

Our Boys And Girls.

FIRST COMMUNION STORY.

Fort Sisseton was a big frontier army post on the banks of the "Big Muddy," as the Indians call the Missouri River—way off in South Dakota, sixty miles from the nearest town and railway. And here Timothy Finnegan had been born and lived the whole twelve years of his young life. He had never seen a railroad, street car, nor the big shops and residences of even a moderately-sized country town.

Timothy's father had been one of the oldest sergeants in the Thirtieth Infantry, so when the old soldier had died, two years ago, leaving a widow and five little ones, the colonel of the regiment kindly gave Mrs. Finnegan permission to occupy the little tumble-down house where Tim and all the other children had been born, and the post surgeon, a kindly old bachelor, who said he abhorred children, gave Mrs. Finnegan the job of hospital patron—in other words, she was laundress for the hospital.

Of course they were very poor, but Tim had never minded his patched clothes and bare feet until he went to Father Wynne's First Communion class.

The good priest drove fifty miles from his mission once a month to say Mass at the fort, for there was quite a number of Catholics amongst the officers and men.

The Father had found ten children—four boys and six girls—old enough to prepare for what is every Catholic "the happiest day in his life."

The first Sunday Tim went he sat next Colonel Harrington's dainty little daughter, but she did not seem to mind one bit; she moved her skirts to make room for him and found the right page in the Catechism.

But when Tim went home after Sunday school he sat thinking quietly for a long time, then suddenly remarked:

"Mother, I've got to earn a pair of shoes and a new suit of clothes for my First Communion; besides, Father Wynne wants me to learn to serve Mass."

"Oh, Tim, dear, it's a proud woman I'd be to see you on the altar, but however will we get the money?"

"I've been praying to Our Blessed Lady all this time, for I am 'Mary's child,' you're always tellin' me, and she's put the idea in my head to ask Dr. Warren for work. You know he's had a civilian taking care of his horses, but he got drunk and the doctor fired him. I'm going up to ask for the job as soon as 'Retreat' sounds, for he'll be through with his dinner then."

"Oh, Tim, you're too little, I am feared," replied his mother.

"Not a bit, motheren. I'm a bit small, p'raps, but," proudly, "Jones says there ain't a better hand with horses round here than me."

Dr. Warren was enjoying his cup of black coffee in conjunction with a fragrant after-dinner cigar when the colored cook who had followed his fortunes ever since the doctor had been in the army came in and announced that "one o' de vedor Finnegan boys wanted to see the doctor."

"Bring him in, Lucinda; his mother has probably sent to complain of the size of the hospital washing."

"Well, my boy, what is it?" called the doctor, as Tim stood respectfully at the door; "come in, come in."

"Please, sir, I heard you wanted a hired man."

"So I do; a man, not a beast." The doctor was very hard on intemperance.

"Were you thinking of applying for the job?" said the doctor, jokingly.

"Yes, sir," then Tim began eagerly to explain, but he hurried so in his excitement that all Dr. Warren could make out was something about Sergeant Jones, a new suit of clothes, First Communion, and he did not exactly understand what this last meant, so he had Tim sit down and go over the whole thing again.

The result was that a few days later Tim found himself engaged as assistant to the soldier who was to take the principal care of the doctor's thoroughbreds.

His salary was to be three dollars a month, and there were two full months before the class was to make their First Communion.

At the end of that time, Tim had six bright silver dollars carefully tied up in an old pocket handkerchief, stowed away safely in a fine hiding place, the grain bin, in the doctor's stable.

It was Wednesday, and on Sunday

next the happiest event in his life was to take place. Thursday his mother was going to send into Springfield, the nearest town, by the stage driver, for new shoes, hat and suit of dark blue clothes, and for sufficient white satin ribbon for a band around his coat sleeve and a big rosette.

"I would not like to receive our Blessed Lord looking like a little beggar. I want to have on my 'wedding garments' when Jesus comes to me," thought little Tim, reverently.

Imagine Tim's horror and dismay when, on putting his hand down in the accustomed place, he found his treasure gone. For a moment he was stunned; then his heart-broken cry brought old Dennis, the stable boss.

Tim had soon poured forth his trouble into the old man's sympathetic ear. Dennis turned the oats out of the box and searched and searched for the missing money, but nowhere could it be found. Dennis would have carried the story straight to the doctor, but Tim would not hear of it.

"He'll think I'm begging; he's done enough for us already," he said. "Father Wynne says when Jesus sends us a cross we must bear it willingly like brave soldiers. I'll make my Communion on Sunday, but I'll just go to early Mass so as not to spoil the procession of the rest. Our Lord will understand, Dennis."

Tim tried to speak cheerfully, but his voice would break a little as he thought of his vanished hopes and of how distressed his poor mother would be.

"Shure the bye talks like the blissed saints. I'm feared he ain't long for this world," murmured Dennis, as he brushed a drop or two from his eyes. "It's so long since pay day I doubt if I could beg, borrow or stale five dollars in the whole post. Tim that hasn't spent their money has lint it to him that has; but it'll go hard if that old hater, Joe Dennis, don't get that bye his clothes."

But Dennis did not impart his thoughts to Tim, so at noon the little fellow started home, quite brokenhearted, to tell the sad news to his mother.

"There's one thing I'll have just as fine as the others," thought Tim, "and that's my Rosary," for Father Wynne had given each of his children a lovely white Rosary; the beads very large imitation ivory ones, but the Crucifix was of solid silver, and on the back of it was inscribed the name of the happy little communicant and the date of the great event.

Most frequently had Tim said his prayers to the Queen of the Rosary, and the thought came to him now that if he could only take his beautiful beads down on the river bank, under the shade of the curious gnarled big live oaks and tell his Heavenly Mother all about his trouble, he felt sure she would sympathize and help him to bear it bravely, as the son of a soldier should.

It was of no use trying to pray at home with four noisy children playing about; he would not even tell his poor mother of his loss until he had talked it over with his Blessed Lady.

His mother saw him, however, as he stole quietly into the house for his beads and started off down the path to the river.

"Shure Tim is just a wee bit of a saint, I'm thinking. What would me and the children do without him, now that his father, God rest his soul, has been taken? Tim would be a priest, I'm sure, if only I could earn the money for his education."

The second joyful mystery was just ended; already Tim felt greatly comforted when the sound of laughter and merry voices struck his ear.

Presently he saw Marjorie Harrington with her nurse and the little Lloyd girls emerge from the path. They carried long fishing poles and a big tin bucket, evidently expecting to make a big catch. They did not see Tim, who remained quiet. They went directly down to the boat landing and Tim went on with his beads.

He had just finished the last decade when a piercing scream rent the air, followed in quick succession by cries for help. Rushing in the direction of the cries, Tim saw Nora, Colonel Harrington's nurse, screaming and frantically waving her arms, while the Lloyd children followed her example. He reached the river bank just in time to see Marjorie's white face and dripping golden curls appear on the surface of the water, while the swift current whirled her rapidly round.

In an instant Tim was in the water, striking out with bold, swift strokes for the spot where he had seen the child disappear. The current would carry him along as swiftly as it would her, so that when she rose again he would be near enough to seize her.

Certainly his Heavenly Mother aided his feeble arms, for in an instant Tim had the drowning child safely in a firm grasp.

She struggled violently, however, and clutched him with both little hands, so that it was all he could do to keep afloat.

Nora had disappeared, and Tim knew she had run for help, so he gave up making any effort to swim. His arms felt as if they were breaking, his head was on fire, everything seemed turning dark, and yet he did not let go of Marjorie.

Then came a dreadful moment when he felt they were sinking and as if in a dream he heard shouts.

"Hold on, we're coming, just a moment," cried the voice mockingly; a moment, no, not a second, for with the shouts in his ears Tim felt the cool dark waters rush over him.

Tim knew nothing more until he awakened to find himself in a pretty, cool room, with dainty white curtains blowing to and fro, and on the wall, right where his eyes rested, was a beautiful photograph of the Holy Mother and the Divine Child.

The mother's eyes looked at little Tim tenderly, and the child held out his arms as if to embrace him.

Mrs. Finnegan, in her best black gown, sat looking anxiously at her son.

"Is Marjorie safe, mother?" he murmured, drowsily.

"Yes, dear; thanks be to God who gave you the strength to hold on to her."

"Are my beads safe?" was his next question.

"They were in your pocket, dearie, and only got a bit wet."

"I'm glad, for they're all I have for my Holy Communion. I've lost all my money, mother; some mean thief has stolen it."

"There, there, dearie, be quiet now, Dennis has told us all about it," replied his mother, soothingly, for the little pale cheeks flushed with excitement, and Tim's eyes looked bright and feverish.

"Here, Mrs. Finnegan, Dr. Warren wishes Tim to take this," said Mrs. Harrington, who had just come in; "Marjorie has had her dose."

"Dear, brave little Tim," she cried, her voice breaking; and as the tall stately lady stooped and kissed the little lad, Tim wondered to feel his face wet; what was she crying for, he wondered?

It was Saturday before the two invalids had quite recovered from the nervous shock of the accident. Colonel and Mrs. Harrington had insisted upon keeping Tim. Everyone in the garrison came to have a peep at the small hero; they brought him delicacies of all kinds; offered to sit up with him; read to him, and altogether quite overwhelmed the modest lad, who could not be made to understand that he had done anything heroic.

After confession Saturday morning, Tim waited to walk back with Father Wynne. He then told the priest all about his loss and how he would receive at the first Mass, for, of course, when he had not even a decent pair of shoes, he could not march in the procession with the others. Father Wynne smiled, but said nothing. Tim was to go home, but as he passed the Colonel's quarters, Mrs. Harrington and Marjorie were sitting, waiting for him, on the porch.

"Come in, Tim," cried Marjorie, smiling.

A big square box was spread out on the drawing room table, and the Colonel himself was busy opening it.

Tim turned white when he saw what came out of that wonderful box. First a beautiful dark blue suit and a pretty hat to match, then new shoes and stockings, white shirts, ties, handkerchiefs, gloves and a lot of broad white satin ribbon; in fact, everything that Tim could possibly have wished for.

But when Mrs. Harrington put in to his hands an exquisite white Russian calf Missal bound in solid silver, Tim's feelings quite overpowered him and he burst into tears, sobbing out his thanks as best he could.

The next morning Tim was up bright and early to give the finishing touches to the pretty chapel. As he opened the door he found a dirty white envelope addressed to "Tim Finnegan." On opening it he found six very dirty dollars bills folded in a piece of paper, on which was scrawled:

"I done you a mean trick. I am sorry I done it, so here's the money back."

That was all, and Tim never did find out who it was that had stolen his hard-earned money.

The entire garrison turned out, Protestants as well as Catholics, to see ten happy children receive for the first time their Lord in the most Holy Eucharist. It was a touching sight, and many of those present never forgot the glorified look on little Tim's face.

After Vespers Father Wynne told him that all had been arranged for him to come and live with the

priest, where he might study and obtain the education necessary for a priest. Colonel and Mrs. Harrington were to look after the "mother" and the little ones as an act of thanksgiving to Almighty God for His mercy in sparing their only child, who was saved through Tim's simple bravery.

A tall young seminarian to-day, who is beloved and looked up to by his sweet humility and fervent love for the "Queen of the Rosary" and her Divine Son, shows that the generosity of his benefactors, Colonel and Mrs. Harrington, has not been wasted or thrown away.—Mary A. Clement in Catholic Telegraph.

MR. FLY'S FEET.—Do you know that a common house fly is one of the most wonderful creatures in the world? If he were only big enough for you to see the strange manner in which his feet alone are made, you would think him far more wonderful than even the elephant, with his long trunk. His feet are padded and have queer hooks and thousands of tiny hairs. From the roots of the hairs come a fluid that keeps the pads moist, so that he can hold on well when climbing on the glass of the window or on the ceiling. There are two of the hooks on each foot, and these are sharp and curved. You have often felt a stinging pain when a fly lit upon your hand and another when he let go and flew away. That fly did not sting or bite you. He only jabbed those sharp hooks into your flesh so that he could hold on tightly. The hurt comes when he tears them out.

DO FISHES SLEEP?—Dr. Theodor Beer claims that they do, by his observations at the biological station in Naples, the much disputed question whether fishes sleep or not. It has long been known that fishes lose their activity at the appearance of darkness and remain for hours floating in the same spot, even their usually restless eyes being motionless. Most fishes sleep in this way, just as horses sleep standing. If the equilibrium of the body is disturbed by clipping the fins, which soon grow out again the fish floating in a vertical position. Few fishes seek the bottom to sleep, but many float on their sides and can be caught with the hand, a fact well known to sailors. The eyes of most fishes are open necessarily during sleep, owing to the absence of eyelids.

OLD BIRDS' NESTS.—Hundreds of thousands of nests are built every year in trees and hedges. What becomes of all these homes after the birds have fitted from them at summer's end? Most of them are lined with sheep's wool, with feathers and other materials that bind them together. Now, it happens that beetles and moths and other insects devour these things and by thus destroying them loosen the nests so much that wind and rain soon scatter the rest of the materials. But for this timely help the trees would be clogged with a mass of old nests, the leaves could not sprout, and many trees would perish.

WHERE DISEASE COMES FROM. The Philadelphia "Ledger" says that "a bacteriologist asked a woman who did not usually have to go on very dirty streets if he might make an experiment on one of her skirts. It was a comparatively new one and received daily brushing. He found on part of the skirt binding at the hem the following small menagerie: Two hundred thousand germs, many bearing diptheria, pneumonia and tonsillitis; also collections of typhoid and consumption microbes."

POPE HONORS CATHOLIC WRITER. Miss Elizabeth G. Jordan, daughter of the late William F. Jordan, of Milwaukee, and widely known as the editor of "Harper's Bazaar" and the author of several books, has just received from Rome the special Benediction of the Holy Father and plenary indulgence in extremis mortis for herself and the Catholic members of her family to the third degree. Miss Jordan owes this extraordinary favor to the influence of a powerful friend at the Vatican. The document which brought her the Benediction and indulgence is an elaborate scroll containing a large portrait of His Holiness Leo XIII. and Miss Jordan's name, beautifully engraved in full, together with the seal of the Vatican and the necessary signatures.

A Scholarly Study Of Godless Schools.

(Continued from Page Nine.)

the educated is coincident with a rapid spread of indifference in all other ranks. Even religious teachers have abandoned all that their fathers understood by essential Christianity. Outside the Catholic Church religious bodies, as Captain Mahan recently declared, come to stand for the idea that mere outward benevolence is the Christian life itself, instead of being merely its visible fruit. Even Mr. Skinner shows some dim apprehension of the situation when he says that the former functions of the church and the home are now devolving upon the school. A writer in the "Educational Review," February 1898, asserted that more than one-half of the children of this country now receives no religious training. The bearing of most higher education upon religious faith is testified to by President Harper, who affirms that there is in the modern college a remarkable decrease in the teaching of Christian truth, and that a great many men and women in their college life grow careless about religion. Nobody who is awake to innumerable indications in the current of American life will venture to accuse the Hon. Amasa Thornton of indulging in exaggerated pessimism when, not long ago, in the "North American" he uttered a solemn warning against "the maelstrom of social and religious depravity which threatens to engulf the religion of the future."

Simultaneously with the decline of religion, there is going on a rapid and profound moral deterioration in public and in private life. The golden calf is set up on every high hill and under every green tree. Greed has so widely corrupted political life in national as well as in municipal affairs, that politics is now almost a synonym for systematic public robbery. In commercial life the standard of natural justice has been extensively supplanted by that of mere legality. In private life, to mention only one fact, the old characteristically Christian reverence for marriage,—the foundation of the family, which in its turn is the foundation of the state,—is disappearing; and the institution of divorce is flourishing to an extent for which civilization affords no parallel since the Gospel stamped out the corruptions of decadent Roman paganism. It is not necessary, here, to examine whether there is any rigorous connection between the two facts—the simultaneous decline of religion and of morality. Are we not witnessing the confirmation, on a portentous scale, of Washington's prophetic warning? Nor is there room, here, to consider whether the Rev. Washington Gladden is correct when he asserts that "there is a marked tendency in the public schools to lower the standard of education by eliminating God, and making us a sordid, money-loving race." One thing is obvious; the source of that influence upon which Mr. Skinner counts for the power to neutralize the pernicious ungodliness of his theoretical principles is steadily increasing. The doctrine that morality does not need religion is contributing to these conditions. Finally, principles and practice cannot permanently continue to be in conflict, for principles, in the long run, work out to their logical consequences. To expect that a system which ignores religion, and thereby makes a deadly assault on it, will continue to draw from religion a saving grace, is neither more nor less than preposterous. We cannot live long upon a capital which we are rapidly eating up. The man engaged in sawing off the branch on which he is sitting is not accepted as a type of practical wisdom.—Rev. James J. Fox, in the Catholic World Magazine.

Projects and Statistics of The Knights of Columbus.

Delegates to the number of nearly 100, representing the various State councils of the Knights of Columbus, met in Warner Hall, New Haven, Conn., on June 2, at the annual convention of the Supreme Council of the Order. Among the matters decided upon was the appointment of a commission to purchase a site and erect a building which shall be the national headquarters of the Knights of Columbus. It will be erected in New Haven and cost \$250,000. Supreme Knight Edward L. Hearn, of South Framington, Mass., presented his annual address. He said the year 1902 had been a prosperous one for the Order. The field of operations had been extended to the

far West, Ontario and Manitoba. He recommended that the age of insurance applicants be advanced from forty-five to fifty-five years.

Mr. Hearn reported that the work of establishing a fund of \$50,000 for the maintenance of a chair of secular history in the Catholic University at Washington is nearing fulfillment, the sum being nearly completed. He said a strong Catholic organization was needed in Cuba, Porto Rico, Mexico, and especially the Philippines, where a crisis of Catholic affairs is approaching which must be met and averted. The schism of the Independent Catholic Filipino Church, he said, was growing in strength and numbers. He urged that the Knights of Columbus take steps to assist in preventing the Catholic Filipinos from being robbed of their Catholic faith.

Daniel Colwell, of New Haven, the national secretary, reported that the total membership on December 31, 1902, was 88,798, of which 44,586 were insured members. This was a total net gain during the year of 10,507 members, including 8,711 associate members. The number of councils on December 31, 1902, was 687, and on May 1, 1903, it was 726. The death rate per one thousand members, computed on the average membership of 1902, was 7.21.

Catholic Societies In Philadelphia.

The Philadelphia Federation of Catholic Societies, says an exchange, met on May 19, in the auditorium of the Catholic High School, when the constitution and by-laws were adopted and the officers formally installed. Archbishop Ryan was present, and there were forty societies represented.

The president, Mr. W. G. Smith, delivered the opening address. Among other things, he said:

How great an influence for good can such a number have if they speak with one voice; how much greater if the silent influence of their lives speak continually of the faith that is the mainspring of their being, the one steady and undeviating standard by which they measure all the duties they owe to God, their country and their fellow-men. It is to unify this influence in each of the various directions for which your separate organizations have been formed, that you are giving to them your countenance and support. It is to unify the irresistible influence of all these societies and through their members the influence of the whole body of Catholics laity that the Federation of Catholic societies has been formed.

His Grace, Archbishop Ryan, in his remarks, said:

"There cannot possibly be any objection to the Federation, since its objects are the objects of the different societies which form it, and that their effect on the people has been good we have ample proof. They now unite to carry out their different laudable objects. They all aim at the improvement of the individual and of the citizen, and their tendency is to make us better men and better citizens. The truly loyal Catholic will not interfere with the autonomy of the Church for any organization to which he is attached. The Church will not interfere with the autonomy of your organization. You will come together to compare notes and to converse with each other. We Catholics have been too much separated. It is good to see some conservatism propagated in an age of progress. There should be a conservative progress, and for its attainment I do not know of any means so effectual as the one adopted. So far the majority of the prelates of the country have approved of it. A few good men in earnest will make it spread and do an immense amount of good, and you will find yourself more loyal Catholics."

Her husband started ill science-struck, and looked round upon her.

"What do you mean?" with a slight contract brows.

"Just what I say, the Elly, smiling and nodding with a pretty affectation. "Those fine ladies in you from Elly. And I'll tell you something, Hardress, I laid her hand on his shoulder and said: 'I'll not let you fine gentlemen either, if you're teaching her give you.'"

"What teaching?"

"Oh, you know yours continued, nodding and smiling, as if she were teaching that you were learning from Elly, if you were in the beginning. Do you there e'er a priest living neighborhood?"

"Why do you ask?"

"Because I have something that lies upon my conscience. And would you not be failings to an affectionate Elly, as well as to a honest?"

"I would," said Elly, but him a look of piercing awe I thought he would forgive words as readily."

"Provided always that true penitent," returned reaching her hand.

"There is little fear for Elly. 'It would be well Hardress, if I could as a sinner for heavier sins.'"

After a moment's deep Elly resumed her playful and placing both her hands



CHAPTER XXI
HOW THE TEMPTATION OF HARDRESS PROCEEDED

During the few weeks the conversation just described a rapid and feverish in the temper and appearance. His visits were shorter than before, and did come, his manner was broken, his cheek grew pale, and a gloomy might be supposed the mind of discontent and dissipation in all his person. He perceived with that nervousness and gait in which he felt perfectly at ease where he felt perfectly at ease. He spoke sometimes with a wild affection, and with a wild affection, and as much of grief as of tenderness. The other inmates of the house altogether reserved and even his own boatman seemed to tempt him into a conversation. Sometimes Elly would think that he had escaped some unpleasant scenes at a dinner during the evening, abstracted and so full of other occasions, when he appeared late at night, shocked to discover about appearance of a riotous Born and educated as she Ireland of the eighteen this circumstance would much disturbed the mind, but that it became more frequent of occurrence rather to indicate a habit, than that necessity which even sober people would subjected, when they mingled in society of Irish country gentlemen. Elly thus for the first time, and for the first time, one of the best of married life.

"Hardress," she said morning when he was present, after an interval of silence long unbroken, "I you go among those fine more, if you are thinking ways when you come to gain."

Her husband started ill science-struck, and looked round upon her.

"What do you mean?" with a slight contract brows.

"Just what I say, the Elly, smiling and nodding with a pretty affectation. "Those fine ladies in you from Elly. And I'll tell you something, Hardress, I laid her hand on his shoulder and said: 'I'll not let you fine gentlemen either, if you're teaching her give you.'"

"What teaching?"

"Oh, you know yours continued, nodding and smiling, as if she were teaching that you were learning from Elly, if you were in the beginning. Do you there e'er a priest living neighborhood?"

"Why do you ask?"

"Because I have something that lies upon my conscience. And would you not be failings to an affectionate Elly, as well as to a honest?"

"I would," said Elly, but him a look of piercing awe I thought he would forgive words as readily."

"Provided always that true penitent," returned reaching her hand.

"There is little fear for Elly. 'It would be well Hardress, if I could as a sinner for heavier sins.'"

After a moment's deep Elly resumed her playful and placing both her hands