter. She seemed almost cheerful, as she bid her mother put her trust in God and in the intercession of His Blessed Mother. It was late next morning, when Pierrot suddenly entered with a pale and haggard look, cast a purse upon the table at which his wife and daughter were sitting, and hurried, without uttering a word, into his bed-room. They both gazed long in silent amazement at the unwonted sight; and when Pierrot, after a few hours' troubled rest, came back, he was surprised and mortified at finding his purse lying untouched where he had thrown it.

'What is the meaning of this?' he asked with some bitterness. 'Do you take that purse for some

venomous animal, that you have been afraid to touch it?'

'Pierrot,' answered his wife, 'how is it come by?' 'Honestly I assure you,' he replied. 'You do not, I hope, think me capable of theft or robbing?'

'God forbid!' rejoined his wife, 'but you have done very little work of late; and it would take long in your craft, even with great industry, to amass such a sum. A purse full like that, got in one night, looks, you will own, to say the least, rather suspicious.'

'Then make yourself easy,' said Pierrot, 'it is honestly come by. I have fallen in with acquaintances, who have put me in the way of a successful commercial speculation; and these I hope are only its first fruits.'

The poor woman was glad to receive the comfort of his words. But though she looked contented and put up the purse, she could not bring herself to use its contents. She redoubled her industry, and wore herself to death at her wheel, to keep up appearances and guard off famine; but neither she nor her daughter would touch the suspicious gold. And often would Pierrot bring more, after having been out a night, and sometimes two, and the intervening day; and yet the store remained untouched. For one sign was in their eyes decisive, Pierrot was no longer the same. He neglected every religious duty, was seldom at Church except on the Sunday, and then seemed to have no pleasure in its duties.

Once it happened, that his little daughter enticed him in the afternoon to Mont-Marie, where taking her usual place she prayed earnestly for him, and renewed the offering of herself before alluded to; she prolonged her prayer beyond dusk, by the favorite light of the Sanctuary lamp; but, on rising from her knees, she found her father gone. He was waiting outside, and on her affectionately remonstrating with him on his impatience in leaving the Church, he replied:

For my part, I wonder how you could stay in so long and pray by that dim and dismal light. By it the church looked to me like a dark sepulchral vault, so gloomy and oppressing. The pictures on the walls stared at me like so many ghosts, or appeared to frown upon me. It made even the image of the Blessed Virgin look cold and stern. I could not stand it, and came out to breathe a mouthful of free air.'

The child sighed, and said, 'Ah! dearest father, you used not to speak so. There must be something amiss in that breast that loves not, or dares not, to pray by the light of the Sanctuary's lamp.'

Pierrot walked home in silence, and for some weeks was more steady at his work. But he soon relapsed into his former habits, and even extended his absence from home to longer periods; to weeks instead of days. It is time, however, that we explain the cause of this unhappy change. The new comers to his neighbourhood, whom we have mentioned, belonged to a rough and unprin-