

Louder still I shouted "Ave Maria!"  
Again no answer.  
"Can't ye shout louder, man?" said the priest, who evidently did not, in his unreasoning way, consider that already I was straining my lungs.

Drawing one good deep breath I hurled out one other "Ave Maria!" that beat my other efforts hollow, and even surprised myself. The good father, indeed, afterwards remarked, that he often listened to "Aves" couched in more reverential tones, and that it sounded to him more like a curse than a prayer. But, be that as it may, it was the "Open Sesame!" for us, for almost immediately the bolt was heard shooting in the door, and I had barely time once more to measure at a glance the distance between me and the tree, when the door was opened, and in the stream of light that fell out through it from the light within, the figure of a tall, burly man was observed, with a paper—evidently a newspaper—held still open, in one hand. I listened intently for his reply. Father Dominic, from beyond the wire-fence, strained his hearing powers likewise. Only a moment, and the astounding reply came in a rich, rolling, distinct voice—

"Sin pleado concibida—an' f'what the devil's fetchin' yez here anyhow?"

All, all rolled out in one sentence. To merely say we were astounded is putting it very tamely. Neither the good priest nor I was able to reply for some moments, though there was a question, which, as certainly as he uttered it, he never dreamt that we, his midnight visitors, would for one moment comprehend, contained in the latter part of his sentence.

Father Dominic was the first who got his breath—"Erin go brah! More power to your elbow, avilish machree! It wasn't the devil fetched us here at all, but a pair of as good nags as ye've clapped your eyes on since ye left Connaught, Hurrah!"

"Holy mother of Moses!" was all the amazed Connaughtian (there was no mistaking the Connaught *patois* even in his Spanish) *puerito* could utter.

In a very short time Father Dominic and I were doing ample justice to a piping hot supper, which did not lack for variety either. Father Dominic indeed observed that though I had to come ten thousand miles to look for my health, I would never have to go further than the cupboard to look for my appetite; and he hoped that I wouldn't by any unfortunate mishap lose it before leaving Argentina, as there were but few in that country who could afford to find it. But he did not restrain me from satisfying my hunger, which, I need hardly say, was particularly sharp after our long and enforced ramble. Very soon, too, we heard the *pampero* at high-jinks without. Father Dominic said he was calling for us, but we didn't feel like responding, and he now gave us very little concern. Our genial host—for, notwithstanding the gruffness of our first reception, for which he was able to give a very satisfactory reason, he was a genial one—we learnt was Barney Dolan from the county of sweet Mayo. He had been brought here from Buenos Ayres by Don Pena's manager. He had the previous day ridden to, and just now returned from, the city of Salta, some twenty leagues distant, where he had obtained his Weekly Freeman by post, for he got it regularly—perhaps irregularly, though, since he had left Ireland.

After having had his supper he had sat down to learn from it how matters were progressing in the old country, and got more deeply interested in the hot election contest then raging in Kilkenny (the first after "the split"), when my hail from without disturbed him. Not, of course, for a moment suspecting that we were other than Argentines who had missed the path, he was so annoyed by our ill-timed intrusion that he had almost resolved, he said, "To let me bawl there till morning if it gave me any satisfaction."

Barney now produced a something else he had also obtained in Salta for the purpose of washing down any bad news he should find in the paper. As he poured it from the "dimmyjon" and handed it round he remarked that it couldn't hold a candle to the stuff Thady Cassidy, of Meenathrasna—God be good to him!—used to brew; but then the haythens here knew no better anyhow.

Barney, by the way, was an ardent Nationalist, and would talk politics by the square perch, only that Father Dominic decided them out of court. The sayings and doings on the oild sod, fond reminiscences, and personal histories, enliven-

ed by many a choice anecdote from a droll story by the priest, made the hours fly like swallows on the wing. Next morning Barney Dolan accompanied us far on our way. He solicited Father Dominic's blessing, a request which the good priest gave with unwonted fervour. Heartfelt was our regret at parting him, and as we did so a big tear trembled in the eye of the Argentine-Connaughtman. May God watch over him.—In the Weekly Freeman.

## THE QUEEN OF PURGATORY, AND CANDLEMAS.

The month of February, witnessing the Purification of Our Blessed Lady, is one that gives great joy to those souls who are themselves being purified. For centuries the Blessed Virgin has been called the Queen of Purgatory. On this Feast day of hers, according to the poets and legendists, she is wont to descend and comfort the souls in pain, and that many, through her intercession, are restored to perfect peace with God, and admitted to the joy of Heaven. This belief is not contrary to Catholic faith, and many theologians accept it as being literally true. From a spiritual standpoint, it certainly possesses an emphatic beauty. One in which the Spiritual Sense has been cultivated, is bound to admit that the Mother of Our Divine Redeemer must possess every amiable quality of commiseration and solicitude for those in suffering, and where may she find greater cause for pity than among those who are expiating the punishment due their faults? The Church holds that the souls confined in Purgatory cannot help themselves, while it is believed that they may help us by their prayers. The only help which can reach them is the propitiatory sacrifice of the Mass, and the prayers of the faithful, on earth, offered in their behalf, together with the prayers of the Saints in Heaven. Reason, alone, would induce us to believe that the Blessed Virgin should be a zealous intercessor for these most helpless children of God, and particularly on the Feast of Purification. On this anniversary of her own purification she would have these pure as she, and, like herself, admitted to the company of angels. Hence, she is represented as on this day journeying to "The realm of doleful sighs," and bearing back to Heaven those who are fitted to enter therein.

The beauty of the Church's ceremonies on Candlemas has appealed to lovers of the beautiful for many ages. Its English name, *Candlemass*, it is hardly necessary to say here, was acquired from the fact that before the Mass on this day the Church blessed her candles for the year and "made a procession with them in the hands of the faithful, in memory of the Light wherewith Christ illuminated the whole Church at His presentation, when Simeon styled Him "a light to the revelation of the Gentiles, and the glory of His People Israel!" In all ages these processions and ceremonies have appealed to the soul's sense of the beautiful, and poets innumerable have sung of their chastity and loveliness. Even poets otherwise Protestant have not remained unaffected in the presence of her sweetness and innocence. Anciently, in England at least, the Christmas sports were not infrequently prolonged until Candlemas day, but, coming before the Holy Season of Lent, as it does, with it all merriment ceases until after Easter.

"End now the white loaf and the pie,  
And let all sports with Christmas die."

is the advice given by Herrick. Candlemas is a preparation for the solemn, but not less beautiful, season fast approaching. The snowy chastity is but a beginning. Those who love purity and goodness are attracted within, and soon their heads are bowed in worship. It is thus with all the ceremonies of the Church.

Their chaste beauty attract; their truth compel the loiterer to remain. There seems a mystic sense attached to Rosset's oft quoted sonnet, "The Church Porch," whether he so intended it or not. Most readers recall his description. Outside is dust, and heat, and glare, and the churchbells wearily jangle a monotonous tune—but inside? Ah—

"But having entered in, we shall find there Silence, and sudden dimness, and deep prayer, And faces of crowned angels all about."

In Italy, in days past, the Feast of Purification was celebrated with most touching and impressive ceremonies.

Pabel, one of the most distinguished of Italian minor poets, speaks of a procession, bearing lighted tapers, which was over a mile in length. The young girls were habited in white raiment and wore wreaths of white roses, bound about their foreheads. The young men sang together with the maidens, as the cavalcade pressed forward. In Spain, in the time of Lope de Vega, not infrequently the whole scene of the Presentation was arranged pretty much after the German manner of the Christmas cribs. A mimic temple of boughs was erected and here was the aged Simeon and Anna, and hither came Mary and Joseph bearing the Infant Lord. After the Holy Child was presented, and while Simeon and Anna were yet speaking, the procession, bearing lighted candles, marched by, singing hymns of joy and exultation, and songs written especially for the occasion. Some of the most famous writers of Spain gladly employed their talent in the composition of these songs, and in the production of touching little dramas, of a sacred character, which were almost invariably enacted by the simple, yet pious peasantry. It is no wonder that the Faith took a strong hold upon these people, where each Feast Day employed the genius of the poet, the art of the painter, the skill of the musician, the dramatic talent of the peasant, and exacted piety, sincerity and simplicity from all. It is this very employment of genius of every character which has in all ages made Music, Literature and Art pre-eminently Catholic, and which yet retains them so in the very face of nineteenth century materialism. The "chaste in art" in no festival of the Church found greater expression than in that of Candlemas, which still retains its ineffable whiteness and beauty, and is likely to so continue.—*The Poor Souls' Advocate.*

"So you feel you cannot marry him?"  
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TEMPTATION.

A story is told of a man who once asked an Eastern king if he could tell him how to avoid temptation.

The king told the man to take a vessel brimful of oil, and to carry it through the streets of the city without spilling one drop.

"If one drop is spilled," said the king, "your head shall be cut off." And he ordered the two executioners with drawn swords to walk behind the man and carry out his orders.

There happened to be a fair going on in the town and the streets were crowded with people. However, the man was very careful and he returned to the king without having spilled one drop of the oil. Then the king asked:

"Did you see anyone whilst you were walking through the streets?"

"No, sir," said the man. "I was thinking only of the oil. I noticed nothing else."

"Then," said the king, "you notice how to avoid temptation. Fix your mind as firmly on God as you fixed it on the vessel of oil. You will not then be tempted to sin."

WIT AND HUMOR.

"Does she love music?" "M—yes. But not enough to keep away from the piano."

The woman of the future does not interest the average girl half as much as the man of the present.

"If you don't leave at once I shall call the porter!" Peddler—"Very well! Perhaps he will buy something of me."

A Colchester paper avers that a hotel in Colchester has a cook so good-looking that she mashes the potatoes by looking at them.

Maud: "What is the height of your ambition, dear?" Marie (blushing): "Oh, something between five and a half and six feet."

No smile is so genuine as that of the hen which, perched on the fence, watches the man next door make his garden.