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THE LITTLE SAVOYARD.

A TRUE STORY OF STREET LIFE IN PARIS.

It was the twelfth night after Christmas—an evening celebrated in England, France and Germany by fetes and entertainments, in which the children bear a prominent part. I must ask the reader to accompany me to an elegant mansion in the aristocratic Boulevard of Malesherbes, in the city of Paris. It was easy to see that something was going on inside, for it was brilliantly illuminated, and from time to time elegantly-dressed figures were indistinctly seen through the openings of the curtains.

It was a Twelfth Night festival. The saloon was fairly ablaze with light. Multitudes of children, dressed with taste, moved about gracefully in childish dances, or eagerly partook of the bonbons which on that occasion are always liberally supplied. Among them moved elegant ladies, most of them being parents of the children present, who with smiles watched the enjoyments of the little ones.

At last came the grand ceremony of the evening. This was the cutting of the Twelfth Night cake, which was of mammoth proportions, and of which each guest was entitled to a share. The cutting of the cake was watched with interest, and the pieces were drawn by lot. Just before this was done, however, the Countess de Charny said to the hostess, "Will you gratify me in a little caprice?" "Certainly," said the hostess, complaisantly. "It is this: I wish my portion of the cake to be given to the poorest little boy we can find in the street."

The French are always fond of novelty, and this "caprice" struck the hostess as promising a pleasant variety. "It is a good thought," she said. "I will at once dispatch Antoine on your errand."

Antoine was at hand, his services being liable to be called upon at any moment. He shrugged his shoulders at the message was given him, and thought there was no accounting for the caprices of fine ladies. But of course it was not for him to remonstrate, and he went out to execute his errand. Reaching the street, he looked around him, hoping he might not have to go far in the cold, for it was one of the coldest nights of the winter. "Ah, there's a little vagabond, luckily!—Now to capture him."

The boy referred to was a ragged little Savoyard, of ten years old, apparently, who was standing opposite, with his little violin under his arm. He had been about the streets all day, playing wherever he could get listeners. From some places he had been driven with abuse, for his instrument was far from being a superior one, and poor little Carlo was only a passable player. The poor fellow had suffered not only a little with cold, for his clothes were thin and by no means sufficient for the season; and he had had nothing to eat since the crust of bread which was given him in the morning by the speculator who had brought him, with several others, to Paris, and now lived on their earnings, doling them out the smallest allowance of food that would keep soul and body together.

After wandering about the whole day, little Carlo had strayed into the Boulevard des Malesherbes, and had paused in front of the beautiful mansion where the festival was going on. He could see indistinctly the forms of the children who were participating in the enter-

tainment, and it is quite likely that the poor little fellow felt a sorrowful envy of those whose lot was so much brighter than his. His gaze was so intent that he did not notice the appearance of the servant until, Antoine, having crossed the street, laid his hand on his shoulder.—Carlo started in alarm, and tried to tear himself from the servant's grasp. "Not so fast, little chap," said Antoine.—"I want you." "I didn't do any harm," said the Savoyard, trembling; for he supposed Antoine's intentions were unfriendly. "Who said you did? I only said that I wanted you." The little Savoyard looked at him distrustfully. He had met with so little kindness in his life, that he regarded strangers as enemies rather than as friends. "You are to come with me into yonder mansion," said Antoine. "Where the lights are?" asked the ragged boy, in surprise. "Yes. Come, hurry along. I don't want to stay out here in the cold." "But why am I to go up there?" asked Carlo, puzzled. "You will know when you get there. All I can tell you is that my mistress wants you." "Perhaps I am wanted to play on my violin," thought the boy; and with this idea he followed the servant to the entrance of the mansion. A moment later he was ushered into the brilliant saloon, blazing with lights. He looked around him, dazzled, and nearly blinded by the glare. There was a chorus of ejaculations, and the young gentlemen and ladies gathered around the timid little Savoyard, who stood bewildered in the midst of the magnificence.

In the midst of it the Countess de Charny, whose caprice had been the cause of his appearance, advanced towards the little boy, and gently removed his tattered cap. "Ah, he is indeed pretty," she said, as his chestnut hair fell in a natural wave over a fine brow, which seemed white in comparison with his sun-burnt cheeks. His eyes were a bright hazel, his features were exquisitely turned, only thin from want of sufficient food. In spite of his rags it was easy to see that he was gifted with beauty. "Countess, you will soil your gloves," said a guest, as she took the little boy by the hand and led him forward into the centre of the saloon. "Then I can buy another pair," she said indifferently. "It is I who sent for you," she said to Carlo. "I will tell you what to do." The drawing commenced. The little Savoyard followed the directions of the Countess, and his share of cake was handed him. "Whoever finds the ring in his slice shall be the king of the party," said the hostess, in explanation; "or if it is a young lady, she shall be queen. The king or queen has the right to select one of the opposite sex to share the honors of royalty." "May I eat it, madam?" asked the Savoyard, with a longing glance at the cake he held in his hand. "Yes, my child; but have a care not to swallow the ring, if it should be within." All the children were eagerly examining the slices, in the hope of finding the ring which was the prize of the evening. In the midst of it, the little Savoyard drew the glittering circlet from the cake, saying to the Countess, "I have it, madam." "The king! The king!" the little Savoyard is king!" shouted the children. "You are the king of the festival," said the hostess, advancing and leading forward Carlo, who seemed bewildered by the enthusiasm. "It was a strange scene—the little raga-muffin in the centre of the saloon, surrounded by elegantly-dressed children, over which he was called to exercise sovereignty. The children enjoyed it better than if one of themselves had been chosen. "A queen! a queen! He must name a queen!" shouted all. "Look around you," said the hostess. "It is for you to choose a queen from those present." The little Savoyard looked around him a moment, then went back to the Countess de Charny. "I want you to be queen," he said. "But," said the Countess, "it is the custom to choose a young girl." "I want you to be queen," he persisted. "Why do you choose me?" she asked. "Because you are kind to me," said Carlo. "Besides, you look like my mother." "Like your mother? Is she living?" "I don't know, madam; but I have her picture." "Show it to me," said the Countess, who seemed to be moved by a strange interest. Carlo drew from under his ragged vest a small locket suspended by a plain white string. The picture, though stained and discolored, presented the face of a beautiful young lady of twenty. No sooner did the Countess cast her eye upon it than she uttered a cry of joy, and threw her arms around the astonished boy. "My boy, my boy, my own little Victor! are you again restored to me?" All the guests gazed in astonishment at this

unexpected tableau. The Countess, quickly recovering herself, said, while an expression of joy irradiated her sweet face, "The picture is mine, as you can perhaps discover by examining it. Eight years ago, I was journeying in the northern part of Italy with my husband and my little Victor, then four years of age, when he suddenly disappeared from me. We had no doubt that he was stolen, and offered a large reward for his recovery, but without success. From that day I have mourned for him as for one whom I never again expected to see in this world. It is doubtless Providence who by such strange means has restored him to me." "Are you my mother, then?" asked Carlo. "Yes, my child," and again the mother clasped the boy, ragged and dirty though he was, to her bosom. This time she returned her caress. "Then I shall not be hungry again," he said. "No, my poor child." "Let him tell us his story," demanded the children.

So, seated on a chair in their midst, the little Savoyard told his story in answer to the many questions that were poured in upon him. As far back as he could remember, he wandered about with his little violin, in Italy at first, but for the last two years in Paris, where he had suffered every discomfort and privation. He was in the charge of an Italian named Giacomo Bartoni, who professed to take care of him, and to whom his violin belonged. "We will send for him to-morrow," said the Countess. "I must buy the violin of him as a memorial of the years of terrible privation which you have passed." That night the little Savoyard who was accustomed to sleep on a bed of straw, rested his weary limbs on a bed of down, in the beautiful mansion of the Countess de Charny. The next morning, he was arrayed in a suit of elegant boy's clothing, in which he looked transformed. Scarcely was the metamorphosis complete, than his Italian master, who had been summoned, made his appearance, and bowing almost to the ground, was admitted into the presence of the Countess. "Do you recognize this young gentleman?" asked the Countess, pointing to Carlo, who now looked like a little prince. "No, madam." "Yet you ought to know him well. It is the little Savoyard, Carlo." Giacomo was overwhelmed with astonishment. "But I do not understand," he said. The explanation was briefly made. The Italian was paid a munificent sum for the violin, which is now the only link which unites the little Count Victor with the little Savoyard of former years. He is now at a military school, and bids fair to maintain by his talents the distinction of the illustrious family to which he belongs.

FATHER BURKE'S SERMON ON "The Immaculate Conception."

(From the New York Irish American.)

On Sunday evening, May 19, Father Burke delivered a lecture in St. Andrew's Church, City Hall Place, taking for his subject "The Immaculate Conception," on which he delivered a most eloquent and effective discourse: "Thou art the glory of Jerusalem; thou art the joy of Israel; thou art the honor of our people." These words, dearly beloved brethren, are found in the book of Judith, and they commemorate a great and eventful period of Jewish history. At that time the Assyrian King sent a mighty army, under his General, Holofernes, to subdue all the nations of the earth, and to oblige them not only to forego their existence, but also to conform to the religion and the rites of the Assyrians. This great army the Scriptures describe to us as invincible. Their horses covered the plains; their soldiers filled the valleys; there was no power upon the earth able to resist them; until at length they came before a city of Judea, called Bethulia. They summoned the fortress and commanded the soldiers to surrender. Now, in that town there was a woman by the name of Judith. The Scripture says of her that she was a holy woman; that she fasted every day of her life, and that though young and fair and beautiful to behold, she lived altogether a secluded life, absorbed in prayer to God. When she saw the outlying army of the Assyrians—when she heard the proud claims of their general: that the people of her race, of her nation, should resign not only their national life, but also their religion, and forsake the God of Israel—she arose in the night of holiness and in the power of her strength, and she went forth from the city of Bethulia; she sought the Assyrian camp; she was brought into the presence of Holofernes himself; and at the mid hour of night, whilst he was sunk in his drunken slumbers, she twined her hand around the hair of his head; she drew his own sword from the scabbard that hung by the bed, and she cut off his head, and brought it back in triumph to her people. The morning came. The army found themselves without their general. The Jewish soldiers and people rushed down upon

them, and there was a mighty slaughter and a scattering of the enemies of God and of Israel. And then the people, returning, met this wonderful woman; and the High Priest said to her these words: "Thou art the glory of Jerusalem; thou art the joy of Israel; thou art the honor of our people."

Now, dearly beloved, this is not the only woman recorded in Scripture who did great things for the people and for the Church of God; and the word of Scripture, as applied to her, was meant in a higher and a greater sense; it was meant directly for Judith; but it was meant in a far higher and nobler sense for her of whom I am come to speak to you this evening—the Virgin Mother, who brought forth our Lord Jesus Christ into this earth. To Mary does the word apply especially, as every great heroic woman who appears in Scripture typified her. The sister of Moses, who led the choirs of the daughters of Israel; the daughter of Jephtha, who laid down her virgin life for her people; Deborah, who led the hosts of Israel; the mother of the Maccabees, standing in the blood of her seven sons—these, and all such women of whom the Scriptures make mention, were all types of the higher, the greater—the real, yet the ideal woman, who was in the designs of God to be "the glory of Jerusalem, the joy of Israel, and the honor of her people;" namely, the Blessed and Immaculate Virgin Mary. It is of the first of her graces that I am come to speak to you. The first of her graces was her immaculate conception. Let us consider this, and we shall see how she is "the glory of Jerusalem, the joy of Israel," and the honor of our race and our people.

Dearly beloved, we know that, before the eyes of God, before the mind of God, before the eternal council of God, there is no such thing as past and future as we behold it in the course of time, and as we consider it. In the past, this world's history is before the Almighty God at this moment as if it were at this moment taking place. All that we can do in the future, even to the uttermost limits of eternity, is before the mind of God now, as if it were actually taking place under his eyes; for the difference between time and eternity is this; that in time—that is to say, in the span of our life and in the span of the world's history—everything comes in succession; event follows event, and each moment of time follows the moment that went before it; but in eternity,—in time as viewed in relation to God, when time assumes the infinite dimensions of eternity,—there is neither past nor future, but all is present under the eye of God, circumscribed by His infinite vision and His infinite wisdom. Therefore, all that ever was to take place in time, was seen and foreseen by the Almighty God. He foresaw the creation of man, although that creation did not come until after the eternal years that never had a beginning. And so He foresaw the fall of man; how the first of our race was to pollute his own nature by sin, and in that personal pollution was to pollute our whole nature, because our nature came from Him. Just as when a man poisons the fountain-head of a river,—goes up into the mountains, finds a little spring from which the river comes, that afterwards, passing into the valley, enlarges its bed and swells in its dimensions until it rolls a mighty torrent into the ocean;—if you go up into the mountain;—if you poison the fountain-head of the little stream that comes out from under the rock;—all the waters that flow in the river-bed shall be infected and poisoned; because the spring and the source of the river is tainted. So also, in Adam, our nature sinned. He lay at the fountain-head of humanity; and the whole stream of nature that flowed from him came down to you and to me with the taint and poison of sin in our blood and in our veins. Therefore does the Apostle say that "we are all born children of the wrath of God;" therefore did the prophet of old say: "For, behold, I was conceived in iniquity, and in sin did my mother bring me forth." God saw and foresaw all this from eternity; He saw that His creature man, whom He made so pure, so perfect, so holy, was to be spoiled and tainted by sin. In that universal corruption, the Almighty God reserved to Himself one, and only one, of the race of mankind, and preserved that one specimen of our race unpolluted, untainted, unfulfill. That one was the Blessed Virgin Mary. Certainly such a one must have existed; because the Scripture,—the inspired word of God,—speaks of such a one when it says, in the language of the psalmist: "Thou art all fair, O my beloved, and there is no spot nor stain on thee." Who is she? Is she multiplied? Is she found here and there amongst the daughters of men? No; she is one and only one amongst the daughters.—"Uiv es colomha mea, amata mea, soror mea in tre filias." That one was the Blessed Virgin Mary. God took her and preserved her from the stream of corruption that infected our whole nature. God folded His arms of infinite sanctity around her and took her in the first moments of her existence,—nay, in the eternal decree that went before that existence. He folded her in the arms of His own infinite sanctity; and she is the one to whom shade or thought of sin or evil has never been allowed to approach. Why is this? Because, dearly

beloved, she was destined from all eternity to be the Mother of God, incarnate in her own human nature. The language of the Church is: "He was incarnate of the Holy Ghost, of the Virgin Mary, and was made man." She was destined from all eternity to be the Mother of God—to give to the Almighty God that humanity, that body, that flesh and blood which He was to assume in His own divine person and to make one with God by the unity of one divine person, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. Reflect upon this. The Scriptures expressly tell us that nothing defiled can approach to God—that nothing with the slightest speck or stain of sin upon it can come near God. Therefore, it is that in proportion as men approach to God, in the same proportion are they immaculate. Almighty God tells us in the Scripture, expressly, that, although all men were born in sin, yet there were a few, a very few, who were excepted from that general rule, because they were allowed to approach so near God. The prophet Jeremiah was excepted from that rule; and he was sanctified before he came forth from his mother's womb. "Before thou earnest forth from thy mother, I sanctified thee," said the Lord. And why? Because he was destined to be a prophet, and to propound the word of God to the people. John the Baptist was sanctified in his mother's womb, and came forth in his birth free from the original sin of Adam, because he was destined to be the one amongst men to say: "Behold the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world." And if these men—one because he was to preach the word of God, another because he was to point out God to man—if they, because of this high function, were born without sin, surely, dearly beloved, we must conclude that the woman who was to give God His sacred humanity, the woman who was to be the Mother of God, the woman who was to afford to the Almighty God that blood by which He wiped out the sins of the world, that woman must receive far more than either John the Baptist or Jeremiah received; and the grace that she received must have been the grace of her conception without sin. And, in truth, as nothing defiled, nothing tainted, was ever allowed to approach Almighty God, the woman who approached him nearest of all the daughters of the earth, who came nearer to God than all His angels in Heaven were allowed to approach Him, must be the only one of whom the Scripture speaks when it says: "My beloved is one and only one, and she is all fair, and there is no spot nor stain in her."

What follows from this? It follows that the immaculate woman who was destined to be the mother of Jesus Christ received at the first moment of her being a grace inconceivably greater than all the grace that was given to all the saints upon the earth, because the dignity in which she was created was inconceivably greater than theirs. The highest angel in heaven was made but to be the servant of God; Mary was created to be the mother of God. What was that grace? Perfect purity, perfect sinlessness, perfect immaculateness, and consequently perfect love of God and highest union with Him. For, reflect, my dear friends, whosoever the human soul is found perfectly free from sin, without spot or stain of sin, without the slightest inclination or temptation of sin,—whosoever such a soul is found, that soul is united to the Almighty God by the highest, by the most perfect and the most intimate union of divine love. God loves all His creatures; God loves the soul of man; so that wherever He finds that there is no impediment of sin, no distortion of inclination, nothing to hinder that union, He gives Himself to that soul in the most intimate and highest form of love; and He gathers that soul to Him by a most perfect union. Hence it is that perfect union with God and perfect sinlessness mean one and the same thing.

The Blessed Virgin Mary, conceived without sin, was kept and held aside to let the stream of sin flow by without touching her.—The only one in whom our nature was preserved in all its pristine beauty and perfection, the blessed Virgin Mary in that sinlessness of her conception, attained, at the moment of her conception the most perfect and intimate union with God. And this,—for which all the saints and all holy souls strive on the earth,—the very highest climax of saintly perfection,—was the first beginning of her sanctity. The saint who wears himself during the sixty or seventy years of his life, the Hermit in the desert, the martyr in the arena, all aim at this one thing—to purge their souls most perfectly from sin, from every mortal and venial sin; to rise above their passions and their lower and sinful nature; and in proportion as they attain to this do they climb the summit of perfection and attain to closer union with God. That which all the saints tend to,—that which all the virgins and saints in the Church thirst for,—that which they consider as the very summit of their perfection,—that is, the grace that was given to Mary at the first moment of her being—namely, to be perfectly immaculate, consequently perfectly united to God by supreme and most intimate union. And this is the meaning of the words of Scripture: "The foundations of her are laid upon the holy mountain. The Lord loves the threshold of Zion more than all