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THREE DAUGHTERS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM

BY MRS. INNES-BROWNE

CHAPTER X.—CONTINUED

To say that Madge's heart did not sink as her quick eye took in at a glance the second-rate appearance of everything, would be to assert what was not true; she felt both sick and disappointed at all she saw and her heart almost failed her through no sign of it appeared in her face or manner. She had been weak and had broken down once that evening; with God's help it should not occur again.

"I shall be most comfortable, mother mine," she exclaimed, "and most happy to feel that I am near you."

For answer, Mrs. FitzAllan kissed her daughter and said fervently, "Good night, and God bless you, darling; we shall meet again in the morning." Perhaps she was taking place in the girl's heart, and could not bear to witness it, for somewhat abruptly she turned and left the room.

Finding herself alone, Madge, with a heavy sigh, turned to examine the apartment more closely; by the aid of a tallow candle in a bright tin candlestick, she looked at the pictures on the wall. Hung up on one side were four old Dutch prints, representing the usual coarse stout figures—some engaged in culinary operations; two spooning lovers with very short winks, struggling through a wood of marvelously low trees; another of a very stout man rooking an alarmingly fat limbed infant to rest; Madge passed them all. "Rubbish, all of them! horrid-looking things!" she muttered and passed on. Her next move was to the looking-glass, that had lost one foot, and was propped up by a piece of wood. Holding the candle above her head, she paused for a moment to look at herself, and her thoughts ran thus: "Can I be the same girl who barely more than forty-eight hours ago stood within the old walls of St. Benedict, and who a few months ago thought of home with such loving and tender feelings? Ah, me, it is hard; it is like some terrible dream! Thank God Beatrice and Marie cannot see me now, though I am sure they would be sorry for me."

Then she walked to the fireplace, and the candle almost dropped from her hand as she exclaimed, "O my God, I thank Thee for this! You dear, dear old man! everything in this wretched house is strange to me but you and mother," and she gazed lovingly up in the face of her early friend, her dear old grandfather. It was a living likeness of him, and one he had painted expressly for her when she was a little child; there he sat in the old oak chair he loved so well, the heavy gold watch chain, from which hung the massive old seals she used to play with; the ring with its crest engraven upon it; the silken stockings and shoes with the beautiful buckles she always admired so much; but most of all the handsome old face with those steady, keen, and piercing eyes, that the upright loved and the scoundrel feared. There he sat looking at her, at his little grandchild, with the same expression of love that his countenance had always worn whenever his eyes fell upon her.

Tired as she was, the girl stood for a long time feasting her eyes on the vision before her, and recalling scenes which had had better not have thought of; for those two bright spots began to burn on her cheeks, and her brain, already worn out and tired, stood in need of rest, not excitement. She almost mechanically let the candlestick drop upon the mantelpiece, and resting her arms on its cold painted wood, allowed her weary head to drop heavily upon them, whilst she mused inwardly, "O Grandpapa, grandpapa, watch over your little grandchild and love her still, for I am, oh, so lonely and miserable! Life seems so dark and dreary, and I am young to face it all. If only you were here, you would help me out of all our troubles, and teach me what to do! But I will come and talk to you when dull and lonely; and the sight of your dear face will cheer me, for I will fancy I am once more seated upon your knees with your strong arms clasped around me, and you will cheer your little darling, and tell me how I must comfort mother!"

In a recess by the side of the fireplace hung a large cross, with a beautifully carved figure in ivory upon it, the gift of her mother to Madge on the day she made her first confession. A bedroom chair with the legs set off short, stood below, and served as a prie-dieu; a set of old but valuable rosary beads hung upon a nail close by; and the figure of a little angel holding a tiny shell for holy water, hung upon the opposite side, the gift of Willie to her when they were children together. Madge knelt upon the would be prie-dieu; she felt stupefied and dull; her eyes burned, and her temples throbed painfully; she could only repeat in broken sentences: "My God, help me! Oh help me! for I cannot understand things at all. Oh, make me brave and strong to aid my mother!"

Over her bed hung her favorite picture of the "Mother of Sorrows," and as Madge, worn out in body and mind, laid her weary head to rest, it was under the special protection of the "Queen of Sorrows,"

How differently the first morning after their return home dawned upon each of our girls. Upon Beatrice the day broke bright and joyously. Love and pleasure, joy and mirth, went hand-in-hand and dined attendance upon her at every turn. She was, as it were, mistress and queen of all around her, and she knew and felt it, for her young heart responded joyfully to it all.

Even the rays of the cheerful morning sun discovered our little Marie, and darting its bright beams through the oriel window, lit up with glory her silky hair and played amongst the roses on her cheeks, whilst the birds sang blithely in the trees close by, and the lark carolled his morning hymn above her head, so that she, too, rose joyous and bright, full of hope in the future. But for poor Madge it was different. The morning broke dull and grey, footsteps on the pavement beneath her window awoke her, and she started up wondering where she was. Quickly she realized everything, but feeling rested, rose, and going to the window, peeped out. Tall, prim-looking houses opposite—in fact, houses to the right of her, houses to the left of her, houses and chimneys everywhere; every now and again a milk cart, jogged past; then a poor shop-girl or clerk hurrying to his or her place of business; a boy with hot rolls, and after him a cab rolled heavily by. "What a dismal place!" thought Madge as she drew the blind a little more to one side. "Poor mother! what has brought you here? Far, far away in the distance, through an opening amongst the houses, she could discern the outline of some hills, faintly lit up by the morning sun. "Oh, how I wish I were there!" she sighed; "it seems to me that anything would be endurable if only hidden from the eyes of men. How I detest the very sight of all this brick and mortar! I must will not stop to think; I will, I must be brave!" and she was. She tried to close her eyes to everything around her save her mother, and the next few days passed more pleasantly than she had hoped for. She realized with gratitude and joy how her presence and companionship cheered and consoled that good, kind parent. The dear grey eyes lit up with pleasure at every fond embrace and attention lavished upon her by Madge, and it was in a sort of rapture that she listened to the girl's voice as she sat and sang to her in the evenings. It was years since Mrs. FitzAllan had sung herself, but the clear notes of her daughter's rare voice seemed to lift the musical soul within her, and she poured forth her sorrow and grief in words and song so sad and musical as though all her long pent-up feelings had found a vent at last. Things would not have been so bad, could they have been permitted to pass on quietly like this; but their few days of rest and peace were drawing to a close.

"How close and warm it is, mother dear; do come for a walk. I simply crave for fresh air. Is there no hill near where we can walk onsen and breathe freely, for I feel stifled?"

"Dear child, no doubt you do. As soon as the sun sinks a little we will go and watch it set from Arthur's Seat, a hill not far off. It is long since I have walked abroad. I shall enjoy a stroll with you."

Madge had made up her mind to speak to her mother and question her upon many subjects that she longed to know, and felt that she could do so when out in the fresh air of that dismal house. They strolled at first through the streets, and then upon quieter and less frequented roads, until they reached the fine hill which is such a boon to Edinburgh. Madge had to support her mother up the steep walk which followed, and was much distressed to find how terribly fatigued she was with such slight exertion.

"Raise your veil, mother darling, and let us rest awhile upon this seat. Do look at the lovely view; and oh, how delightful and refreshing is the breeze! O mother, mother, for a glimpse once more of my native hills!"

"Hush, hush, Madge! I cannot bear to hear you speak like that; you will break my heart," and Mrs. FitzAllan covered her face with both her hands, and what?—wept? No! only prayed that God would spare her darling child any unnecessary suffering. They rose and walked on higher still, and again seated themselves upon a secluded seat placed in the hollow of the hill.

"Mother," began Madge firmly, "you and I are here, apparently far away from every one else at present. See, from where we sit, there is not one soul in view. Open your heart to me, dearest, and tell me things I have a right to know; it will relieve you when you feel I know the way."

Mrs. FitzAllan shuddered perceptibly, but answered, "You are right, Madge; ask me any question you wish."

"Why did you leave the dear old home, and with it everything bright and beautiful, and come to live in Edinburgh?"

"Because, child, we lost nearly all our money."

"But how, mother?" Did a bank break, or what?"

"No, Madge; your father was unfortunate in business."

"Business?" and the honest eyes looked up inquiringly—"what business could he have to do?"

There was a pause; but an expression of mingled pain and shame hung over the mother's countenance as she replied, "I fear to understand it too well myself, darling; but after grandpapa's death, your father met

with unwise companions, and somehow they beguiled him into fearful losses."

Madge perceived how her mother's hand shook, and noted that she trembled quiver in her voice, but felt she must probe the wound still deeper. It was her right and duty to know the worst, though she would strive to be as merciful as she could. "Can you not tell me how these men prevailed upon father to lose his money?"

"I can only guess, my child."

"I have heard how men gamble and bet, and thus lose their money, but surely surely my father is not one of those?"

There was no reply; but Madge noticed that, as if by accident, her mother's veil had fallen, and saw that her head drooped.

"You had a large fortune, mother, I know you had, what became of that?"

"By degrees I gave it all to your father to satisfy his creditors; it was mine to do as I liked; surely I could not have seen him cast into prison for debt, could I, darling?"

Madge had a clear head, and she more distinctly she began to see things the more vaguely did they appear.

"I see," she said slowly, and there was a harder tone in her voice. "You were forced to sell the home in order to have a little money upon which to live; otherwise we should have been beggars. But why come to a town?"

"Because I found that, for one reason, it would be cheaper to take a furnished house in town; and for another I heard that your father spent much of his time in Edinburgh, and hoped that perhaps if I lived there he might be tempted to spend his evenings with me instead of with those unfortunate friends."

"And this is the way he does it," said Madge bitterly. "Ah, I begin to see it now! After ruining his wife and turning her out of her home, he goes away and enjoys himself upon the few pounds she has left, leaving her to pine away or starve—in fact do the best she can in a dark and wretched house."

"Spare him, spare him, Madge; he is my husband and your father, and he loves me still, indeed he does. I swore at God's altar to be faithful and true to him until death, and with his help I may; besides, I may be able to reclaim him yet; and oh, Madge, if in his conduct you see much else to condemn, try and be merciful in your judgment of him. You know not how he may be tempted, nor, with a convulsive sob, 'what I have suffered.'

"Dearest, dearest mother, for your sweet sake I try not to condemn him," and with her strong young arm Madge clasped the slender form closely to her, as if she would faintly protect her from all further suffering. "You are a veritable saint. To help and comfort you I will endeavor to be patient and kind to him; but I am young and want mother dear, and at times the trial may be hard, I fear."

"It will—I know and feel it will; but remember," and Mrs. FitzAllan clasped her hands together tightly, "I can endure anything but the sight of your grief; that would almost kill me."

"Does Lady Abbess know all this, mother?"

"Yes, almost all, for she has ever been my best and truest friend, and I cannot hide it from her. Her sympathy, counsel, and advice have always been my greatest earthly comfort and consolation."

For some time the mother and daughter sat silent and still, their hearts too full for words; both were abstractedly watching the changes in the sky. The sun had concealed itself behind a large dark cloud, the top of which was lit up hopefully with a bright golden edge, revealing a little of what was hidden behind, whilst at the bottom strong sparkling rays were shooting downwards, which each instant grew more and more brilliant, until at last, little by little, the great golden orb itself appeared, dazzling with its glory the eyes of those two silent ones as they sat sad and hopeless.

Presently the girl, pressing her mother's hand fondly, said, "Look up, mother, and see how clearly and brightly the sun now shines after being hidden so long beneath that dark and gloomy cloud. It will be the same for us, dearest, Lady Abbess told me so. She said that the heavy clouds would roll away and that the sun would shine more brightly than ever afterwards. So do not lose heart; God will help us."

"For you, dear one, I seem to feel that the sun is hid behind for a time. For me—no; my sun is set; it will never shine upon me more, nor will it ever rise again."

"Nay, say not so, mother dear," pleaded the girl, with her sweet, earnest eyes. "God is good, and He will never try you beyond your strength. I cannot endure to see that hopeless look upon your face."

"Not hopeless, dearest," replied the mother tenderly; "but, Madge, I believe sooner or later we must each of us learn our lesson in the school of sorrow. Some, like you, learn it early in life, whilst youth and hope are strong within them; to others their task is set in later years, when, perhaps, like me, the untutored discipline, the unheeded carelessness of their previous lives may have been but a poor preparation for their hour of trial, and thus render the task all the more difficult to bear; besides which, in after years the bodily strength will sometimes give way, totally unable to bear the mental strain."

"And do you feel like this, mother darling?"

"Candidly, I do, Madge. In times of extreme sorrow my heart feels as though it would fall me entirely, by utterly refusing to do its duty longer; but I would die contentedly could I see you happy and your poor father himself once more."

"Poor little mother!" was all that Madge could say. She arose, and drawing her mother's arm firmly within her own with an air of protection, they began to descend the hill together. Mrs. FitzAllan endeavored to be cheerful, but Madge was silent. She felt that from her mother's words there was still more for her to learn, something worse than she already knew. They passed a quiet evening; the piano was left untouched—much to the disappointment of a few street strollers who had formed a habit lately of collecting outside the window in an evening and listening to the sweet melody within. Over their spirits a gloom seemed cast, a feeling as of coming evil, undefined but certain. Each felt and dreaded that soon there would be an end to those enjoyable, peaceful hours, during which they had been all in all to each other.

Madge had made a point lately of rising a little earlier, in order to be down before her mother, and help to arrange the frugal breakfast, so that everything might look bright and cheerful, and thus tempt Mrs. FitzAllan's failing appetite. This morning she noticed a letter lying face downwards on her mother's table. She took it up and scrutinized it more closely. It bore the London postmark, and the address was written in a shaky, slovenly hand. "From my father," thought the girl, "but what fearful writing! What is coming now, I wonder?" and she dropped the letter with a trembling hand. She had only just done so when her mother entered. With a quick, anxious look she seized the letter and seating herself wearily, tore it open. Madge watched her face intently whilst she read it. The fair white brow was drawn, and the blue veins stood out more conspicuously, whilst care-worn lines appeared upon her face, and her grey eyes bore a timid look of dread as she raised them and met the earnest gaze of Madge bent full upon her.

"It is from your father," she said nervously.

"Oh!" replied the girl, not knowing what else to say.

"He is not well. I fear he has been very ill."

"I'm very sorry," was Madge's calm reply. "Come, mother, you are sitting nothing; do try and take something," urged the girl.

"I really cannot, darling," she answered in an agitated tone. "Do not press me; perhaps later I may be able to do so."

"Poor mother!" thought Madge, "how long can you go on like this, I wonder?" but she said nothing.

She saw little of her mother that day. Madge thought she appeared wishful to be alone, but observed how occupied she was, going from room to room endeavoring to give an air of comfort to each dingy apartment. Mr. FitzAllan was expected home about seven, and towards that hour Madge, feeling restless and dull, wandered into the kitchen to see what Mary was doing. There was an unusually savory smell arising from that quarter; but at that time—though a bright fire was burning, and several pans were hissing and boiling upon the brightly polished stove—Mary, as prima and nest as her surroundings, was ironing at a side table. "Come in, miss," she said pleasantly. "I have not seen much of you lately. Sit down, and I will show you how to iron."

It seemed as though Mary guessed that her mistress desired to be alone, "or why," thought Madge, "should she press me so?"

WHAT THE ROSARY DID

The swiftly darkening twilight of an October evening spread over the landscape, hiding the great, sullen rain-filled clouds, and the wind rushed at the little house in a fury of rain, and every night in the year when hailed away in a soft moan it came and the little farmhouse shook under the strength of its fury. Mrs. O'Connor turned from the window with the listless manner of one who had been stunned by some great sorrow.

"Ely, darling, put on the things for your father's supper," she said, addressing the girl who sat by the fire busily knitting.

The girl smiled. "Yes, mother," she said gently.

A strangely beautiful girl this Eileen O'Connor, the highest lady in the land might have envied her delicate complexion and her shadowy violet eyes. She had been educated in the convent school of the little neighboring town of Drumginn. She was now eighteen, and had broken the news to her mother, told it simply, with a glad light of happiness in her eyes: "In three months time she would return to join the Sisters of Mercy, her old teachers. And in the midst of her trouble, Mrs. O'Connor always thanked God for this grace; her one little girl a nun, how lonely she would be, and yet—how happy!"

But things were going from bad to worse on the little holding; debts seemed to have sprung from nowhere, and the rent was two months in arrears. Then too her husband seemed to have suffered some indefinable change, she tried to find an excuse for him, but in her heart of hearts she knew well he had taken

that repentant Britain is taking the Pilgrims again to her material breast there is grave—or Snigrave—danger that we may be seduced into taking up our abode again with her under the imperial foot.

That the "Pilgrims Progress" in this country was not so ideal a thing as some of our "Anglo-Saxons" would have us believe will soon become evident to anyone who reads the authentic accounts of their life and labors in the New England settlements. Stripped of the unreality that ignorance or excessive admiration has added to them, these accounts portray the Pilgrims and the other Puritans who followed them here as an intolerant crowd of religious fanatics. They came here in quest of religious freedom, but they denied it to others. Their religion was a caricature of Christianity and their hearts were as hard as the flint that tipped the arrows of the Indians whose lands they stole.

In the recent "History of the United States," Gilbert Chesterton, the English writer, drew a picture of these fanatics which is true to history. He says: "At about the same time that the persecuted Catholic found a refuge in Maryland, a similar refuge was sought by the persecuted Puritans. A number of these, who had found a temporary home in Holland, sailed thence for America in the celebrated Mayflower and colonized New England on the Atlantic coast far to the north of the plantations of Raleigh and Baltimore. From their root sprung the colonies of Massachusetts, Connecticut, Vermont and Rhode Island, and later the States of New Hampshire and Maine. It would be putting it with ironical mildness to say that the Pilgrim Fathers did not imitate the tolerant example of the Catholic refugees. Religious persecution had indeed been practised by all parties in the quarrels of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; but for much of the early legislation of the Puritan colonies one can find no parallel in the history of European men. Calvinism, that strange, fierce creed which Wesley so correctly described as one that gave God the exact functions and attributes of the devil, produced even in Europe a sufficiency of madness and horror; but here was Calvinism out of from its European roots and from the reaction and influence of Christian civilization. Its records read like those of a mad-house where religious maniacs have broken loose and looked up their keepers. We hear of men stoned to death for kissing their wives on the Sabbath, of lovers pilloried or flogged at the cart's tail for kissing each other at all without license from the deacons, the whole culminating in a mad panic of wholesale demonism and witchburning so vividly described in one of the most brilliant of Mrs. Gaskell's stories, 'Lois the Witch.'

Our literature and our liberty owe something to the Mayflower, but the broad and tolerant genius of this people owes it nothing—Catholic Union and Times.

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ANOTHER ASPECT OF SPIRITISM
 Domestic differences may be more disturbing than hostile warfare. Among Catholic today perhaps no difference of opinion is more fruitful in discussion than the phenomena of Spiritism. Behind the assertions of diabolical intervention is the undeniable truth of revelation, that the devil can and does interfere with wonders for the ruin of souls. Those who deny his intervention in the matter in question hold fast to the principle that recourse is not to be had to the preternatural without necessity. Each admits the other's principle; each denies its applicability in its holder's sense to the point under discussion.

Undue credulity is baneful. A too willing attribution of everything in Spiritism to the devil's work is the devil's most fruitful discomfiture. Of this the impostors of Leo Taxil are a proof. No well-informed Catholic denies the existence of Luciferism. Not only were the first revelations of the pseudo-conversi antecedently probable, but it is also possible that in them he mixed falsehood with the truth. Having been thus caught, many accepted unquestioningly his boldest fabrications, and when these proved false, as was the reaction in the unwarranted conclusion that Catholics were deceived by their over credulity in all their notions of Masonry and its allied mysteries. The true conclusion of the affair is that, knowing so much for certain, they were led too easily into error by stories not inconsistent with the certain facts.

But here is no question of the over-credulous, or of the utterly incredulous. We suppose what is common in Spiritism is a fact which natural forces or activities, as known, are inadequate to explain; and reasonable, well-informed disputants are inclined, the one to refer it to diabolical activity, the other to make it the effect of unexplored potentialities in partially known agents.

Notes that the disputants have not the same interests in the matter. Did both agree that the wonders of Spiritism some can be explained naturally, while others surpass the purely natural order, the discussion would come merely to this; to which of these classes does the fact in question belong? But such is not the case. The partizan of unexplored potentialities, though he does not deny diabolical activity absolutely, holds that in the matter of Spiritism it has no place. Hence, in