

transfiguration of death. She still wore the penitent's habit; her hands were wreathed around her fingers, which clasped a crucifix; and a few flowers were pinned here and there to her dress. But the face—once more the face of a little child, had been sculptured into unearthly beauty by the chisel of death, who stood by and waited, for he worked only in solitude, and seemed to say: "Mark, how I can beautify before I destroy. So too shall the reincarnation come after destruction."

Father Meade came up, too, after Mass and breakfast. He knew nothing of the great secret.

"It's a beautiful sight, William," said Father Tracey, "God will bless you for this beautiful soul, redeemed to Him."

But Father Meade only stooped down, and blessed the forehead of his little child, and whispered:

"Good-bye, Alia!"

And when Margery accompanied the old chaplain to the gate, and had made sundry comments, on his green coat, and his brown hat, and frayed and fringed habiliments, he seemed not to mind, but now and again would stop and plunge his stick into the ground, and ask, as if he had never heard it before:

"God bless me! you don't tell me?"

"But I do; Father dear, what an unbeliever you are!"

"And I mustn't pretend, you know, to know anything, I suppose?"

"No. You're to go on, as if you saw nothing, and shut your eyes, and mouth!"

"God bless me! that will be hard. And, you really tell me? And Reverend Mother knew it all the time?"

"There, now! Good-bye! If you show by sign or token that you know anything, you'll be expelled; and then, what will your saints do?"

"God bless me! you don't say so? Very well, you won't see me as much as wink one eye."

But he was hardly an adept at deception. Every one of his many acquaintances knew that something was up. And some wise people, watching his ecstatic features, said amongst themselves:

"He has seen something. Could it be the Blessed Virgin?"

Margery walked back to the gate very thoughtfully. But she did not reach her cell.

Not the following Sunday, but some Sundays later, she penned a letter to her great brother. He, too, was passing through strange and novel experiences.

"I can see the quaintness, but I cannot see the sanctity of this old gentleman," said Luke, as they sat after dinner, and chatted. The old man, following a time-honored custom of thirty years, had made two tumbler of punch, and pushed one towards his curate.

"You'll only get one, young man," he remarked, "but 'tis a decent one."

"I never touch the like," said Luke, with a contemptuous sniff.

"Oh!" said the old man; and it was a rather prolonged exclamation.

"Here, Jerome," said the housekeeper, when the glasses were removed. Jer was the meditative boy who was always found in the vicinity of the kitchen about dinner time. "Tis your luck; though, faith, you don't deserve it."

"Ellie, you have a little sup?" said Jerry, generously.

"Here's a look of withering contempt," said Jerry, adding in his heart: "May the Lord help our young priest to keep his pledge faithfully all the days of his life."

This went on for three evenings. The fourth evening a strange thing happened. The prodigy caused much perturbation in the kitchen, and afforded Jerry abundant food for anxious reflection as to what the explanation was. Had the young priest forsaken his pledge and gone the way of his fathers? Impossible. Had the parish priest swallowed both? Equally impossible. Then, the following evening, but one tumbler came out of the parlor; and henceforth, but one—and the vast perspective of tumbler, reeking hot, and extending to eternity, vanished, like a pleasant dream.

What had happened was this. The good old pastor, a slave to habit, not heeding Luke's refusal the first evening, continued concocting the second tumbler on the succeeding nights.

"May I have a cup of coffee, sir?" said Luke.

"Coffee? No, young man, you may not. There's no such thing ever made in this house. You can have tea for breakfast, and tea for tea, and a glass of good punch at your dinner. That's all!"

"Thank you!" said Luke, curtly.

The fourth evening the old man brewed the two tumbler as he had done for thirty years; and pushed one towards Luke. Luke was suspicious of the steaming tumbler, and going over, he raised the window, and fung the liquid into the grass. Then he put down the window, and bringing back the empty glass, resumed his seat. The old man said not a word.

Each of these lonely winter evenings, precisely at 8 o'clock, the household assembled for the rosary; then, all lights were put out. Luke went retired to his bedroom, with what thoughts and memories may be conjectured. The remembrance of the past with all its intellectual pleasure haunted him; the future with all its dread possibilities frightened him. Was this to be his life? Dreary days, spent in listless and unprofitable attempts to raise a helpless and delirious people; and dreadful evenings, when he could not escape from himself, but had to face the companionship of thoughts that verged on despair. Yet, he made gallant attempts. Youth and hope were on his side; and there was no retreat. He had burned his ships. And, after all, why could he not do what the Canon had done in and around Liensles? That was Aradia; this Siberia! Well, the brave soul is that which bends unshakably to the hopeless task. He would try.

"Now, I don't want to hurt your feelings, Conor," he would say to a

parishioner; "but don't you know that that festering heap of compost is a nest of typhoid and diphtheria? The horrible miasma pollutes the entire atmosphere, and fills the house with disease?"

"I suppose so, your reverence; but, begor, no one died in this house for the past three generations, except of old age."

"That is exceptional," Luke would reply; "but, apart from the question of sanitation, don't you think that a few flower beds would look better than that dismal swamp?"

"Of course, yer reverence, but we'd have to pay dear for them."

"Not at all. A few wall-flowers—there are thousands of them in the springtime in the hedgerows—and a few simple geraniums in the summer, would not cost you one half-crown. Now, Lizzie, don't you agree with me?"

"I do, Father," Lizzie would say.

"So do I, yer reverence; but it isn't the cost of the flowers I'm thinkin' of, but the rain' of the rint. Every primrose would cost me a shillin'; and—"

"I thought, that was all past and gone forever?" said Luke.

"The poor man would shake his head. I daren't yer reverence. Next year, I'm goin' into the Land Courts agin; and, begor, the v'ulators and commissioners would put it on, hot and heavy, if they saw a sign of improvement about the place."

"God heavens!" Luke would say. "Then 'tis your interest to drag everything back to primitive conditions instead of improving house and land and gardens?"

"You've said it, yer reverence," said Conor.

This horror oppressed Luke keenly. In the beginning he used Luke in anger when a poor peasant would come to him on a sick-call or other business.

"Put on your hat. Don't you see 'tis raining?"

"Yes, yer 'anner."

"Stop that infernal word. Call your priest 'Father.'"

"Yes, yer 'anner."

"Look here, my poor man. Hold up your head, look me straight in the face, and call me 'Father.'"

Yes, yer 'anner.

Then Luke would fume and foam, and preach lessons on independence and manliness, and that God should be feared, not men; and he quoted the example of our Lord, and His firm, respectful, dignified bearing before Herod and Pilate. It was no use. And in the cold, raw winter, as he rolled along in his side car, and saw the poor farmers with down bent heads, and faces burnt by the bitter wind, driving the heavy ploughs into the hard, unyielding earth, he thought with intense bitterness that that poor toiler was laboring, not for his own little family over there in that wretched cabin—that meant only bread and potatoes—but for the agent, that he might have his brandy and cigars; and for two old ladies in a Dublin Square, that they might give a shilling for their lap-dogs; and for a solicitor again above them, that he might pay for his son in Trinity; and, on the highest pinnacle of the infamous system, for the lord, that he might have a racer at the Derby and a St. Cloud, and a set of brilliant for Sadie on the Opera Comique. And he thought with the peaceful Irish valley, the grinding and jarring of the dread engine of English law. Can it be, he said, that the horrid thing has stretched out its tentacles and grinds and grasps with its inexorable unconsciousness, even here? But he put the dread thought aside. Had not the great Canon risen buoyantly over all these difficulties, and created his little paradise? How was it done? And Luke was puzzled.

He was also puzzled by another circumstance. It was the quaint, strange language of this mysterious people. It was quite clear that they regarded this earth and this life as of but little moment.

"Wahs, yer reverence, 'tis good enough for the short time we're here. Sure 'tis here to-day and away to-morrow!"

"Yer reverence, why should we trouble about this dirty body? Sure, 'tis good enough for the worms."

"I'm goin' to me long home, yer reverence; and 'tis time. If we hadn't much here, sure 'tis 'ave plenty hereafter."

Luke didn't like all this. It sounded indeed dreadfully like the Scriptures, "Which of you can add to your stature?" "Consider the lilies of the field;" "Seek ye first the kingdom of God," etc., etc. The whole thing was horribly reactionary. But, these quaint Irish phrases were dreadfully like those fishermen of old; and their philosophy of life was suspiciously a reflection of that which was preached by the Sea of Galilee; and which all men have agreed to pronounce Divine. But where then was the philosophy of the salon, and the delicious humanitarianism of Amiel Lefevrill? Seek ye the God in man? Evidently these poor people didn't believe it possible—that strange quest of the Illuminati.

It was on one of these wintry days that Luke received his sister's letter. It ran thus:

"Dear Luke—I cannot help writing to ask your prayers, and if not too much, a remembrance in the Holy Sacri-ment (perhaps, if you have time, you may give a whole Mass) for one of these poor penitents whom dear Father Meade brought from England. Oh, Luke! such a death? It was horror after horror in the beginning. Then, such serenity and peace. It was a miracle; and we couldn't understand it. But I saw something that explained all. Still it is a great secret; and you don't know Father Tracey (but you don't tell that ever lived) knows it too, and is in ecstasies. So we must not tell. But God is so wonderful. Some day, perhaps."

"Will you be going home soon? Do dear Luke, they're dying to see you. I hope you like your mission. Try to like it, dear Luke. You know it is only

temporary, and you will make it very happy if you take up and foster the poor. That makes life all rosy and sunny. There! I suppose now you will say: 'That's not English. I don't mind. But, Luke, dear, be humble; be very humble. We all need be. I wish I could tell you the great secret. But some day, perhaps.'"

"I suppose Reverend Mother will never allow this scrawl to pass."

"Your loving sister,"

"EULALIE."

"Conventional, not conventional!" said Luke. "There is one grain of common sense. I must run home, if only to see Father Martin, and ask his advice about getting away from this unwholesome place forever."

Father Martin was not at all sympathetic.

"What is no reason why you should not do what all the excellent priests of the diocese have done before you," said Father Martin. "They all have had to commence in the same way, and most seemed to find pleasure where you experience despair. Do you think that the life of a priest should be one long holiday of social and intellectual pleasures?"

"No," said Luke. "That's not it. It's hard work, work, from dawn to dark. I shouldn't mind. But, this enforced idleness—and the daily contact with all that is sordid and hopeless—is enough to give any man the blues."

"Well, tastes differ. Father Cusson says he is supremely happy, except when he thinks of England; and then he is disposed to be profane. He is forever thanking God that his lot is cast in holy Ireland, among such a loving people."

"I cannot see it," said Luke, in despair. "It is England, England everywhere, when we have to blame ourselves."

"Do you think so?" said Father Martin, looking him straight in the face.

"Well," said Luke, "there are faults on both sides, I suppose. I admit, indeed, this system of land tenure is abominable."

"We won't discuss it," said Father Martin. "Are you reading?"

"No. Why should I? All my books are in their cases in the stables. I dare not unpack them."

"Why?" Because, first, I shall not remain here. Secondly, there is no room to put them in. Thirdly, those women would ruin them. Fourthly, where is the use of continuing one's studies in such a country?"

"Pshaw," said Father Martin. "You have a lot to learn, and unlearn yet, which is not found in books."

"I have learned that life is very miserable, whatever," said Luke.

"A priest shouldn't complain," said Father Martin. "He is a soldier. The outpost duty is not pleasant; but it is duty. The Church was not created for priests; but the priesthood for the Church."

"I have been hearing that, usque ad nauseam," said Luke. "And yet, I'm anxious to get the pillows under his elbows."

"Not every one," said Father Martin, gravely. "There are numbers of priests, young and old, in this diocese, and elsewhere, who are happy in serving God under worse circumstances than yours—silent, men, whose life is one great sacrifice."

"And not one gleam of intellectual pleasure," said Luke, doubtfully.

"Except the elation of duties well discharged; and such companionship as can afford each other."

"Pretty doubtful," said Luke, shrugging his shoulders. "Better solitude than that fellow!"

He pointed to the photograph of the poor priest, around whom Father Martin had grouped his demi-gods.

Then, noticing a look of pain and displeasure on the face of his friend, he said:

"I admit, indeed, there are a few compensations. There is a vague sense of home, and freedom from anxiety about money matters that no one ever experiences in England. Then, somehow, the landscape is gaining on me. I have seen colouring across the moors and the hills, and the mountains that would make an artist's fortune, could he fix it on canvas. And, then, certainly the little children are very attractive. The one thing that strikes every English visitor to Ireland are the children's eyes—das Vergissmännicht blaue Augen!"

"For heaven's sake, Luke, don't talk that way before the brethren. You'd never hear the end of it."

"I shall go my own way, Father Martin," said Luke. "If there be one thing I despise before another it is the eternal deference to human opinion."

"You may be right," said Father Martin. "But, life needs its little adjustments; I was going to say its little stratagems."

"That evening Father Martin sat long and anxiously near his little stove in the library, thinking of his young friend. Very few would have spoken to Luke as he had done; but he loved Luke, and would not spare his feelings.

"The Bishop must take him into the city," he said. "This violent change in his circumstances is too much for him."

Then his eye caught the photographs.

"I never thought it was so easy to scandalize the young," he said. "I wonder in what fit of diabolical uncharitableness did I put that photograph there?" He took down the frame and uncrowded it from behind. He then removed the picture that represented "concocted emptiness," and put it carefully in an album. He balanced the remaining photographs for a long time in his hand. At last, he dropped them, one by one, into the stove.

"Satan, or self, which is the same, is looking through their eyes," he said. "The crucifix is enough for an old man."

And Luke went back to his lonely room, and sat on the red, coal chair, these long, weary, winter nights, watching the rough iron bedstead, and the thick red quilt, and the painted wash-

stand and the broken jug; hearkening to the heavy breathing of his good pastor in the next room; and thinking, thinking of the beautiful past, that had vanished so swiftly, and wondering through what narrow loopholes would he escape the mendacious present and the unpromising future.

And there in the city, in a room far worse furnished, knelt an aged priest, who thanked God for his supreme and unalloyed felicity, and who cried in loving wonder to the pale face on his crucifix: "Lord, Lord, what have I done to deserve it all? Stop, stop this flood of delight, or I'll die."

And when pondered from his wretched pallet at midnight, he drew on his dingy clothes, and murmured, "What poor soul wants me now?" And when lighted by the night-nurse along the gloomy wards, and some sleepless patient caught the light of his holy face, and murmured, "God bless you!" and when he came to the couch of the dying, and saw the happy look creep into the wistful, eager face, that now turned to Death tranquilly, for here was the man who could transform the King of Terrors into an Angel of Light—he murmured, as he uncovered the pyx, and knelt before the Divine Healer of Humanity:

"Lord! Lord! how wonderful art Thou! and how generous I! And what a dread purgatory I shall have for the heaven Thou hast given me here!"

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THE LOVELY HEIGHTS.
BY ELIZABETH FOLLARD.
It was mighty hot work, hoeing corn, that June morning. I stood up to the fence, as he held up a letter for me. After a few minutes' chat, he drove on, and I opened my letter. It contained the welcome information, that a distant relative had left me the sum of \$200. My first thought on reading it was that some deserving man should have a job, hoeing corn. I went straight to the house, hung up my hoe in the woodshed, washed, then went into the kitchen, where Belinda was getting dinner.

"Belinda," I announced, as I fanned myself with my straw hat, "I'm done with hoeing." She looked up in surprise from the string beans, that she was cutting into pieces, saying, "why Phil, I had no idea you were so near through, why you must have worked like sixty."

"The hoeing isn't all done by a long shot; but I'm done with it. I'm going to hire a man to do the rest of it. Listen to this," and I read the letter to her.

"Now," I went on, as I finished, "I'm done with farm work."

"But that won't last long," reminded Belinda, as she set the beans on the stove. "What'll you do when it's gone?"

"I expect to have plenty more by the time that's gone."

"Why? Who'd you expect it all to come from?" she asked.

"From the magazines; I intend to write for a living from this on."

My wife, dropped the knives and forks, that she was carrying from the pantry, and stared at me in amazement, "what ever put such an idea into your head?" she asked at last.

"It has been there for a long time. You remember Jack Benton? Well, when we were at school together, I was as clever as he was, and Jack he has made all kinds of money, writing."

"I wish didn't you ever try it before?" she asked doubtfully.

"Because I never had time, I always had to keep grubbing away, to make ends meet. Now for the first time in my life, I'm going to try doing the work, that I like and feel that I'm fitted for."

Belinda, said no more, but managed to look, as if the project wasn't as promising to her as it seemed to me. Only a short time before, I had read two novels, in which the heroines were represented, as taking up literature, and in both cases, had floated around on a sea of cream, so to speak, from start to finish. If they why not I? The first thing I did, was to write to Jack Benton, telling him of my intentions.

"I had a nice friendly letter of encouragement, and a lot of magazines, for which he said I would get an idea of the sort of writing most in demand. I had always liked poetry, and I believe it was Shakespeare who said that 'From admiration to imitation there is but a step.'"

So I wrote my first poem for the market, entitled, "A Dream of fair men."

I sent it to a magazine, whose poetry seemed to me, notably bad; thinking that if they could get something better they would be glad to publish it. I felt quite confident that my poem would be accepted, and began composing others on the same lines, to be sent to the same magazine if they paid well enough. Great, therefore, was my surprise, when in about two weeks my poem was returned, and with it a slip saying, "Not up to our usual standard. Gracious goodness and I

CONTINUED ON PAGE SIX

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