

would scarcely have recognized in the changed expression of his face, the pale wan countenance he had worn in the court-room that morning. Like Margaret, he had one anxiety: to know what Plowden's fate would be, and to see him; and, like Margaret, he too prayed for the unhappy murderer of Cecil Clare.

Plowden, or rather Frederick Clare, around whom, despite his crime—despite the wrong that he had suffered for so long to separate two lives—there clustered the grateful, tender feelings of two happy hearts, sat alone in his grim prison, battling with the doubt, and fear, and despair of his strange unhappy position. He fancied that if he could receive some assurance of his pardon by Hubert and Margaret, that he could meet his fate as a brave man should; but the uncertainty of knowing whether he was hated and abhorred, rendered him restless and excited. From one smile of forgiveness from the face which rose so often before him, for one kind word from those lips, death in its most disgraceful form would have been little to bear.

Silent and grim as the grim walls which confined him, he sat viewing the pictures which memory conjured up— it conjured up one scene more frequently than any other; a pale, lovely face always lifted up in entreaty, and then always drooping in the bitterness of disappointment—it was the entreaty to which he would never listen, the entreaty which, coming from an overwhelming love returned, on its refusal, only to break at last the heart which loved "not wisely but too well."

When the long night hours yielded to the dawn, the prisoner bowed his face in his hands and murmured: "Mother! mother!"

Perchance she was about him then, with her angelic ministrations, perchance, her prayers before the Mercy Seat of heaven had softened his heart to true penitence at last—that her influence there had completed the work which Margaret Calvert had so unconsciously begun here.

TO BE CONTINUED.

FOR THE CATHOLIC RECORD. A GOOD MAXIM.

"Anything that is worth doing is worth doing well." The truth of this maxim can not be doubted; and why it is that so few follow it, when all must know the happy goal to which its pursuit inevitably leads, can be attributed only to the weakness of poor human nature.

It will be readily admitted that in every occupation in which man earns his daily bread, various degrees of perfection are arrived at in the accomplishment of the work by the different persons employed, and this fact is noticeable when any number of men are engaged together, whether they are occupied in the digging of a ditch or in the accomplishment of some grand feat of engineering.

Why this is so, why one man having the same or perhaps better advantages can not attain as great a degree of proficiency in his work as another, is attributed sometimes to his lack of ability, sometimes to other causes, while in nine cases out of ten the sole difference is in exact proportion to the concentration of time and attention which the one devotes to his work more than the other: in a word to the recognition of the one and the contempt (though passive) of the other of the maxim "Anything that is worth doing is worth doing well."

No matter in what station of life a man is placed, or what his employment may be, if it is honest he can elevate himself in the eyes of the world, and ennoble his work by his efforts to attain perfection in it; but this end can be reached only by doing well from the beginning whatever it is to be done, and accomplishing his task day after day in as perfect a manner as he possibly can.

Since the beginning of the world the constant aim of men has been to approach perfection in the various departments of work in which they are engaged. In the great majority of cases they have succeeded. In a few they have deteriorated, as for example in proficiency in the fine arts. However, in the more useful and practical walks of life a steady progress is noticeable. Here the inventive genius of the few has sought out improvements and materially lightened the labor and bettered the condition of their fellow-men. The lives of these champions of their respective causes would prove a beneficial study to us. We would see that the improvements and discoveries which are now considered so important did not come all at once. Deep thought, long consideration, and, above all, strict attention to their work in almost every case preceded the result which often added fame and fortune to its promoter. The difficulties they conquered and the impediments they overcame would teach us lessons of patience and perseverance; and if we could enter the workshop or study of one of these during his lifetime, and gaining his attention from his labors ask him for a single rule conducive to a successful life, we have no hesitation in affirming that there is no answer more suitable to be received than this, "Do well each day whatever it is to be done and you are sure to be successful in the end."

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THE PASSING OF A REPENTANT SOUL.

A Christmas Sketch Depicting the Pathos of Life's Shadowy Side.

BY INEZ OKEY.
It was very cold. "Cold as charity," said Nonnie to herself, with a dreary sense of discovering new aptness in the comparison. That was before dark, when she heard the big hospital door close inexorably behind her and stood trembling at the top of the high flight of steps, dazed by the unaccustomed rattle and roar of the streets, with the bitter wind snatching grudgingly at her ragged shawl and the bitter knowledge tearing at her heart that in all the swarming honeycomb of life spread before her there was not one little nook or corner where she could claim shelter.

Certainly existence in the great city hospital had not been entirely agreeable, with the strict rules rigidly enforced by a corps of fresh faced nurses in their blue uniforms and the white caps and aprons whose spotless crispness was long a source of languid wonder to Nonnie. She was simply a "case" to these young women, a very ordinary one, with few interesting and many unpleasant features, and the care they gave her was, like the doctor's visits, somewhat perfunctory. Still, she had been housed and warmed and fed, and being too sick and cowed to hunger for the excitements of a lawless past, had spent her two months quietly enough. She did not trouble over much about the future, and the announcement of her discharge broke in on her apathy with a shock of painful surprise. The care-worn, experienced matron read correctly the frightened look in the girl's eyes and interceding with the good natured young house physician procured her another week's grace; she even added to this good deed a fruitless application at a refuge, and then, having done all she could and the week being gone, led her to the door on Christmas eve and, after looking at her pitifully for a moment, shut her out into the bleak December dusk.

Two miserable tears rolled down Nonnie's cheeks as she started slowly down the steps. On the last she stopped and cast a despairing glance up and down the street. It was all as if by the pleasant bustle of Christmas shopping. People were coming and going, happily intent on the business in hand. Lights began to flash out in the shop windows and from the street lamps. In every detail of the shifting scene the spirit of home, of charity and good will and kindly fellowship was so visible that even the out cast creature felt its influence and brightened for a moment. Then as the searching wind pierced her she shivered, and wrapping her weak arms more closely about a little bundle she carried under her shawl, stepped down to the pavement. Snow had fallen earlier in the day and still lay pure on the inaccessible roofs, but wherever men had been able to reach and defile it it was crushed and trampled into a black, repulsive mass that splattered and defiled in turn, and she stumbled aimlessly away though the freezing slush into the gathering darkness.

Of the many, many doors she passed that night Nonnie never dreamed of stopping at any one to ask for the shelter that meant salvation. She caught glimpses through curtained windows of light and warmth and cheer; she saw the trimming of Christmas trees and heard the sound of music and laughter of little children and felt instinctively the barriers which love and happiness draw about those others who keep dry and on the safe heights of respectability. She thought once, in her misery, of the den from which she had been taken to the hospital. Even there her place was filled. Some other girl with rouged cheeks and bleached hair and blackened eyebrows was shrilling forth sentimental songs in a high metallic voice from the stage at O'Rafferty's, coming down afterwards in her short dancing dress to serve at the tables where men were drinking; to joke and laugh with her customers and glide with fatal ease and swiftness towards the abyss whose depths Nonnie was now sounding. It would be worse than useless to apply there for help, even if she could rid herself of the strange, unaccountable feeling that a great gulf had yawned between her and her past life. She dismissed the idea, and hugging the forlorn bundle, staggered on.

People that looked at her in passing silently averted their glances. It did not require a very close scrutiny to classify Nonnie. The slimsy, light-colored skirts, some remnant of summer's cheap finery, now bedraggled half a foot in depth by the mire of the streets; the battered straw hat with a few tawdry flowers clinging to it; and the hard little face with a tangled fringe of metallic yellow hair hanging down to the eyebrows and big dark eyes that were brazen and defiant and frightened and appealing and dim with a dumb suffering like an animal's all at once, told their own tale, a very plain, common, ugly story. No one looked close enough to see that the pallor which looked ghastly under the electric lights was not due to artificial aid, that the dark circles under the eyes were real and the thin cheeks were innocent of coloring, or noticed that the girl's knees were tottering under her as she walked and her breath coming through her dry lips in short, painful gasps. Patrolmen policemen eyed her with strong disapproval and were only deterred from interference by the thought of the already crowded vagrant cells.

Once she tried the only course open to her; she waited near a brilliantly-lighted saloon until a little crowd of men came out laughing and flushed with liquor and begged of them, but they turned a battery of brutal jests on her and she crept away more stunned and wretched than before. And once she stopped on one of the low bridges crossing the back, sluggish river that flowed through the city, and resting the bundle she carried on the railing, looking down at the sullen water creeping stealthily through the archways, but after a moment she lifted the burden again and started on.

The hours wore slowly away and with them the girl's strength. Sometimes she rested in a dark doorway for a little while and on one of these halts she fell asleep. It was nearing midnight when she awoke, frozen and numb, and began to walk again, although the effort was now acute anguish. The street was deserted. Lights were beginning to vanish from the windows and only some echoes of far off sound broke the stillness. The long rows of houses seemed to sway and reel in Nonnie's dizzy eyes, the ground to swing beneath her feet. A terrible, suffocating sense of loneliness and fright settled on her, but she struggled doggedly on, her head dropped on her breast. A broad bar of yellow light crossing the pavement in her path moved her to raise her eyes. She was passing a church. The steps were low and one of the doors open wide; from where she stood she could see almost the whole interior.

The church was very large and still brightly lighted. Some late Christmas penitents were kneeling patiently near the confessionals, waiting their turn to approach the weary priest. Preparations for the great festival had been made in the decoration of the sanctuary and the brother sacristan was finishing his work by testing the effect of the lights at the moment when Nonnie stopped to look. Clearly shining in its own light, isolated and floating like a vision above the soft gloom of the sanctuary, she saw the scene of Bethlehem's stable.

It was one of those beautiful representations of the Nativity, the use of which is an inheritance of the loving, child-like German piety; but to the world-broken creature looking in from the darkness it was more. She saw something in the solemn, simple pathos of that lonely group with its background of pale blue sky and Judea's startit hills showing through the gaps in broken roof and wall, that touched a chord in her heart never waked before. The shelterless, hunted Love of the world, resting on the fros y hill side, with only His mother's garments to shield Him from the night winds, and the simplicity of a poor workman for His guard—the sight appealed to her like an imperious summons, and she dragged her aching limbs painfully up the steps and stood within the door.

It was the first time in years, and even one year was a long space in Nonnie's brief space of eighteen, that her wandering feet had crossed the threshold of a church. As a child she had stumbled through the snow to the Christmas Masses, holding fast to Maggie's skirts, the elder sister, who was mother and father, bread winner and care taker and all other things to the baby Nonnie, the charge of whose helplessness was the only legacy she inherited from their parents. If Maggie had not died also, just as Nonnie was developing into a pretty, merry, witty girl, things might have gone differently, but left alone there had been only one easy road for the child with her round pink cheeks, her bright dark eyes and mat of auburn curls, her lissome figure and the little feet that danced as easily as they walked with a lilt like a lark's and a saucy tongue and all the vanity and recklessness and weakness of her wayward nature, only one road, and she had followed it to the dreary end. Nonnie did not attempt to kneel down; perhaps she voiced no prayer at all; she only looked, and felt as all humanity feels when the last earthly support is withdrawn and the strong arm of Divinity lifts the sinking soul. The warm, close air of the church, the heavy, spicy fragrance of the evergreens turned her faint and sick, but she only raised her burden she carried higher and hid it close against her heart and looked on.

It was just then a man came down the side aisle from the vicinity of one of the confessionals and turning to pass out came face to face with Nonnie. She did not notice him but he stopped short and turned deadily pale at sight of her. He was a tall, well knit young fellow, with the free, quick movements and fresh complexion of one who lives much in the open air, a building carpenter by trade in fact. Decently dressed, as are our American workmen for the most part, with a strong, serious face, where thoughtful lines were drawn about the grave mouth and between the steady, gray eyes. Self respect and self reliance in his whole bearing, he was altogether a splendid fellow, this Joe Ryan, staunch as oak, clean of heart as the great timbers he worked with, the pride and joy of the little mother who had given the first years of her widowhood to his rearing, and from whom in all his life he had withheld but one confidence—the acknowledgment of the love that, in spite of him, followed wayward Nonnie. They had been children together in the old tenement where he still called the two rooms his mother kept sweet and spotless as her own life, home. He had loved her through his boyhood and even when it seemed to his upright manhood a degrading weakness, he loved her still. For a

long time he had sternly refused to permit himself to seek news of her. He would have forced himself to pass her on the street without a second glance but Nonnie flaunting along the highway at noonday and Nonnie standing at the church door at midnight with the look of a departing soul on her face were very different cases, and he stood still, noting with a bitter and swelling anguish the abject misery of her appearance until at length she turned her head toward him. He saw recognition dawn in the eyes that at first stared at him vacantly and then the ashy lips formed his name; and after a moment's hesitation beckoned her to follow him out of the church that he might speak to her, and when they reached the open air turned just in time to see her sway helplessly forward on the top step. Stress of mental suffering unconsciously steeled the strong grasp with which she steadied and lifted her down and under the rough pressure a feeble wail went out from the bundle under Nonnie's shawl. Joe staggered back as if the cry had been a blow and a fierce gust of wind raging down the street tore the grotesque hat from Nonnie's head and flung back the sheltering shawl exposing—Oh, the pity of it!—the tiny face and little withered fists of a few weeks old baby, blue and numb with the icy cold and fast sinking back into the merciful torpor from which it had been aroused. The burden to which Nonnie had clung so faithfully was the burden of her sin and her salvation. Even when Joe's support was withdrawn and she felt herself falling, the supreme effort of her expiring strength was to clutch the child and it was still in her arms when she lay stretched on the cold stones at Joe's feet, the ruin and the wreck of gracious motherhood, the saddest thing on which the stars looked down through the wind-driven clouds that night, but even in her last abatement moved by the God given instinct that makes the lowest maternity sacred.

An empty cab jogged slowly by. Joe halted it and a little later was toiling with his double burden up the long, steep flights of the tenement stairs, where Nonnie's light feet had so often passed.

It was a strange interruption to the simple Christmas preparations Mrs. Ryan was making while she waited for Joe's coming when he entered with the two, mother and child, unconscious and helpless in his arms, but her charity was the blessed charity of the poor, accustomed to sudden calls on its slender resources; she made no difficulties and needed no explanations. She had long grieved over Nonnie's story, and she knew Joe's heart far better than in her tender, motherly wisdom she ever let him suspect. So she led the way to the room that was his and helped him lay the two on the white bed and set herself to the task of bringing reluctant life back to the still forms.

Nonnie's great eyes opened shortly after a while under the rubbings and warm wrappings and cordials the good soul applied and gazed blankly, then with beseeching remembrance at the kindly face she had known from her babyhood, but she did not try to speak and Mrs. Ryan slipped to the outer room where Joe sat with his head bowed between his hands, passing the bitterest hour of his life, and whispered with a break in her gentle old voice, "Go for the doctor, dear, and fetch Father John back with you."

The doctor's visit was brief and his decision given without hesitation. "They may both last till daylight," he said to Mrs. Ryan, stopping on the landing to pull on his gloves while she held a lamp to light him down the stair. "Not longer, I think. Good night, or rather good-morning, to you, Mrs. Ryan," and went his way, not unkindly but without emotion, because men who grapple daily and hourly with the great mysteries of life and death must sheathe themselves in indifference or die of the hurts they will receive. But Father John's stay was long and when he left the room was very quiet. Nonnie lay propped high on the pillows, a strange, solemn, unsmiling peace in the dark eyes turned to the windows where the Christmas dawn was whitening. Mrs. Ryan had brushed the poor yellow hair with an aching heart, remembering the glossy auburn rings it had replaced, and with the change some look of the old child in nonce returned. All trace of sickness and disorder had been removed from the room by Mrs. Ryan's care. The small brass crucifix and two candlesticks, where the newly extinguished candles sent up two dim, blue spirals of faintly aromatic smoke through the still air. The baby's downy head lay close to Nonnie's breast. Father John himself had laid it back within the feeble arms that mutely begged for it after he had poured the baptismal water on the unconscious little brow, and child and child mother were drifting fast. No sound was heard but Nonnie's hurried, panting breath, the little grating noise of Mrs. Ryan's beads, and the sigh that now and then broke from Joe's laboring chest, as he stood watching Nonnie's face.

Suddenly through the dusk, the hush and the waiting, trembled the first throbb of the Christmas bells; then strong, sweet voices penetrated Nonnie's dulling ears; Joe saw that she heard, and lifted the window, and the sonorous music flooded the little room. And in the still brightness of the Christmas morning, while the east flushed to red and beneath the snow-covered roofs hearts were awakening to the sweetness of an hour's truce with the sin and suffering, and, as on the first Christmas, the yearning restlessness

of humanity was stilled beneath the overshadowing of the Divine, and earth's fretful turbulence reposed an instant on the promise of eternity's satisfying peace, the two souls took flight on the winged echoes. And the bells rang on; deep throated harbingers of peace! Their message floating above the crowded house-tops, across the snowy fields, out into the silent country; bearing up from the ways of men, from lust and greed and strife and ignorance and oppression and bitter want, from the race that suffering for the sins of its father's blindly strangles the hopes of its children, mankind's only lawful plea from eternal Justice to the comprehending patience of eternal Love.

A VERY OLD WOMAN.

A quaint little old woman, says the *New York Sun*, whose gray hair, thick as that of a girl, fell in confusion over her broad and wrinkled forehead from under the scalloped rim of an old-fashioned cap, landed yesterday at the Barge Office pier from the Ellis Island pier. She was accompanied by her youngest daughter, Catharine Coffey of Plainfield, Conn., who is about sixty years old.

Detective Peter Groden, who has been for nearly twenty years looking after the welfare of immigrants at this port, saw the little old woman sitting on a part of her baggage munching an apple. He heard her talking in Gaelic with a decided Kerry accent, and he went over to her and spoke to her in the only language she understands. It is not often that Peter, who is fluent in Gaelic, gets a chance to exchange sentiments with a primitive Celt. He was surprised when the old woman who is Mrs. Mary Coffey of county Kerry, told him that she was 104 years old. He asked her how she fixed the date of her birth, and she said from the invasion of Ireland by the French under Gen. Humbert. This occurred in 1788, and Mrs. Coffey says she was then a girl of seven. She said she did not remember much about the invasion, except that, like Wordsworth's little maid, she was seven. When Peter asked her why she had come to America, she said, with a dry smile and a twinkling of her sharp, black eyes, that she had come to find another husband. She said she had been made a widow when she was in the heyday of her youth, fifty years ago. She has four children living, and she was going up to Plain field to live with her baby, the lass of sixty, who went over to Ireland to bring her here.

"She is probably as old as she says she is," said Detective Groden. She doesn't understand a word of English, like many of the other old folks of county Kerry. Her Gaelic is not classical; that is, it is not as smooth and pure as the Gaelic you may hear the old people use in counties Galway, Mayo, and Sligo. It is what the Irish call "crabbed"; more of a dialect of Gaelic than the pure language.

Mrs. Coffey does not look older than many women of eighty. Her hands are wrinkled and somewhat bony, but she knows how to use them in knitting. Her eyesight, she says, is as clear as it was when she was a young woman. She does not walk well without an arm to lean on. She saw a part of the big buildings of the city on her way up to the New Haven boat, seated on her trunk in an express wagon.

A Lie Does Not Become Truth Because Oft Told.

The charge so frequently met with that the saying "the end justifies the means" is a Jesuit maxim, is dealt with by the Rev. Herbert Thurston, S. J., in a letter to a secular contemporary. This and similar charges against Jesuit doctrines are no more justified by the circumstance that they have been widely credited than the fact that Europe for many centuries believed the sacrifice of Christian children to be part of Jewish ritual would justify us in stating that the Jews sinned the religious obligation of murder. It is simply and absolutely untrue that the Jesuits, or any other Catholic body, teach that the end justifies the means.

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