

THE LAST PRAYER

From the French of Charles Foley.

(By Alys Holland, in The Criterion.) They had put us in what used to be a chapel belonging to the Carmelites, and it was so damp that the water kept dripping from the arched roof and oozing out of the bare walls.

There was only a faint light from the high, narrow, stained-glass window, which was all covered with dust and had an iron grating before it, and we slept on sacks with scarcely any straw in them.

Once a day the heavy door of the little chapel was opened and the jailer, standing on the threshold, called out the name of one of us, and we all knew that the one who was called would never be seen again by the rest of us.

The jailer's visit only lasted a minute, but we lived through all the other hours of the day and night in horror of just that minute.

Such was our state of misery when the two sisters, Solange and Delphine and Halancourt, were thrust in among us.

They came in with their arms round each other, both of them with fair hair and pink and white complexions, resembling each other as one spring-time resembles another and lighting up our damp, gloomy prison like a sunrise. It took us quite a week to distinguish them apart, for they were so much alike. On Delphine's beautiful face, though, there was an expression of playfulness, whilst a gentle melancholy seemed to be more natural to Solange. Their voices, too, were different. Delphine spoke in a lively, quick way, whilst the voice of Solange was grave and penetrating.

We grew so accustomed to seeing them always together with their arms round each other that we never thought of them apart, and it never occurred to us to give the preference to one or the other. If by chance they happened to move away from each other for a moment, we felt instinctively that something was wrong as long as they stood alone, so ideal was their mutual devotion.

Somehow, when they first came among us, we felt for them something that adoration which men who have been shipwrecked in the night must feel for a distant sail they catch sight of when they day begins to break. We were not deceived in our expectations, for they brought us relief in the midst of our distress.

When the two sisters had been searched, Delphine had managed to hide her prayer-book, and now every day, just before the jailer arrived to fetch the condemned prisoner, she and the sister went across the little chapel and took their place so that the faint light from the high stained-glass window fell on them.

We all followed and grouped ourselves around them, the most vivid among us kneeling down on the stone floor and the others sitting on their straw mattresses. Arm in arm, as fair and beautiful as symbols of faith and hope, the two sisters alone remained standing in the centre of our group, and, holding the precious little book in her delicate, white hands, Solange, in her deep, solemn voice, which went straight to our hearts, began to read the burial service.

Utterly deprived as we had hitherto been of the consolations which we might get from any kind of religious service, nothing was more calculated to stimulate our moral courage and fortify our souls like those sacred words. They gave us just the strength which we needed and which would enable us to meet our executors without fear or anger, and to walk with head erect to the scaffold.

Nevertheless, when the jailer flung the door open with the butt end of his gun by giving it a kick with his foot, and then called out the name of one of the prisoners in a brutal voice, which echoed under the vaulted roof, our gentle Solange was obliged to wait a few minutes, and a tumult which we could not control interrupted our devotions. We knew that the one who was leaving us would never return, and at this thought, sobs and broken words or silent gestures of sorrow would counteract all the salutary effect of our prayers, and excusable though our agitation might be in the midst of such heartrending scenes, yet it seemed to us unworthy of our religion. We therefore agreed unanimously to subscribe all the money which we had left in order to obtain from our jailer a favor which would have been nothing at any other time, but which seemed to us priceless, plunged as we were in the very depths of grief.

The man consented to remain in the little room adjoining the chapel, which had formerly been used as a vestry, and to call the prisoners through the little grated window of the floor. In order that Solange and Halancourt more than anyone else should not know what took place, and so should not be interrupted in conducting our little service, we arranged that she should turn her back to the door. Each of us took it in turn day by day, to remain by the little grated window, and when the jailer arrived he whispered the name of the condemned prisoner. The person on duty then walked across as quietly as possible to our group, and touched the

one who had been called lightly on the shoulder. The martyr rose, and, without disturbing the others, disengaged himself from the little group, and, crossing the prison as noiselessly as the messenger of death had just done, disappeared through the terrible doorway, and invariably, as long as he was in the chapel, his eyes kept their steadfast expression and his lips continued to murmur the words of the service.

Sometimes a slight change in the voice of Solange, or the way in which we instinctively bent our heads still lower, indicated the fact that we knew one of us was about to die, but at other times we entered so thoroughly into the service—carried away by the sublime devotion which Solange put into the words she repeated—that we neither heard nor saw what went on around us, and it seemed to us for the time being as though we were in another world. Anyone would have to have lived through those terrible times in order to understand the grandeur and proud serenity of such heroic silence during these fearful separations. One day, however—a day that stands out as more sinister than all the others—our feelings got the better of all our efforts for self-control.

On that day—I remember every detail as though it were only yesterday—Mme. de Faucigny, trembling in every limb, took her turn at the little grated window which looked into the vestry whilst we all grouped ourselves as usual around our beloved Solange. Standing up in the midst of us, with a halo of light falling round her from the stained-glass window, she was reading our Lord's Passion from St. John's Gospel, and as she read it seemed as though her whole soul were in her voice. Delphine was standing by her, with her arm round her sister's waist and her head resting on Solange's shoulder.

As we looked at them thus together in their white dresses, with their fair curls intermingled, and the chaste expression of faith and hope on their sweet faces, they reminded us of two innocent doves, and never had their affection for each other appeared to us more touching; never had they looked so united and so lovely, so infinitely above all the infamies of this world, carried away by the divine rapture of their prayers.

An almost imperceptible noise attracted my attention, and, glancing at Mme. de Faucigny, I saw her bending towards the little open window to hear the fatal news. Accustomed as I was to this incident, which was of daily occurrence, I do not know why my heart should have commenced to beat so fast on this particular occasion. My emotion increased in a most painful degree when I saw that Mme. de Faucigny, looking deadly pale and tiptoeing, instead of passing by the two sisters, to lay her finger silently on one of us, stopped just behind them.

The poor woman had raised her trembling hand and was just about to lay it on Solange's shoulder, when Delphine, warned undoubtedly by one of those strange presentiments which come to us sometimes when anything is about to happen to those whom we love, turned her head slightly and saw the hand raised just over her sister. With a look she made Mme. de Faucigny understand that she was not to touch Solange nor to disturb the service.

We were all gazing in breathless anxiety, but Delphine's eyes explored our silence and we remained dumb. With the utmost precaution Delphine gently took her arm away from her sister's waist, and obeying her mute supplication, Mme. de Faucigny substituted hers. This was all done so silently and so naturally that Solange continued reading in a clear voice. Delphine then lifted her head from her sister's shoulder, but this movement startled Solange and she gazed anxiously into her sister's face. We were all trembling with suspense, but the brave girl, in that supreme moment when she was leaving forever her adored sister and going to face death in her stead, gathered up all her strength and smiled back so sweetly and with such a look of peaceful confidence that Solange, reassured, continued her reading.

The whole of this little drama, which stabbed us to the heart with such anguish that prayer died away on our lips, took place promptly and simply in the most tragic silence. Mme. de Faucigny continued to obey Delphine's mute signs, and the latter first moved quietly back a few steps, and then, without turning round, walked in the direction of the little grated window with her quick light step.

Through the half-open door we could see nothing but gloomy darkness. The white dress fluttered through the opening, then the door, closing again, seemed to swallow her up in its shadow. That was all, and Solange continued reading. When she came to those heartrending words—"My God! My God! Why hast thou forsaken me?"—she pronounced them with such an accent of distress that it was as though her own voice startled her. Shuddering, she looked down anxiously into the face near hers, and where she expected to find Delphine she recognized Mme. de Faucigny. The poor girl understood immediately the atrocious thing that had taken place. All at once terrible sobs rose in her throat and nearly choked her; she felt half stiff and helpless into the arms that were supporting her. Her eyes closed, and in her terrible grief her fingers loosened their hold of the little prayer-book.

And then—for her this time—we all

of us together, from our very souls, repeated those sacred words of consolation which she had so often said for us. She stood up again, and, holding fast the little book, which had nearly fallen from her hands, sublime in her turn, she tried to finish the words of Christ. "Father, in Thy hands I commend my spirit." But with the last words her strength gave way, and bitter tears fell on the page, which she could not finish this time.

POPE LEO AS A FARMER

What the Holy Father Has Done for His Native Carpignano.

As Pope Leo continues his wonderful reign, seeming as the days pass to grow even more robust, people delight in relating stories about his innumerable hobbies and self-imposed duties.

As a writer of polished Horatian verses he is well known, but not many people know that he is a keen farmer. He owns a great quantity of land at Carpignano Romano, being indeed, the biggest proprietor of the district. When he came to the Papal throne he determined, in order to show his affection for his country home, to supply the whole of Carpignano with good drinkable water. The Popes have always been celebrated for their water-works, as witness the innumerable fountains of Rome, which is the best watered city in the world.

Accordingly, the Pope sent for the hydraulic engineer, Giuseppe Olivieri, and ordered him to dig. Water was found at a depth of 300 meters (roughly, 900 feet), but not in sufficient quantity for the needs of the country. Accordingly, Olivieri, with the Pope's permission, bored two lateral galleries. These brought forth water in abundance. But when the summer came the earth dried up to such an extent that water escaped through the gaping pores of the galleries, rather than into the gaping mouths of the peasants.

Then the Pontiff caused galleries and main bore alike to be lined with concrete. But even this hardly proved satisfactory, without reckoning that the wells have cost already over £12,000. Pope Leo is a little sore about the poor success of his schemes, but he keeps on doggedly, and is even now planning fresh devices for the watering of his people.

His property is admirably managed, and its peasant population is wonderfully free from want and sickness. Pope Leo regularly sends for his agent, examines all the books, knows to a lira what his ground has produced, and what improvements it needs, and spends the larger part of the income derived from the land in better it and in building new cottages for the peasants.

He has the fondest memories of his estate, where he possesses a very beautiful villa, surrounded by chestnut trees, among which he always spent his holidays during his legate days, and later, during his Cardinalate, any time that he could snatch from the affairs of state. And he knew his tenants well, and used to visit them in their homes, where, great prince of the Church that he was, he would sit chatting about the baby's teething and the old man's rheumatism.

Once, not long ago, a timber merchant made a proposal to buy some of the oldest chestnuts. This roused the Pope, for his trees are his dearest possession. And the audacious merchant was driven from the Vatican, with the assurance that never, so long as the Pope lived, should one of his trees be touched.—Rome Letter to London Leader.

TROUBLES OF AN EX-REEVE

Were Easily Disposed of by Dodd's Kidney Pills

W. C. Cragg, of Dresden, had Inflammatory Rheumatism, and was Cured Silb and Clean.

Dresden, Ont., Feb. 9.—(Special).—"Dodd's Kidney Pills cured me sick and clean of Rheumatism," says W. C. Cragg, ex-reeve of this town. "It was the Inflammatory Rheumatism I had, and I think Dodd's Kidney Pills are as fine a remedy for that as I want. I am as sound as a bell now as I was when I was afflicted with that disease."

This is Mr. Cragg's experience, and it is the same as many others. People generally here are learning that Rheumatism is simply a result of Kidney Disease—that if the kidneys do not do their duty and take the uric acid from the blood, it crystallizes at the muscles and joints and causes those tortures too many people know too well.

"I had been troubled with Inflammatory Rheumatism for eight years," continues the ex-reeve. "I could scarcely get around to do my duties in my store. I tried doctors and medicines without getting any benefit, till I heard of Dodd's Kidney Pills. Six boxes cured me completely." "Cure the kidneys with Dodd's Kidney Pills and your Rheumatism will cure itself."

Chats With Young Men

AN IMPRESSION OF MARCONI.

The Scientific American brings Marconi into perhaps the most familiar light in which cold type can represent him. His character is a lesson in modesty for young men to study: Only five years have passed since the general public first heard of Marconi. Scientists, to be sure, had known of him as a young man who was carrying on the work of Hertz and his immediate successors. When, however, Marconi, made his first successful experiments in transmitting messages for short distances without wires, the newspaper man scented a good "story," and proceeded to write him up for a sensation-loving world in their best and most daring style.

PATHS BETTER THAN RUTS.

If a man is driving along a country road, he may need to keep the wheels of his wagon out of the ruts. If he does not, he is likely to wrench his wheels or to have them drag heavily all the time. But if a man is walking along a country road, he is glad to know that he is in the right path and then he moves on confidently. There is all the difference in the world between a "rut" and a "path." This is as true in study and daily conduct and in every phase of human life, as in country and traveling. A "rut" is a track that has been too much traveled and that has been too exclusively used, to the neglect of the road on either side of it. A "path" is a course which can be safely followed on foot without the neglect of the main thoroughfare. Sometimes we see signs on a country road, "Don't rut the road," or "Keep in the path." It is well for us to bear in mind the lessons of such signs in our daily life course.

THE VALUE OF POISE.

Rigidity destroys grace. In endeavoring to stand up straight and acquire a good bearing some men assume a stiffness that is detrimental to natural harmony of motion. In exhorting their sons to stand straight fathers will say: "Hold yourself erect," but no one can hold one's self properly erect without being taught correctly to do so. It does not mean throwing the shoulders back and carrying the head high, with the chin thrust out. It means such a complete control of the body that a perfect erectness is acquired without any apparent effort. Some men are too indolent to bother themselves about taking a correct posture while sitting, walking or standing. Consequently, they soon lose their youthful suppleness, for unless the muscles of the body are well trained, they will show the effect of advancing years upon them.

He is now one of the most "interviewed" of public men. Reporters hunt him; and when they drive him to cover, they hunt him. Hardly a day passes but he is talked at, questioned as to his work, and begged to give some exclusive bit of information. He has been photographed in all possible positions. He has been interviewed at all possible times, and sometimes at impossible times. Clearly Marconi has learnt that fame is its own punishment; and that he must submit to the delicate torments of the inquisition instituted by the modern press. No wonder that he leaves the impression of being intensely weary by interviewers. At best he is but pleasantly unhappy with them.

When you meet him for the first time, you know that he is not a cordial man; and yet you feel that he will not rebuff you, that he will probably do for you what he can. His manner is that of chilly reserve.

For a successful inventor Marconi appears the least joyous of men. His features are melancholy in expression. They are those of a man fast approaching forty—not those of a man of twenty-eight. His face is impassive, his eye almost cold. When he smiles he half shuts his eyes, wrinkles the muscles of his cheek, and draws up the corners of his mouth. It is not a pleasant smile.

If you visit Marconi with the expectation that he will do the most of the talking, you will find that you are grievously mistaken. You must do the talking yourself. To be sure, he answers questions frankly and fully; but he will not converse voluntarily. You discover quickly enough that his reticence is the reticence of modesty. When he discusses the Marconi system of wireless telegraph, he refers to it as "our" system, not as "my" system. He praises where praise is due, recognizing fully that it is not given to any one man to learn the secrets of science, and that great results are attained usually by the co-operation of many minds working to a common end.

He acknowledges fully and openly how important to himself has been the work of his predecessors, and even that of some of his contemporaries. "The success of the experiments with which I have been engaged is the logical result of the work of myself and of my assistants in the last few years, and of scientific investigations of the latter part of the century," he himself says. "Revolutionize" is a word not included in the vocabulary

which he uses to describe the possibilities of his invention. He frankly admits that it is not his purpose to render submarine cables useless; he is satisfied if he can successfully compete with them; or if he can only make them cut down their present rates.

And he talks of his system with a certain air of east confidence, which leads you to infer that if any man will ever succeed in outdoing the submarine cables, it is Guglielmo Marconi. It is not often that he prophesies; and when he does, you feel that he knows; or as he himself puts it, "It is not my policy to make a statement before I am absolutely sure of the facts."

Any sensible young man ought to know that he can't be up late nights abusing his stomach and be in full possession of his faculties for business the next day. And he ought to know, also, that a man must be clear-headed and in full possession of his faculties to hold his own in the keen competition of life. Your "good-fellow" is popular for the time being, but when his money is gone and he has lost his job and is on his uppers the "good-fellow" business doesn't get him anything. It's "poor fellow" then. Another good man gone wrong, and "the boys" are ready to kill another "good fellow" who has the price.

The young man who gets the sleep his system needs, is temperate in his habits, lives within his means and shows up for work in the morning with a clear eye and active brain—that's the man business men are looking for. They want employes they can trust. Having worked hard and laid by a competence they want to throw some of the burdens off, and they won't throw them off on the employe who is too much of a "good fellow."

AN EMPEROR'S HUMANITY.

One arm of the Danube separates the City of Vienna from a large suburb, called Leopoldstadt. A thaw inundated this suburb, and the ice carried away the bridge of communication with the capital. The population of Leopoldstadt began to be in the greatest distress for want of provisions. A number of boats were collected and loaded with bread; but no one felt hardy enough to risk the passage, which was rendered extremely dangerous by large bodies of ice. Francis II., who was then Emperor, stood at the water's edge; he begged, exhorted, threatened, and promised the highest recompense, but all in vain; whilst on the other shore, his subjects famished with hunger, stretched forth their hands, and supplicated relief. Their monarch's sensibility at length got the better of his prudence; he leaped singly into a boat loaded with bread, and applied himself to the oars, exclaiming: "Never shall it be said that I made no effort to save those who would risk their all for me." The example of the sovereign, sudden as electricity, inflamed the spectators, who threw themselves in crowds into the boats. They encountered the current successfully, and gained the suburb just when their intrepid monarch, with the tear of pity in his eye, held out the bread he had conveyed across at the risk of his life.

THE BEST.

There is an old song, one verse of which runs:

"If I were a cobbler, it would be my pride The best of all cobblers to be; If I were a tinker, no tinker beside Should mend an old kettle like me."

The writer of that song evidently believed in honoring one's occupation, no matter how humble that occupation might be.

He was like a poor, ignorant woman, who once came to the writer's house seeking work as a char-woman. "I do beautiful scrubbing," said she, "beautiful scrubbing. Nobody can scrub a floor cleaner than I can. And I never leave a spec on windows. I clean."

She honored her work, humble though it was. She had the spirit that should characterize every worker. There was as much honor in doing her work well as there would have been in some far more ambitious task. She made full use of such capacity as God had given her, and this was all he asked of her. It is all, is it not, He asks of any of us?

Never do anything by halves, my boy. Better to leave it undone. Cultivate a spirit of absolute thoroughness and accuracy in the performance of even trifling things. Nothing less than perfection will do if you are true to yourself and to those by whom you are employed. Slovenly work is worse than no work at all.—Young Reaper.

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ORDINATIONS IN OTTAWA. At the Church of St. Jean Baptiste, Ottawa, last week, six young students were ordained priests, four receiving minor orders and two the tonsure. All were members of the Dominican Order. The ordinations were conducted by Archbishop Duhamel, assisted by Rev. Father Rouleau, prior of the Dominican Order; Rev. Father Caouette, superior of the seminary. Rev. Father Myrand, of the Basilica, acted as master of ceremonies. Those receiving the order were: To the priesthood—Rev. Hyacinthe Barriere, of St. Cessaire, P. Q. Rev. Ceslas Cote, of Levis. Rev. Vincent Marchidon, Bastican. Rev. Pierre Grange, St. Marie Saloni. Rev. Jourdain Charron, Vercheres. Rev. Jean Dominique Daziel, of Montreal. Minor orders—Brothers Constant Chamberland, Montreal, and Marc Cote, Nicolet. Tonsure—Brothers Alvarez Biron, Sherbrooke, and Augustin Turcotte, Stanstead.

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