

her. And, at least there was spotless cleanliness here.

Carmelita, therefore blessed herself and began to eat. Presently, she became aware that Nepzibah was staring at her, with a genuine ill-concealed astonishment.

"See here," said Nepzibah, at last, her curiosity, which all these years had been smouldering for want of material, leaping into life. "Whatever made you do *that* just now?"

"What?" asked Carmelita half-alarmed.

"Why *that*, what you done, when you began to eat."

As Carmelita still seemed unconscious, the old woman attempted an imitation of the Sign of the Cross. Carmelita's sense of the ridiculous overcoming all else, she burst into a merry peal of laughter, which was taken up and re-echoed through every nook and cranny of the old place. For just that moment she forgot home-sickness, weariness, the dreariness, almost fear, produced by her first impressions of the old house and its inmates. Her native light-heartedness had surmounted them all. Meanwhile the old woman looked on in stony silence, much amazed and no little offended by this untimely mirth.

"I forgot you was a papist," she said at last, snappishly. "They does them sort of idolatrous things down to their meetin' house. Elder Robinson, he says so, and I guess he knows."

Poor Carmelita. Much of this harangue was wasted upon her, but it came to her with a sudden feeling of desolation, worse than the dark rooms above, worse than the dreary house, than the uncongenial companionship, the sense that she was in a land where the Sign of the Cross was unknown. She had left a country where warmer than the warm sunshine was the Catholic spirit that vivified the air, where the evening fell and the morning rose with the Angelus bell, where churches arose at every square and corner, where the laboring-man

lifted his hat as he passed the church, and the working-woman paused from her toil to kneel at the way side shrine. Here—— oh, the cold of it, the bitter, biting cold. She rose and went near the fire, while Nepzibah observed that she had barely tasted of the viands.

"I should not have laughed," said Carmelita presently. "You must forgive me, I did not mean to be rude. But ——"

"Tain't no matter," said Nepzibah, shortly, "only I'd advise you to be more careful with some folks around here."

"I will, indeed," said Carmelita, "and as for what I was doing, why, I always make the Sign of the Cross before eating."

"Why, do tell," cried Nepzibah, regarding her, and holding the dish of huckleberries, which she was removing from the table, at a perilous angle, and overcome by curiosity, "perhaps you might as well let me see what it is anyhow."

Carmelita repeated the action, saying the words clearly and distinctly.

"I always did think Papists was queer folk," commented Nepzibah, "though I never did know but one, and he was demented. Now, what on airth do you do sech a thing as that for?"

"We make the form of the Cross to remind us that Christ died on the Cross, and we say the words to bring the Blessed Trinity to our remembrance."

"Downright mummery," muttered Nepzibah, "but I guess I must go now. I've got to give Mrs. Johnson a dish of gruel for her supper."

"Oh, is that grandmamma? Can I do anything for her?"

"You'd better set right still and not worry. If she wants you, she'll let you know it."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

WHEN you say, "Hail, Mary," the heavens smile, the angels are filled with new joy, earth exults, hell trembles, and the devils are put to flight.—*St. Francis*,