

the order, he proceeded to enrol the candidate and to bless the scapulars.

For a moment the old priest seemed to be absorbed in silent prayer, and then, turning solemnly towards Ally, asked her for the last time if she had faith in the intercession of Our Lady; and, on her fervent response being given, he placed the scapulars around her neck, and, sprinkling her with holy water, bade her remain quiet for a while and raise her heart in humble hope to God.

The old priest was soon on his way; for a sick call waited him on his road homewards. He thought much upon the morning scene, and was not at all disappointed that an instantaneous effect had not followed his ministrations. God's time was always the best time; and, even if days were to pass, it might be to perfect the child's faith, Father Aylmer thought, or to give her an opportunity of gaining new merit.

Father Aylmer had many things to do that day, and next day he would be hard at work in his confessional; but still Ally Hayes was constantly before his mind, and many a prayer did he offer that, for her all things might "work together unto good." Once in his confessional, however, the good priest's mind was lost in the care of his penitents, and so absorbed was he in the ministration of the sacrament that he was the very last in the chapel to notice an unusual stir, and the low murmur of many voices raised in various ejaculations of praise and surprise around him. At last, the tumult became so great, that he opened the door of his confessional, and looked out to ascertain the cause of so much unusual commotion. The figure that met his gaze answered his mute enquiry; and for a few moments the old priest was as much lost in astonishment as any of his flock. There, before his eyes, walking firmly up the aisle, and making for the altar of Our Lady, her beads wound about her wrist, her scapulars on her breast, and her crutches in her hand, was Ally Hayes, smiling and radiant! Yet the child had a gentle recollection about her, that was in itself a prayer, as she smiled and bowed right and left to the prayers and salutations of the wondering people.

"I come, Father," she said quite

simply, as Father Aylmer joined her by the Virgin's altar, "to lay my crutches at her feet who has given me power to move. And I walked the three miles good," she added; "and I am to walk them back again, because, Father, Our dear Lady never does anything by halves."

Soon we may be sure Father Aylmer and Ally were the centre of a prayerful crowd. The good old priest hung up the votive crutches, and Ally's joyful mother brought forth the votive candles; and, as they were lit, as a mute token of thanksgiving, he told how wonderful were the ways of the good God, and bade them all join him in a hymn—Mary's own Rosary, as a recognition of the great grace that had been sent among them.

After a visit to the confessional, Ally Hayes walked home, as she had promised, and the malady that had stricken her for long, weary years was for her as if it had never existed, save in a terrible dream.

We do not wish to make an argument, but it would be worth something to the followers of Messrs. Huxley and Tyndall to ponder upon *one single assertion*—and that is the simple fact that all we have related took place under the eye of the writer of this history, to whom the girl Ally Hayes represents was well known, and whose crutches were laid within the very church where he himself at one time ministered.

The fame of the miracle spread rapidly, and gave rise to the usual amount of dispute and contradiction; but among those who believed most fully, and sympathised, most cordially with the widow and daughter, was their employer and best friend, Mr. Meldon. He came first to see Ally on her feet, with his own eyes; and, then, as the sweetness, gentleness, intelligence, and rare natural refinement of the girl's person and manner grew upon him, he formed a project, which in due time he communicated to Father Aylmer, who most cordially approved; and so it came to pass, after a few months, that Ally was sent as a boarder to the Ursuline Convent at Waterford. There she had the happiness of making her First Communion, and in due time of being received among "*Les Enfants de Marie.*"