

A MAY-DAY GIFT.

By MARY CATHERINE CROWLEY.

Early on the morning of the 1st of May, Abbey Clayton ran downstairs, exclaiming by way of greeting to the household: "A bright May Day! A bright May Day!"

"It isn't very bright, I'm sure!" grumbled her little brother Larry, who clattered after her. "There's no sun-shine; and the wind blows so hard I shan't be able to sail my new boat on the pond in the park. It's mighty hard lines! I don't see why it can't be pleasant on a holiday. Think of all the shiny days we've had when a fellow had to be in school. Now, when there's a chance for some fun, it looks as if it were going to rain great guns!"

"Well, it won't," said Abby, pausing in the hall to glance back at him, as he perched upon the baluster above her. "It won't rain great guns, nor pitchforks, nor cats and dogs, nor even torrents. It's going to clear up. Don't you know that some people say the sun generally shines, for a few minutes anyhow, on Saturdays in honor of the Blessed Virgin?"

"This isn't Saturday," objected Larry, somewhat indignantly. "Yes, but is it the 1st of May; and if that is not our Blessed Mother's day too, I'd like to know what is!" said his sister.

"I don't believe that about the sun shining," continued Larry. "If you are ten—only two years older than I am—you don't know everything. I'm going to ask mother."

The children entered the breakfast room, greeted their father and mother, and then slipped into their places.

"Mother," began Larry, as he slowly poured the maple syrup over the crisp, hot pancakes upon his plate, "is it true that the sun always shines on Saturday in honor of the Blessed Virgin?"

"It is a pious and poetic saying," replied Mrs. Clayton. "But a legendary sentiment of this kind often hides a deeper meaning. For those who are devoted to the Blessed Virgin, there is never a day so dark but that the love of Our Lady shines through the gloom like a sunbeam, changing to the rosy and golden tints of hope the leaden clouds that shadowed their happiness; and blessing the closing day of life, which, to look back upon, seems but as the ending of a week."

Mrs. Clayton had hardly finished speaking, when a long ray of yellow light fell upon the tablecloth. "There! the sun's out now, anyway!" cried Larry, "I'm so glad!"

"The clouds were only blown up by the wind," said his father. "I do not think we shall have rain to-day."

"Mother, may I put on a white dress and go to buy my May wreath?" asked Abby.

"The air is too cold for you to change your warm gown for a summer one," returned Mrs. Clayton. "You may get the wreath, though; but be sure that you wear it over your hat."

Abby seemed to think it was now her turn to grumble.

"Oh, dear!" she murmured. "All the girls wear white dresses, and go without hats on May Day. I don't see why I can't."

Her complaint made no impression, however; so she flounced out of the room.

"My mother is the most exaggerating person!" exclaimed the little girl, as she prepared for her shopping excursion. She meant aggravating; but, like most people who attempt to use large words the meaning of which they do not understand, she made droll mistakes sometimes.

Abby had 15 cents, which her grandma had given her the day before. "I'll hurry down to the Little Women's before the best wreaths are gone," she said to herself.

The place was a fancy store, kept by two plain but pleasant spinster sisters. Besides newspapers, stationery, thread and needles, and so forth, they kept a stock of toys, candies and pickled limes, which insured them a run of custom among the young folk, who always spoke of them as the Little Women. Not to disappoint the confidence placed in them by their youthful patrons, they had secured an excellent assortment of the crowns of tissue-paper flowers which, in those days, every little girl considered essential to the proper observance of May Day.

Abby selected one which she and the Little Women made up their minds was the prettiest. It usually took both of the Little Women to sell a thing. If one showed it, the other descended upon it, merited, or wrapped it up in paper when the bargain was completed. Neither of them appeared to transact any business, even to the disposal of "a pickled lime" (as the children say), quite on her own responsibility.

After Abby had fully discussed the matter with them, therefore, she bought her wreath. It was made of handsome white tissue paper roses, with green tissue-paper leaves, and had two long streamers. There was another of pink roses, which she thought would be just the thing for Larry to buy with the 15 cents which he had received also. But Larry had said: "Behave! I wouldn't wear a wreath!" Abby didn't see why, because some boys wore them.

On the way home she met a number of her playmates. Several of them shivered in white dresses, and all were bareheaded except for their paper wreaths. Not one of the wreaths was

so fine as Abby's, however. But, then, few little girls had 15 cents to expend upon one. Abby perceived at a glance that most of those worn by her companions were of the ten-cent variety. The Little Women had them for eight; and even five copper pennies would buy a very good one, although the roses of the five-cent kind were pronounced by those most interested to be "little bits of things."

Abby talked to the girls a while, and then went home to exhibit her purchase. Her mother commented approvingly upon it; and the little girl ran down to the kitchen to show it to Delia the cook, who had lived with the family ever since Larry was a baby.

Delia was loud in her admiration. "Oh, on this day," said she; "but doings in Ireland," said she; "but doings in Ireland, to be sure, it's nothing to what it was in old times. It was on May eve, I've heard tell, that St. Patrick lit the holy fire at Tara, in spite of the ancient pagan laws. And in the days when the country was known as the island of saints and of scholars, sure throughout the length and breadth of the land the monastery bells rang in the May with praises of the Holy Mother; and the canticles in her honor were as ceaseless as the song of the birds. And 'twas the fairies that were said to have great power at this season—"

"Delia, you know very well there are no fairies," interrupted Abby. "Well, some foolish folk thought there were, anyhow," answered Delia. "And in Maytime the children and cattle, the milk and the butter, were kept guarded from them. Many and many an evening I've listened to my mother that's dead and gone—God rest her soul!—telling of the blooming of the hawthorn, always put a spent coal under the churn, and another beneath the grandchild's cradle, because that was said to drive the fairies away; and how primroses used to be scattered at the door of the house to prevent the fairies from stealing in, because they could not pass that flower. But you don't hear much of that any more; for the priest said 'twas superstition, and so down from the heathenish times. So the old people came to see 'twas wrong to use such charms, and the young people laughed at the old women's tales. Now on May-Day the shrines in the churches are bright with flowers, of course. And as for the innocent merrymakings, instead of a dance round the May or hawthorn bush, as in the olden times, in some places there's just perhaps a frolic on the village green, when the boys and girls come home from the hills and dales with their garlands of spring flowers."

Delia, with a contemptuous glance at Abby's wreath, forgetting how much she had admired it only a few moments before.

Somehow it did not now seem so beautiful to Abby either. She took it off, and gazed at it with a sigh.

"Here in New England the boys and girls go a-Maying," she said. "Last year, when we were in the country, Larry and I went with our cousins. We had such fun hanging May-baskets! I got nine. "But," she went on, regretfully, "I don't expect any this year; for city children do not have those plays."

She went upstairs to the sitting-room, where Larry was rigging his boat anew. He had been to the pond, but the wind wrought such havoc with the little craft that he had to put into port for repairs.

Half an hour passed. Abby was dressing her beloved doll for an airing on the sidewalk—a promenade in a carriage, as the French say. While thus occupied she half hummed, half sang, in a low voice, to herself, a popular May hymn. When she reached the refrain, Larry joined, and Delia appeared at the door just in time to swell the chorus with honest fervor:

"See, sweet Mary on thy altars Bloom the fairest flowers of May. Oh, may thy earth's sons and daughters Grow by grace as fair as they."

"If you please," said Delia at its close, "there's a man below stairs who says he has something for you both."

"For us?" exclaimed the children, starting up.

"Yes: your mother sent me to tell you. He says he was told to say as how he had a May-basket for you."

"A May-basket, Delia! What! All lovely flowers like those I told you about?" cried the little girl.

"Sure, child, and how could I see what was inside, and so carefully done up," answered Delia evasively. They did not question further, but rushed downstairs to see for themselves. In the kitchen waited a foreign-looking man, with swarthy skin, and thin gold rings in his ears. On the floor beside him was a large, rough packing-basket.

"That a May-basket!" exclaimed Abby, hardly able to restrain the tears of disappointment which started to her eyes.

"Si signorita," replied the man. Her frown disappeared. It was certainly very nice to be addressed by so high-sounding a title. She wished she could get Delia to call her signorita. But no: she felt sure that Delia never would.

"Behave! It's only a joke!" said Larry, after a moment. "Somebody thinks this is April-Fool Day, I guess."

"Have patience for a little minute, please," said the man, as he cast away the packing bit by bit. The children watched him with eager interest. By and by he took out a little bunch of lilies of the valley, which he handed to Abby with a low bow. Next he came to something shrouded in fold after fold of tissue paper.

"And here is the fairest lily of them

all," he said, in his poetic Italian fashion.

"What can it be, mother?" asked the little girl, wonderingly. Mrs. Clayton smiled. "It is from Santoris', the fine art store where you saw the beautiful pictures last week; that is all I know about it," she replied.

The man carefully placed the mysterious object on the table.

"It is some kind of a vase or an image," declared Larry.

"Why, so it is!" echoed Abby. In another moment the tissue veil was torn aside, and there stood revealed a beautiful statue of the Blessed Virgin.

"Oh!" exclaimed Larry, in delight. "How lovely!" added his sister. The image was about two feet high, and of spotless Parian, which well symbolized the angelic purity it was intended to portray. To many, perhaps, it might appear simply a specimen of modeling, but little better than the average. However, those who looked on it with the eyes of faith saw before them, not so much the work itself, as the ideal of the artist.

The graceful figure of Our Lady at once suggested the ethereal and celestial. The long mantle, which fell in folds to her feet, signified her modesty and motherly protection; the meekly folded hands were a silent exhortation to humility and prayer; the tender, spiritual face invited confidence and love: the crown upon her brow proclaimed her sovereignty above all creatures and her incomparable dignity as Mother of God.

"And is this beautiful statue really ours—just Larry's and mine?" asked Abby.

"So the messenger says," returned Mrs. Clayton.

"Who could have sent it, I wonder?" inquired Larry.

The Italian pointed to the card attached to the basket. Abby took it off and read:

"To my little friends, Abby and Larry Clayton, with the hope that, especially during this month, they will try every day to do some little thing to honor our Blessed Mother."

FATHER DOMINIC.

"From Father Dominic!" exclaimed the boy, in delight.

"How very good of him!" added Abby, gratefully.

Father Dominic—generally so called because his musical Italian surname was a stumbling-block to our unwieldy English speech—was a particular friend of Mr. and Mrs. Clayton, who devoted to his priestly duties. He was an occasional visitor at their house, and took a great interest in the children.

"How nice of him to send us something we shall always have!" Abby ran on. "Now I can give the tiny image in my room to some one who hasn't any."

"May we make an altar for our statue, mother?" asked a lively, rollicking boy, who came to anything but devotion to his prayers, he was unaffectedly and almost comically solemn about it.

"Yes," responded Mrs. Clayton. "And I think it would be a good plan also to frame the card and hang it on the front of the altar, so that you may not forget Father Dominic's words: 'Try every day to do some little thing to honor our Blessed Mother.'"

TO BE CONTINUED.

CHURCH AND THE BIBLE.

An Exhaustive Examination of Oft Repeated Calumnies.

In St. Patrick's Church, Bradford, Eng., Rev. Father Earnshaw recently concluded a series of sermons on "The Church in Its Relations with the Bible." Father Earnshaw said that, speaking in a Catholic church, to a Catholic congregation, it seemed almost ridiculous to discuss the question, Are Roman Catholics allowed to read the Bible? They all know perfectly well that, so far from being forbidden, they were encouraged to read the Holy Scriptures; that they were bound under pain of mortal sin, to believe that they treated as the word of God, and that they revered as such which it was entitled.

How is it that in this age of light and learning people of education persevered in their assertion that the Catholic Church withholds the Scriptures from her people? It is an invention of the evil one, a concoction of the father of lies. Those who brought forward those charges said that in the year 1535 Martin Luther, a young ecclesiastical student at one of the German universities, when searching for some book in a library, accidentally came across an old copy of the Bible. He had opened and read, saw the deception which had been practiced by Rome, and threw the Bible open to the people for the first time. This was the beginning of the glorious Reformation.

These lies were told year after year, and believed by people who did not take the trouble to examine for themselves these baseless fabrications. These bare, unvarnished lies. If the Church withheld her children not to read the Word of God, it might have left the Scriptures buried in the old, forgotten tongues in which they were originally written, but if she took the trouble to translate them into every modern language it was plain that she wished the multitude to read them.

From the beginning the Church had provided her children with the Scriptures in their own language. In the Apostolic age several translations were made. In the second century

translations were made, the Scriptures being written in Hebrew, Chaldaic and Greek. But it was said at that time the Church had nothing to fear—corruption had not then set in; and when the Popes became Governors and rulers the Bible was condemned. In the fifth century, when this corruption had crept in—when the Church taught the doctrines condemned by Protestants to-day; when the Mass was believed in, as well as prayers for the dead, etc., Pope Damasus ordered St. Jerome, a priest at Rome, to devote himself to the work of translating the Scriptures. St. Jerome was well qualified for the task. He had a thorough knowledge of Hebrew, Chaldaic and Greek, and had studied the great masters who wrote in these, their native tongue. He was eminent for his sanctity and the austerity of his life. In order to reach the original documents St. Jerome went to Palestine, the land of the Scriptures, knowing the customs of the people, and there collected the Sacred Scriptures and translated them into Latin, which was the language of the Western peoples in those days, just as universally as English is spoken here to-day, so that the Bible was placed within the reach of all who could read.

This Latin translation, known as the Vulgate, has never since been equalled. The greatest scholars have admitted there was no better translation of the Word of God. Protestants spoke with pride of their English translation, its exquisite style and the beauty of its language, but it could bear no comparison with St. Jerome's translation.

TRANSLATED 1,500 YEARS AGO. Protestants say their translation was made from the Hebrew manuscript, but the oldest of these only dates back to the ninth century, whereas St. Jerome's translation was made from hundreds of years previously. The Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol, in his preface to the Epistles, acknowledges that there are many mistakes in the Protestant version, and the revised edition comes nearer to the Vulgate, which still remains the most accurate.

Later when the barbarians overran Europe, and by mingling their dialects with the Latin, formed the modern languages, the Vulgate became unintelligible to these nations. History of the Middle Ages," says that when the Vulgate became unintelligible in this way it was translated into the language of the people in the different countries.

The Church multiplied the Bible, setting monks to spend their lives making translations. St. Bede, who was the father of English history, lived in the eighth century. He knew Hebrew, Greek and Latin, as well as his native Anglo-Saxon. He loved to read and to expound the Scriptures, and he died with the pen in his hand writing the Gospel of St. John. When King Alfred, the great Anglo-Saxon monarch, went to Rome the Pope confirmed him and became his godfather, and when the King returned to England he set himself to translate the Scriptures. The last work he wrote was a translation of the Psalms, which is still preserved.

In the tenth century the whole Bible was translated into Anglo-Saxon, chiefly by the Bishops and priests, who would be the last person in the world to assist in spreading the Word of God if, as was alleged, the Church was opposed to such action. After the Norman Conquest in the eleventh century the Church set to work to produce copies of the Scriptures in modern English, and in the thirteenth century the whole Bible was translated into English. There was translated into English to do this if the Church desired to hide the Scriptures. On the contrary, she did her utmost to multiply them in order that her children might drink of the waters of eternal truth.

The same remark applied to Germany, France, Italy and Ireland. In Ireland St. Columbkille himself wrote three hundred copies of the Psalter. With regard to Germany, printing was invented in 1441, and the Popes, then as ever, the patrons of learning, made use of the invention for the purpose of spreading knowledge of the Scriptures.

FIRST BOOK PRINTED. The first book printed was the Vulgate, and forty two years before Luther was born there were 29 presses working and 1,000 printers employed. Previous to the supposed discovery of the old Bible by Luther, 100,000 copies of the Bible had been printed, and there were 14 editions in high German and 5 in low. It was the same in all countries and in all ages.

The following occurs in the imitation of Christ, written in the thirteenth century by Thomas a Kempis: "Whilst I am in the prison of this body I acknowledge myself to need two things, viz., food and light. Thou hast therefore given to me, weak as I am, Thy sacred body for the nourishment of my soul and body, and thou hast set Thy word as a light at my feet. Without these two I could not well live, for the word of God is the light of my soul, and Thy Sacrament is the bread of life." Then the question arises: Has the Church ever placed any restrictions on the reading of the Bible? On two occasions in 1,800 years the Church has thought it necessary to place some restrictions on the reading of the Bible, of which the Church alone is the custodian. In 1229 the Council of Toulouse passed a decree to the effect that laymen were not to read the Bible without the sanction of a Bishop.

This was during the time of the Albigenses, who, in the heresy of Hallam, aimed at the destruction of the Christian religion.

A LOCAL RESTRICTION. The Albigenses said there were two gods—one good and the other bad; they denied transubstantiation, the divinity of Christ, the resurrection, future life, and supported these false doctrines by quotations from the Bible, which they wrested to their own destruction. They insisted on their own private judgment; and was it to be said that the Church was trying to destroy Christianity? The Church, actuated by a good mother, took measures to prevent her children from imbibing false doctrines, but even this necessary restriction was local in its effects, and temporary also. It only applied to the south of France, where the heresy flourished, and as soon as the Albigenses were converted the decree was no longer enforced.

Again, in the sixteenth century, when Luther rebelled against all authority, when there was a Bible mania and when it was taught that anyone might interpret the Holy Scripture for himself, when the heretics condemned portions of the Bible, including Tobias, Machabees, etc., the Epistles of St. James, which were called "a book of straw," and the Lamentations of Jeremiah, whom Luther called "a weeping ape." Then, again, the Church having kept the Holy Scriptures inviolate for more than one thousand five hundred years, it was necessary to step in to prevent their utter destruction. Henry VIII, himself, the head of the English Church, passed a law inflicting one month's imprisonment on all who read the Scriptures and exercised their private judgment; because he wished to be the sole interpreter of the Bible, according to his own judgment. The Church did not go to such extreme measures, even in this emergency, but merely ordained that no layman should read the Bible without the permission and guidance of his confessor or parish priest; because there were so many spurious editions that there was no guarantee that the Bible could be had in its integrity—some might be left out; it might be mutilated.

READ AS AN ANTIDOTE. In 1770 Pope Benedict XIV. issued instructions that all might read the Bible, and in 1779, when the infidelity which afterwards led to the French revolution was at its height, the Pope proposed that the Scriptures should be read as an antidote to the pernicious doctrines of infidels: Pope Pius VI., writing to the Archbishop of Florence, who was preparing an edition of the Scriptures, said: "At a time when a vast number of bad books which grossly attack the Catholic religion are circulated, even among the unlearned, to the great destruction of souls, you judge exceedingly well that the faithful should be excited to the reading of the Holy Scriptures, for these are the most abundant sources which ought to be kept open to every one, to draw from them purity of morals and of doctrines, to eradicate the evils which are so widely disseminated in these corrupt times."

To come down to the present, just at the time when the correspondence was going on in the Bradford Observer on this subject, a letter appeared in the Times, stating that in Italy the Bible was being issued in halfpenny numbers, and that in this way 50,000 copies, costing £20,000, had been circulated. This was in Rome, the Pope's headquarters, which scarcely looked like condemnation of the Bible. When Catholic emancipation was before the public, M. P.'s brought forward this charge, and Dr. Doyle, the great Irish Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin, said that if any one wanted to know the extent to which the Bible circulated, they need only count the number of editions which had recently been published.

The Protestant Irish Church Missions were in the habit of saying that in Ireland you would see the cross, the holy well and the beads, but the Word of God was hidden, and yet they might hear the epistles and gospels read at Mass, just as publicly as they were in Protestant churches. People who believed those charges were fooled by those who made them for their own purposes, but the truth would prevail in spite of the most persistent calumny. As to the veneration in which the Bible was held, they would not see Catholic lads pelting each other with the Bible, they would not get their

fish wrapped up in leaves of the Bible and it would not be put to the vilest uses, as was done by those who professed to respect it. These charges, though refuted, would be made again only to be once more refuted. Catholics would always love and venerate the Word of God; they had always treasured it, and would always do so, knowing that it will strengthen their faith, support their hope and increase their charity.

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The Protestant Irish Church Missions were in the habit of saying that in Ireland you would see the cross, the holy well and the beads, but the Word of God was hidden, and yet they might hear the epistles and gospels read at Mass, just as publicly as they were in Protestant churches. People who believed those charges were fooled by those who made them for their own purposes, but the truth would prevail in spite of the most persistent calumny. As to the veneration in which the Bible was held, they would not see Catholic lads pelting each other with the Bible, they would not get their

fish wrapped up in leaves of the Bible and it would not be put to the vilest uses, as was done by those who professed to respect it. These charges, though refuted, would be made again only to be once more refuted. Catholics would always love and venerate the Word of God; they had always treasured it, and would always do so, knowing that it will strengthen their faith, support their hope and increase their charity.

Again, in the sixteenth century, when Luther rebelled against all authority, when there was a Bible mania and when it was taught that anyone might interpret the Holy Scripture for himself, when the heretics condemned portions of the Bible, including Tobias, Machabees, etc., the Epistles of St. James, which were called "a book of straw," and the Lamentations of Jeremiah, whom Luther called "a weeping ape." Then, again, the Church having kept the Holy Scriptures inviolate for more than one thousand five hundred years, it was necessary to step in to prevent their utter destruction. Henry VIII, himself, the head of the English Church, passed a law inflicting one month's imprisonment on all who read the Scriptures and exercised their private judgment; because he wished to be the sole interpreter of the Bible, according to his own judgment. The Church did not go to such extreme measures, even in this emergency, but merely ordained that no layman should read the Bible without the permission and guidance of his confessor or parish priest; because there were so many spurious editions that there was no guarantee that the Bible could be had in its integrity—some might be left out; it might be mutilated.

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