

FOILED.

Truly those were bitter days. Stone-hearted men were left upon the children of the Church, and through the gloom of that time of stress no man could dare to prophesy the day of betterment.

In a quiet little corner of Somersetshire, on Monday, the 28th of March, 1625, the Manor of Westfield was in a state of confusion. Father Ralph Westfield, a son of the Westfields—a family of long and unimpaired Catholic reputation—was at that time an inmate of the house. Mass had been said there on the previous day, and the villagers had come long distances to it, despite the knowledge that their lives might pay the forfeit for such temerity.

And now the news had come that the State myrmidons were already on the path and might at any moment be expected to make a raid on the Manor. Then Father Ralph would be taken before the authorities to answer for his heinous crime of worshipping God according to the rites of his forefathers.

In these times of peace we can look back with something like complacency across those darker ages and read of the priest's hiding place without realizing to the full what it meant not only to the priest but to the faithful few who shielded him to have the stern forms of heartless, callous and brutal men tramping through the home life of the bloodthirsty priest, whose life search of the hidden priest, whose life would be virtually over when the hiding place was discovered.

The women of that time were heroines that no other age can ever hope to equal. A look, a word, an incautious glance would be enough to undo the secret preparations of many a long week. There was the duty to show a smiling face and unchanging countenance when stood on the very threshold of discovery, tapping at a panel which alone stood between the hunted and the hunter.

Commencing where they were in the hall, they were soon busy tapping the oaken wainscots, moving aside pictures, shifting chairs and tables and measuring floor spaces and walls to discover if any space within the house was unaccounted for. The leader of the gang let his eyes every now and again rest on those of Grace, but without once finding any change of expression or gleam of fear, although on one occasion he had actually caught her glance while his hand was on the very panel which rightly pressed would have opened the way to the first of the hiding places.

Nor when the danger was passed did her face brighten or alter, though it was hard to repress her elation as they left the hall and entered the great dining room, one hiding place—perhaps the very one in which her brother was secreted—already overlooked.

There were gibes and jeers and coarse jests enough from the men, but though their loose vulgarity often brought a blush to her cheeks she bore it all bravely and went around with a great show of unconcern.

At last, when their search had lasted half an hour, a sudden cry from one of the men told her that one of the hiding places had been discovered. It was behind a deep, old-fashioned fireplace. A loose tile, carelessly replaced or accidentally moved, had given the clue, and in a few minutes others had been shifted and a hole discovered which led to a small aperture beneath.

There was no light enough to discover its extent or whether it was occupied; so he who had been styled Jacob called on the priest to disclose himself.

"Soon run to earth, my friend," he called out, keeping, however, a faintly respectful distance from the spot. "Best show yourself up and save being spitted with this long blade."

The poor girl's moments of suspense were so terrible that something of it must have shown on her face, and seemed to assure the leader that their search was over.

"No answer, Jacob," he said, with a rude oath. "Then thrust round your sword and see what comes in the way of it."

The sword was poked into the aperture and twisted there and there, only to meet with walls on every side, and finally one of the men lowered himself into the hole and assured himself that the space within was only a few feet square and was absolutely empty.

the house for a Popish priest—one Ralph Westfield. Is he within?" "If your orders are to search, it will matter little my saying he is not within. You will doubtless obey your orders whatever I say."

"Well, that's true enough," answered the man. "And besides which, and likewise in addition, thereto, we happen to know he is within; so, by your leave, it would save us the trouble of searching if you tell us at once where we might find him." He answered with a grin.

"You are doubtless paid for your trouble, my good sir, so that I need not spare you on that account. You may search—only I warn you of one thing: if you exceed your orders by any needless damage or violence my mother's name is yet good enough in this county to warrant me in promising you a speedy retribution."

The man shrugged his shoulders. "To business, Jacob," he said to his lieutenant. "Place three of your men at the outer doors and one to watch over the good lady here. He pointed to Mrs. Westfield, who sat in trembling anxiety within view of the group. "The young lady we must trouble to show us over the place, as we've not had the honor of being here before."

Grace Westfield knew it would be idle to refuse and thus rouse the brutality of her rough visitors (stories of whose deeds had often reached her ears), so, calling a maid to remain with her mother she took her place as guide to the search party.

It was in vain that the brave girl strove to look unconcerned at such an awful moment. She felt the blood surge to her forehead and leave her deadly pale, and one of the men noticing it, yelled out in triumph: "That hits the mark, Mr. Miles! That hits the mark! We've touched the young wench up at last!"

And several of them, turning to look at her, noticed the ghastly pallor she was so vainly striving to conceal. Then there was a crash with a hatchet which not only shattered the panel but broke through the heavy heading above it, and shifting two of the panels along in its space, a small doorway was discovered in the wall.

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spring and the third hiding place stood open—open and empty. It was but a small cupboard and a single glance disclosed its extent and its emptiness.

"Plague on the place! Was ever rat-infested spots more full of holes and more empty of rats? But the rat shall be caught if I spend the night here," and with an added volley of oaths he recommenced the search.

All now depended on the whereabouts of the fourth hiding place being discovered. At present they had failed to find it, though from its being the largest and most important of all Grace had greatly feared it would be the first to be opened. But they had carefully examined every panel of the oak covered hall, and had seemed satisfied that there was no hiding place behind it.

Formerly the uncertainty as to which of the four hiding places her brother had chosen had sustained her, as he intended, with the hope that each one discovered would prove to be empty. But now no doubt remained, and a cold chill seemed to creep over her as the party tramped roughly downstairs and stood once more in the hall, within a few feet of the spot where her last hope remained.

"It's my belief, Miles," said the half-drunken wretch Jacob, "that we've not yet done our duty by this passage. These foxy priests love a good stout piece of wood to get behind, and the wall is a bit too thick for my liking. Suppose we try a pike on it here and there to see what may be below it?"

"That's well spoken, my Jacob! A hole or two in the walls here will make it more like the rest of the house," replied the other, and a hoarse roar from half a dozen of the men told that the joke had been appreciated.

"Have you orders for the destruction of our contemplating?" asked Grace. "For I warn you, if you go beyond them you will be made to regret your deeds."

"Harry Miles, my dear, at your service, don't regret such. His orders are: 'Hunt the rats.' If word's in the way, wood goes. Contemplating's my man, try these walls again and break open a bit here and there where the fancy takes you. Have open this bit, Crabbe, and see what comes of it," and as he spoke he touched with his hand the very panel he had already fingered once that day, the right moving of which would disclose the fourth and last hiding place.

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house has been searched. He may be even yet in danger." "Nay, you may be reassured," he answered. "Father Ralph cannot be far off, and we will soon find his heels."

But as a matter of fact it was he who was soon on their heels, for he entered the room at the same moment and was quickly folded in his mother's warm embrace. And then he told them how at the last moment his mind misgave him as to the safety of the hiding place he had chosen—which was actually the first one discovered by his sword-bearers—and an inspiration seized him to hurriedly leave it, creep through a small window in a remote room, and seek cover in the ivy on the wall outside, which was there so dense that he easily lay hid beneath it, though it was only with the greatest difficulty that he maintained his precarious footing.

From that giddy perch he had seen Sir William Glassingham ride up and the other side ride off, and the windows being still open, he had managed to climb back into the room.

Of the great rejoicing of all the household at the providential end of the adventure and at the hope of better times held out by the advent of King Charles I. to the throne I need not write; but I may mention that Sir William Glassingham was so impressed with Grace's courage in dealing alone with her rough visitors that he soon afterwards persuaded her to become his wife.—Catholic Fireside.

THE LENTEN ATHLETE.

In the late reverend Abbe Hogan's "Clerical Studies" we find quoted the following remarkable passage: "As the height of courage often is to say: I dare not; and the height of love often is to say: I will not; so the height of wisdom is to have learned to say: I know not."

This thought may be called a keynote to the Church's methodical, unflinching law of penance, to her rules concerning abstinence and fasting, and to her end system of mortification, the three-fold mortification of the flesh, of the eyes, and of the will. The Catholic Church has lasted for nineteen centuries; and, if the world endures for as many centuries more, she will last till then; but never, to the end, may any man expect to fathom the ocean of her treasures of wisdom, her practical methods of dealing with her children, her insight into their needs, and her firm purpose to train them in the proper paths by which they may best serve God, and carry out His eternal designs.

She knows perfectly well that each one of us will have to meet more or less of strong temptations; she knows how weak we are; and therefore she lays certain restrictions at certain times upon us, in things that are of themselves of no great visible importance, in order that we may be trained and prepared to meet temptation in things of very grave importance and of very plain harm to our immortal souls.

It may seem strange to many that the Church concerns herself with such things as whether we eat meat or not at certain seasons, and that she sometimes forbids us to eat meat and fish on the same day, and sometimes even enjoins a "black fast," as our more valiant sires used to call it when contentedly swallowing their butterless bread and milkless tea. Yet her Divine Master laid restrictions of a like nature on the Jewish Church in the Old Law, and He bade our innocent first parents in Eden's garden not to eat the fruit of one certain tree when they might eat any fruit besides.

So we attain to self-control. "As the height of courage often is to say: I dare not; and the height of love often is to say: I will not; so the height of wisdom is to have learned to say: I know not." The Church bids us abstain, and fast, and deny our taste, touch, sight, smell, and hearing in lawful things, so that, when temptation to real sin presents itself to our souls in any of these directions, we may be, like trained athletes, ready to cry at once: "I dare not, I will not, I know not."

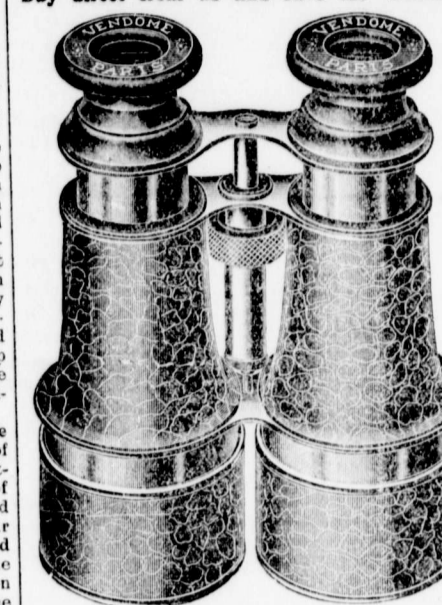
In our degenerate and feeble days, it appears to be a semi-settled fact, a foregone conclusion, that people who are general can not fast like the men of a century ago. Our young men can train for a foot-race or a football game; our young women can take physical culture lessons, and ride bicycles, and practise at a gymnasium; our society women can keep many a vigil in a ball-room. Yes, but to fast in Lent, to watch with our Lord one hour, even to abstain from meat a few days,—oh! how strangely impossible is this!

Suppose, however,—the Church being a singularly indulgent mother—we really are dispensed by lawful authority from the severity of the fast, or even from the abstinence, what then? Are we freed from any penance at all in Lent? Oh, are we freed? Shall we go on just the same as at other seasons, with the same novel-reading, the same dainties, the same amusements, the same thoughtless and gay companions; or shall we say boldly: "I will not! But I will deny myself something real and tangible, for the sake of Jesus Christ, and to make strong my feeble soul!"—Sacred Heart Review.

Statistics show that during the twenty years from 1882 to 1901 the deaths from intemperance in England and Wales have increased 66 per cent. amongst men, and 125 per cent. amongst women. This is an alarming state of affairs, and the alarm should be shared on this side of the Atlantic. Canada has a younger, fresher, more full-blooded class of people than the England of to-day. We have few cities and therefore few slums. But intemperance, if indulged in, will inevitably pull us down, and we must take time by the forelock if we wish to check the practice of this degrading vice.—Antigonish Casket.

In such a matter as abstinence from intoxicants, there are two advantages: (1) The strength, which comes to character by self-denial. (2) The fact that this habit saves its votary from very many evil temptations that go with the association of drinking men and the saloon environment.—Catholic Citizen.

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By Fra Armitie.

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But then—the tale goes on—this rebel move had singular results. The people quickly wearied of their new-born lord, refused in turn to bear the different clans in far-off lands.

The King was grieved, bethought himself in love for his misguided race, and called around his throne some chosen few among the well disposed of all his tribes; some from the wandering shepherd folk, some from the settled nations near, and some from the different clans in far-off lands.

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