

A MOTHER'S PRAYER.

London Illustrated News. The Barley's house lies in a green hollow at the end of Linen Clough. To reach the place from Milton you climb the stony, ill-kept road to the summit of the "edge," then cross a few fields to a paddock horse track of moss green stones, all hollow in the middle, where in wet weather the water lies in round, limpid pools; then you descend abruptly through a narrow ravine, its limestone walls barely covered with mountain pansies and bilberry, lichens and fishbone ferns. Half way down lies the Druid's Well, a basin-shaped reservoir, where the frogs spin in early spring. From the steps that rise to this picturesque the first glimpse of the quaint house may be caught, nestling amid its farm buildings in a circle of stunted rowan trees.

The place dates from the sixteenth century. It is one of the seven granges that Eadmund Barley, of Barley Lees (whose ruins, with the old chapel still intact, though to-day it is used as a cowshed, stand a good half mile from Darrand Bridge), built for his seven sons. Not one is inhabited now save the hall in Linen Clough, and there are no Barleys of the true stock left in all Peakland save Hezekiah, the master; his wife Harriet and their descendants.

A high-spirited man was Hezekiah, in spite of his poverty. He lived narrowly—what can be got nowadays from a poor eighty acres of marshy meadows and five hundred acres of the roughest moorland in the country? The gaffer was too haughty to let his shooting; too needy to pay a gamekeeper's wages. Such grouse and rabbits as grew to maturity were greedily snared by the poachers from Greenlow-in-the-Water, which all the world of the High Peak knows as the Mecca of the ragtag and bobtail. Hezekiah used to stir uneasily in his bed when the toothless sheepdogs gave a warning that the ruffians came too near the house, but Harriet would bid him be still; for although he was still plucky, as in his youth, she knew that he would fare ill in an encounter, even though Stephen, his old man servant, and the cow lad followed with flails.

Harriet was as proud as her husband. Traditions are more carefully cherished by the women folk, and, despite the fact that she never spoke of the past, her memory teemed with pleasant hearsays. Sometimes, when her master was in the distant fields, she would steal across the neglected garden to a great coach house whose doors were locked over a majestic velvet of last century make, all embellished with lacquer and gilt ornament. Once before the family had sunk so low, a Barley had been High Sheriff of the county, and this coach had been built in London when he went up to the capital to see King George III. But when she had lowered the steps and stripped the holland covers from the cushions and sunk into a luxurious dust of lavender pollen, it was a more recent past that made her pulse throb with something invisible to her wasted bosom, where the black silk of her bodice lay in stiff, frayed folds.

Because she had played there with her bantling. She had not married until her thirtieth year, and only one child had been born. But such a child—a beautiful, strong lad, fit for a kingdom; fair-skinned and yellow-haired and gray-eyed, with a temper obstinate as his father's. Dear God, that old woman had suffered a long agony!

"When land is gone and money spent," said Hezekiah, "then learning is most excellent."

So Ralph Barley had been sent to the Bluecoat school. She used to cry still when she thought of the first time she had seen him in clipped curls and disfiguring clothes.

son's desire to send ample supply of money from his own store. In the latter case the mother had not urged him to consent, for a woman so high-minded does not care to be beholden to her offspring. She smoothed the telling of the refusal, and wrote with painful lightness of other matters. Her lady loved her the more for every letter she sent; it trembled when he discovered that the Italian calligraphy which women affected in Hezekiah's youth, was growing shaky and indistinct. His own letters, treasured in a sandalwood secretary, were so carefully placed that she could find each year's collection with closed eyes.

Now that the man and wife had completed the allotted span of years, and each saw the other failing, they began to long more powerfully than ever for the presence of their son. But Hezekiah gave no outward sign of wavering, and resolutely forbade his wife to tell Ralph of their weakness. And day by day Harriet was compelled to resign one after another the little household duties she had managed ever since her early widowhood. It came about that in her seventy-second year she fell ill of a sudden. One morning she did not creep down stairs, and Hezekiah, going to the chamber at breakfast time, found her lying back in an easy chair, her eyes closed and her face ashen hue. He had been a reserved man even in his passionate days, yet now so warm was his pleading that when she had left him, Harry; what should I do without you—alone? You've always been brave; you'll not go when I need you most."

He put his arm around her neck and drew her head to his breast. "All I ask; I have no more save you. You'll not leave me, Harry; what should I do without you—alone? You've always been brave; you'll not go when I need you most."

Her pride helped her to keep infirmities at bay; in a short time she rose again to her share of the day's work. Then Hezekiah deprecated, but she would have her way. Such tasks as she undertook might numb the poignancy of her longing; she gave herself no moment for idle thought. Her letters to Ralph grew more tender than ever; she discoursed often of the laughter and play that she, even then a woman approaching middle age, had shared with her baby. But never once did she mention the thing that her heart craved for—the old mother's passion to gaze, before she died, into his frank eyes.

So the year went on, from spring to summer, from summer to autumn, and with each day she grew more fragile and transparent. She allowed no sigh to escape; her husband was fain to believe that she was content. He watched her with jealous care to disconcert her in her contentance any look of wishfulness, yet never in their life together had he seen more placidity there. If she wept at all it was in the dead of night, when, worn, with out-door toil, he lay fast asleep by her side.

But one afternoon in harvest time, having had occasion to leave the field where the servants were reaping and going to return to the house for another sickle, he hurried to the parlor, where she usually sat amid quaint silk pictures and lac cabinets two centuries old, and found her favorite chair empty and her linen darning thrown carelessly on a side table. Then he went to the bedchamber, but as she was not there he descended again to the parlor and tugged the hare's foot at the end of the bell-rope.

The housekeeper came briskly along the hall in pattens, which she doffed at the door. She was a short thickset dame, with a face brown and creased as a walnut shell. She had lived at Nether Flat in Mrs. Barley's maiden days, and long service had given her the position almost of a humble relation.

"Where's the mistress, 'Lisbeth?" said Hezekiah; "I cannot find her."

"She was here a while ago," replied the housekeeper, "for I came to ask her about the blackberry wine." Her mouth closed tightly, and before Hezekiah could intercept her she had done her patters again and clattered off to the kitchen garden. The old man swore faintly and renewed his search for the housewife. He could find her nowhere, and with each moment his anxiety grew less endurable, so that at last he was compelled to go back to the house to consult 'Lisbeth again.

Afterward he unfastened a postern gate that led to a court which opened to the garden. Here were the great doors unlocked and slightly ajar. The sound of Harriet's voice, very loud and strong on the woodwork; he stood stockstill and listened. His wife was praying, and her prayer was full of wild appeal.

"O, Jesus Christ, whose Holy Mother nursed Thee in her arms, have pity on an old, old woman. O Saviour of the world, help me—let me no longer be as one who has not known motherhood—let me keep house with my son's children about me. Soften, I beseech Thee the heart of him I love, and love as powerfully as my own issue—break down the walls of his firmness—let the wish to see our son become too great to be contented against."

Her husband's hands rose to his face; he groaned aloud. From the closed chariot came the sound of muffled sobbing.

"O, Thou who wert the one Son of Thy Mother, help me in this my grief, I am too old to bear my burden in patience, too feeble not to cry out. Shall the agony of my labor, the longer agony of these years and years of separation, stand for naught? Send me not down to the grave without seeing my lad again! Let me but lay his hand in his father's."

After a long interval of silence Hezekiah crept closer to the coach and saw Harriet kneeling with bowed head. On the faded cushions before her lay tiny garments of fine needlework—and a christening cloak of yellowed silk embroidered with blue heartseases, knitted socks no bigger than a man's thumb and a worn coral with battered silver bells. And on the opposite seat were spread toys—wooden houses and bricks for palace building, and tin soldiers and tattered copybooks, between whose ruled lines ran ancient maxims writ in a straggling hand.

This had been the lad's playhouse, and these were the things that he had loved. It was the old woman's playhouse now—a playhouse of tears and everlasting sorrow.

Hezekiah leaned silently over her shoulder and put his cheeks against her own.

"Harry," he said, in a husky voice, "I'll send for the lad. I can't abide without him any longer."

The mother moaned again, this time with perfect gladness. "I'm tired husband," she whispered, "you must help me to the house."

CHRIST'S ONE CHURCH.

Our Protestant neighbors seem to think that different churches are like different families and that it does not matter to which one you belong, so long as you "have faith in Christ and accept Him for your personal Saviour."

To the argument that Christ established only one Church, they reply: "Oh, well, there is really only one Church, and these are branches of it."

But, then, to the objection that it stands to reason that these churches that teach contradictory doctrines as divine truths cannot be branches of one divine Church, which Christ effectively prayed should be one, they have no reply to make.

When they are asked if, as there is only one Church of Christ, the Catholic Church also is a branch of it, some of them will say Yes, and some No, and others will again remain silent, not knowing what to say.

There is only one Church established by Christ; it is visible; it has only one creed; and no one is saved who does not belong to it, consciously or unconsciously. Faith in Christ as the Son of God and acceptance of Him as one's Saviour, will save nobody who rejects the light of faith, who is not baptized, and who has no sorrow for sin.—Catholic Columbian.

Missionaries to Non-Catholics in England. The missions to non-Catholics so successfully in this country have now been definitely extended to England. One of the latest works of Cardinal Vaughan was the establishment of what are called in Westminster the Diocesan Missionaries of Our Lady of Compassion, who are commissioned to preach to non-Catholics.

The ordinary Protestant may, at first acquaintance and on general principles, dislike a firm, outspoken, self-respecting Catholic; but he will not distrust him. But the Catholic who caters to Protestant prejudices—trimming his convictions and opinions with a view to making himself more tolerable to them—cannot demonstrate on every possible occasion how little he is in sympathy with the mind of the Church.

The loyal Catholic who is always modestly but unmistakably letting his light shine, is doing more to disarm Protestant prejudices than the one who takes pains to hide or soften those points of doctrine or discipline which he imagines Protestants dislike most.

IN CATHOLIC COUNTRIES. I know nothing that saddens me more than to return to our own country after having been a little while in Belgium or Tyrol. There, the poor people seem so wonderfully to live in the presence of God. If you were to go through a Tyrolean village at 6 o'clock in the evening you would hear from every cottage a hum like that of a hive of bees, every one, father and mother, and children and servants, saying their prayers. It is much the same at noon, only then many of the people are out of doors, in the fields or in their gardens. The church bell rings at 12, and mowers put down their scythes and take off their caps and fold their hands in prayer for about a minute, and then go on with their work. One market day, at Innsbruck, I was dining, and there were a party of farmers at another table having their dinner. The church rung the Angelus. Then they all rose up, and standing reverently, the oldest man in the party began the prayers and the rest responded. And the women shopping were standing still in the market.—Father Mahoney.

UNREMEMBERED HEROINES.

"The world has not ceased hearing of Florence Nightingale," says the Catholic Transcript. "Her name is embalmed in the memories of the Crimean war. Still she does not bear her honors single and alone. From the obscurity of the cloister, a nun now writes her 'Memories of the Crimea.' Seldom indeed do we find the name of a religious on the title page of a volume of history, or the more pretentious works destined to perpetuate deeds of mercy. As a matter of fact a band of Irish nuns went to the battlefield when the Crimean war broke out. Two or three of the religious survived. One of the nuns wears the decoration of the Red Cross—a recognition which in tardy form came forty years after the campaign drew to a close. All the heroines of charity do not wear badges from the hands of royalty or republics."

THE OPEN CHURCH.

A PROTESTANT MISSIONARY TELLS HOW A PRESBYTERIAN LADY BECAME CATHOLIC. In the Madison Avenue Methodist Church, Baltimore, the other day, Rev. Dr. Frank Mason North, of New York, read a paper on "The Open Church in Our American Cities."

At the conclusion of Dr. North's paper, Mr. James E. Ingram, president of the Baltimore City Missionary and Church Extension Society, spoke. Mr. Ingram said he was much impressed by Dr. North's paper, and in urging the "open church" he said:

"We ought to have our churches open at all times. A few summers ago I was stopping at a seaside hotel, and there met a lady who was a Roman Catholic, and she was never tired of impressing upon me her peculiar religious views. I asked her how it came about that she had been converted to the Catholic Church for she had been a Presbyterian. She said that years before her husband lay sick unto death, she desired to go to the Great Physician and pray for her husband's restoration. But she could not pray at home. So, leaving her husband's bedside, she started out for a church. But she found the churches closed. Presently she came to a Catholic church, which was open. She entered, and there prayed for her husband's recovery. He grew better, and now both are devoted members of the Catholic Church. Doubtless they would have remained in their own Church if she had found a Presbyterian Church open."

A Real Piety.

"Be pious, but let your piety be of the kind which sets duty before mere practices of devotion. Be firm against the world and human respect; be simple and modest; habits of luxury and novel-reading are the ruin of women. Bad books lead to hell. If you come across any such work thrust them from you as you would a burning coal. I warn you against these things that you may not fall into sin; but if you ever find your fervor waning, come to the Sacred Heart, make a good retreat, and God will give you grace to rise again.—Mother Barat.

"Certainly our will can not die, nor our mind either," writes St. Francis de Sales. "But it sometimes passes beyond the limits of its ordinary life in order to live entirely in the will of God. It is when it neither can nor desires to will, and thus abandons itself totally to the good pleasure of Divine Providence, so mingling with and steeping itself in that good pleasure that it no longer appears, but is entirely hidden with Christ in God, in Whom it lives, yet not it, but the will of God in it."

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