

bitter experience the regenerating power which is hidden in that essence of all true beginning of life,—“cease to do evil; learn to do well.” Surely of a truth this demonstrates that the beneficent Source of all Life is Infinite Love revealed in Infinite Wisdom in His dealings with us and all His creatures.

“Future life,” then, is but the opportunity to use in larger measure the life powers we have partially developed here. “Future life” is—must be—far more real, more substantial, far more potential for good or evil, than this life, because there our powers are granted greater opportunity. Let us begin here, then, the life we *will* to live in the future. Let us be up and doing,—be useful here that we may be more useful hereafter. God’s kingdom is a kingdom of uses here, and therefore hereafter. The *will* to benefit our fellowmen is the true life here. For God’s sake,—for goodness’ sake do it, because “forasmuch as ye do it unto one of the least of these, My brethren, ye do it unto Me.” A sentimental beatified idleness is nowhere depicted in God’s Divine Word as the “Kingdom of Heaven.” And it is written in the laws of our being that “in keeping God’s commandments there is great reward,”—not the reward of *merit*, but the purely natural reward of the blessedness of a life whose every faculty is working according to its nature and constitution, finding every power respond harmoniously to every effort of its God-given will or life. “Cabinéd, cribbed, confined,” this life may be while we exist in this world, but if begun at all here, even in slightest measure, it will grow and expand by added life from God, instilling into it a wisdom pure enough to guide and render useful a boundless

“CHARITY.”

IS THERE A PERSONAL DEVIL?

SIR,—Your correspondent assuming the practical, if peculiar *nom de plume* of “Diabolus,” seems to endeavour to prove that instead of there being a personal devil, there are a number of spirits who take the place of that Divinity, each and all attempting to lead us into temptation at every opportunity, and that such spirits proceed from ourselves. In fact, he embodies the Devil in a number of Demons which he christens by the name “Evil,” as if the many were represented by the one minus the “D.” Now by so doing he simply altogether begs the question. Of course *all* evil comes from the Father of Evil, since God can do *only* good. “Diabolus” quotes the text, “Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have thee that he may sift thee as wheat,” and draws the conclusion that there cannot be a personal devil, since this text should not be taken literally, “but as meaning falsity, is desirous to appropriate and prevent all the good seed of truth in you.” Exactly. “New Presbyter is but old priest writ large,” may be said in answer to this new interpretation. But who is “falsity” itself if not the Devil himself? “Diabolus” might as well quote Shakespeare’s immortal passage of “call the spirits from the vasty deep,” and attempt to prove in consequence that all that is evil comes not from the Father of Evil, but from sundry and many Deities of a wicked nature, and generically terms “Evil” and that this poly-spirited spirit is within us. Truly a remarkable exposition. Perhaps “Diabolus” will explain the passage, “The Devil goeth about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour!” But your correspondent “out-Herod’s Herod” when he assumes that we should regret the fact of there being no personal devil, because “we should have no one to blame for our evils but ourselves.” Strange paradox! Why surely if there were no Devil to tempt us, we are no longer responsible beings, since the evil being created *in* and *with* us must certainly absolve us from its results. Then would all sins become “original” and I for one would decline to believe that a beneficent Deity like “Our Father in Heaven” would punish us, even for a short time, for “evils” born in and with us. The explanation given in the same letter, of the text, “resist the devil and he will flee from you,” is simply Machiavellian, and if all Scripture is to be twisted into what “Diabolus” pleases to term its meaning, then “farewell, a long farewell to all its greatness.”

As there is *one* Godhead, so there is *one* head of Devils. . . . Nothing, according to Milton, would satisfy the cravings of Satan’s ambition, but what amounted practically to a godship, and for that he was cast into hell. There he had, and has a crown, (but of what an awful nature) and a crown which will last him, God only knows how long, but certainly—while that time is running—he will wear it as a very “Prince of Evil.” The Bible says Satan can assume, amongst his many other attributes, the role of an “Angel of Light” to compass his purposes, but *that* plurality none the less makes him the Devil, and a personal Devil. No! break down the fact that there is a Devil, and that a personal one too, you do away with the responsibility of man *at once*, for if the evil is in and with us, and does not proceed from external sources in the first instance, we are, if condemned for such sins, condemned for sins not our fault, and are amongst “the most miserable of men.”

ANGELUS.

THE MILL OF ST. HERBOT—A BRETON STORY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF “PATTY.”

CHAPTER XII.

IN THE WOOD.

“There, child, rest, thou hast done enough,” Madame Rusquec said; “rest now, for to-morrow will be a busy day.”

Louise looked pale and tired; she had been formally betrothed to Christophe on the day following Jean Marie’s furious outbreak. The young pair had eaten out of one plate and drank out of the same mug, and, in fact, had followed the Bazvalan’s instructions; and now to-morrow the friends, on both sides would assemble at the mill to see the stores Madame Rusquec had laid by for her daughter. All the old oak armories, tables, benches, and the frames of the box bedsteads, had been oiled and rubbed till the firelight reflected red in their shining faces; the silver spoons had been diligently polished, and there was a fine display of pewter arranged on the shelves in front of some very gay-coloured faience. The shelves of the armories had been studiously piled with all the best linen, and the doors of these would be left ajar to-morrow to show the further wealth and industry of the household, for all this linen was home-spun. The walls, too, shone with the brightness of copper and brass. Madame Rus-

quec and her daughter had been hard at work polishing every cooking utensil, and now they were both tired out.

“Rest, my child,” her mother called after Louise, as the girl went to the open door.

“I cannot rest, mother, I must get some air, it is so hot. Mother,” she turned on the door-step, “dost thou think Jean Marie will come to-morrow among the rest?”

Madame Rusquec looked keenly at her daughter. “I hope so,” she said. “Why should he not come?”

Louise grew red under her mother’s keen glances.

“He did not come for the betrothal, and I thought—”

“Thou art full of foolish fancies, child. Jean Marie could not come then because he was still suffering, but he must be well by this time.” The widow checked a sigh; she could not check the thought that, if her daughter had not been wilful, she might have been mistress of the farm of Braspart.

“Mother”—Louise turned such a saddened face over her shoulder as she stood at the open door, that her mother softened at once—“I must go out for a short while, I cannot rest yet; I feel that I must be moving.” She ran back and kissed her mother, and then went out rapidly, fearing another remonstrance. She did not as usual seek for Barba; she had rarely felt so tired bodily, and the fatigue depressed her, and made her wish to be alone. She sauntered aimlessly into the wood, but she was soon glad to seat herself on one of the grey boulders that are scattered everywhere over this wild country. The evenings were now long, and there was plenty of light in the sky. Louise was not sentimental. She loved Christophe as well as her shallow nature was capable of loving; but at this moment her thoughts were chiefly occupied by her wedding dress, whether she should wear a short richly-embroidered handkerchief across her shoulders, or a long plain white silk shawl. She was reckoning the difference of price on her plump fingers, and suddenly she paused and listened. Steps were coming through the wood behind her.

“Mathurin!” she called. There was no answer, but in a few minutes a man came out, stooping under the branches of the beech-trees. It was Jean Marie, and at sight of him Louise rose up hastily, and felt inclined to run away; but the farmer was prepared for her avoidance of him.

“Stop, Louise, I must speak to you, and you must wait and hear what I say.”

If he had studied the girl for years, he could not have chosen his words more skilfully. Louise stood still, compelled to listen by the man’s strong will. He waited a moment, looking eagerly in her face for some show of feeling towards him, and in the silence Louise recollected herself.

“I hope you have quite recovered,” she said, but she kept her eyes on the ground. Then she remembered that this man would soon be her brother. “We shall see you at the mill to-morrow,” she said, and she raised her eyes to his face.

All Jean Marie’s preconcerted calmness fled.

“You vain, heartless woman,”—his voice was so harsh and broken that all her fear came back—“what do you take me for? Do you think I mean to give you up? See here Louise”—he put his hand on her arm, but he did this so quietly she had no excuse to cry out—“I ask you what prevents me from going on to the mill, to bid your mother put me in Christophe’s place. Bah! she would do it, for I understand women, I hope, though I have troubled so little about them. I have only to name the sum, and she will give you to me, and give up the mill into the bargain.” He stopped, and looked at her with an intense craving in his eyes. “Why do I talk to you? Why do I not go on to the mill at once? Do you know, Louise?” He stopped again; the girl stood fascinated by his intense gaze. “Why, you do not answer?” he said more gently.

“I do not know.” Tears came into her eyes, and her helpless look touched him.

“Child”—the deep passionate tone mastered her, she kept her eyes fixed on his—“it is because I love you—yes, love you—I who all my life long have despised women. I tell you, Louise, that I cannot be happy unless you become my wife. Do not fear, my sweet child”—for she had drawn back at this—“I will not hurry you. You know nothing about love, and that raw boy can teach you nothing. You cannot even guess how happy I will make you—how precious you are to me, my sweet, lovely child.” He drew her closer to him, and gazed at her with an intensity of admiring love.

Louise was frightened, but yet she was fascinated. The strongest feeling she had—her vanity—was fed and soothed. Christophe had never talked to her in this wild adoring way. He had said he loved her, but he had said it more quietly; he had not said he could not live without her. “And yet I love Christophe,” she thought, “and I can never love this dark violent man, I fear him so.”

She stood silent, with downcast eyes, unable any longer to meet his gaze, for his eyes seemed to blaze under his dark brows. Her silence gave him courage; he drew her yet closer, and clasped his arm round her waist.

The touch roused Louise. “Oh, let me go—please let me go, Monsieur Mao; it is not the way to make me like you to frighten me.”

He muttered an oath between his teeth. “I will frighten you yet more,” he said, sternly, “unless you do what I ask. I watched you just now, and you listened with pleasure to my love. If you did not love me in return, you would have shrunk away.”

“No, oh no, I have promised,” and the girl struggled vainly to free herself.

Jean Marie drew his arm slowly from her waist, but he kept her hand tightly grasped in his. “Look here,” he said, “you shall not waste your life and mine for an idle promise. I came here to-night by no chance. I came because I am resolved that you shall not marry Christophe. You love me, and you shall be my wife. Ah, Louise, think what I can give you besides my love; Christophe can give you nothing. As my wife you shall never work; you shall not even spin, unless you please. Say you will give up Christophe.”

She shook her head. “I cannot,” she said faintly.

(To be continued.)