REX CORDIUM

You're the only passenger, Miss," said the station agent, as he handed me to the platform; "just step in here."

A kind of shed a few paces away, bearing overhead the notice, "Linteu," told me my destination was indeed reached.

"Mr. Ellis, the school secretary, will be here in a few minutes, Miss. He had to fetch some letters and told me to get you warm. Mighty sharp weather, Miss," and my obliging guide bowed and departed.

I, Agnes Morris, university undergraduate, had lately been appointed teacher of Linteu district school. Papa's last illness had exhausted our slender capital, and as my widowed mother had but Mabel, a girl of 12, and myself, the hope of becoming the stay and support of my dear ones urged me to the sacrifice. Thus tremblingly, but hopefully, I accepted the position.

Mr. Ellis greeted me most kindly. He was an elderly man, with a pleasant though careworn face. I noticed that he hesitated a little over his words, as if he weighed everything he said. He made many inquiries as to my comfort as he showed me my place in the sleigh.

"I've settled the wee ones down at our feet, Miss Morris. I think they will be more cozy there. The road's bad and we're having such a cold snap. Put the buffalo around you tight."

The "wee ones" were two little girls at present undistinguishable bundles in mufflers and wraps. It was too cold for conversation, and I drew my furs around me and abandoned myself to the delight of a first sleigh ride in the country. The road was uneven for some distance, but was finally succeeded by a smooth, shining track, and we sped along to the music of the sleigh-bells.

Night was closing in as we stopped at the entrance to a long, low farmhouse. Mr. Ellis opened the gate and, after calling, "Johnny, come help with the trunk," turned to me a smile.

" 'Fraid you're cold, Miss Morris. Not used to the country, are you?" Never mind. You'll soon like the air. Guess supper's ready by this time."

The kitchen was neatness itself, with its polished stove, white-worn floor, immaculate cloth and dainty tea service. It gave a pleasing sense of home comfort.

Mr. Ellis opened the door of an inner apartment and called:

"Jane, here's Miss Morris."

A tall, middle-aged woman came forward, holding out a long, thin hand.

"Miss Morris, you're welcome. I hope you're not altogether froze." Then, looking at her husband, "My sakes, What kept you? Did you think I'd nothin' to do but sit here waitin', an' the supper spilin', an' the milk not strained yet, nor the young uns clothes ready for the wash. Much you care, though. Keepin' this stranger out so long in the cold, too. It's a shame!"

I hastened to say that I had enjoyed the ride extremely. After a few minutes the irate lady grew calm and I turned to express my thanks to Mr. Ellis, but he had disappeared.

Muriel and Bessie, the little girls, had taken off their shoes and were warming their feet at the stove Mrs. Ellis excusing herself to get some lights, I began to chat with the little ones.

"Aren't you afraid of getting chilblains?" I said to Muriel.

"Oh, no, Miss. I'll be warm just in a minute. Wasn't it grand, though! Did you like the cutter ride?" timidly.

"I guess you's 'omesick, Miss Mawris," chimed in Bessie. "You mustn't cwy, though. I allays cwy when I go away from my papa."

Bessie was two years younger than her sister, whom she greatly resembled. Both girls wore blue frocks and silver medals of the Immaculate Conception.

Mrs. Ellis' return cut short our talk and soon we all sat down to supper. Mr. Ellis carved the ham while Mrs. Ellis poured out delicious cups of tea. Muriel and Bessie perched on high chairs near their papa. Opposite me sat Johnny, the farm boy. He had a shock of red hair and a freckled, good-natured face. Taking no part in the conversation, he every now and then would wink expressively at Mr. Ellis, and, whenever I spoke would pause in the act of raising a morsel and gaze at me with open crumby mouth and twinkling eyes.

From Mr. Ellis I learned that ours was a new section and my duties comparatively light. Some little time, he said, must elapse before things were in working order. In the meantime I must make myself thoroughly at home and get acquainted with the good people of the locality. "These little ladies," he added, "will give you the entire history of the section in no time. They're very anxious to get to school, but I tell them when they've had a few whippin's from the teacher they'll be glad enough to run home and play with pussy."

Muriel and Bessie in unison protested that pussy should come to school, too, and Muriel went on very confidently: "She's good, Miss Morris. She's just as quiet as a mouce."

Even Mrs. Ellis could not refrain from laughing, although the next moment she shrugged her shoulders and said. "That's their papa's teaching for you! You young-uns ought to be seen and not heard."

Strange to say, her every word to Mr. Ellis was a barb of bitterness. He took no further notice of her than merely to reply to her direct questions, and, supper over, withdrew at once, in company with Johnny, who whistled on his way to the barn, the keen air proving no obstacle to his enjoyment of a tune.

As I assisted Mrs. Ellis to clear the table, I was struck by the look of settled melancholy on her face. From time to time she wiped away a furtive tear and her manner grew quite gentle.

"We're few Catholics here," she said. "The church's ten miles away, an' we get Mass only every fourth Sunday. I generally drive the team myself. The babies can't go in winter, an' Johnny's home Sundays."

She did not mention Mr. Ellis by name, but went on after a little:

"It's a great pity we can't practice our religion better. Men are so careless, you know."

I sympathized, saying, as I kissed my Promoter's cross:

"The Sacred Heart has done wonders for me, dear Mrs. Ellis. Who can tell what favors are in store for you!"

* * *

The afternoon sun was adding its lustre to the already shining kitchen, and as I was prepared to enjoy a pleasant hour with my Longfellow, when there was a light tapping at the door.

A slight girl of about fourteen years stood without. She wore a cloak of coarse but pretty plaid and a hood of the same material. Her eyes, dark and deeply expressive, told of a strong soul and a generous heart. In a glance I saw she was not an ordinary girl, but one of God's child heroines whom He decks with special graces which are at once a pledge of His love and a protection from the scorn of the worldly-minded.

The girl dropped me a curtsy and said: "Please, are you Miss Morris? My father sent me over to make arrangements with the teacher about some lessons. I can't go to school."

I invited her in, and soon we were chatting together with the ardor of old acquaintances. Her name was Lizzie Lloyd. A new St. Elizabeth, I thought, as I glanced from the toil-worn hands to the delicate face. Her father had been blind for some years; and Lizzie, his only child, remained his only solace. She looked after the house, did the marketing, kept the accounts, and was withal his careful nurse and affectionate companion. It was her father's wish that she should take lessons in history and grammar, and advance a little in arithmetic, for which she had a great fancy.

"You must study French and German, Lizzie. I know you'll like that," I said; "but, my dear, when can you begin?"

"Oh, Miss Morris, I love books, and I can begin to-morrow, but I fear you'll find me stupid enough. I'll beg our Blessed Mother to help me that I may learn real fast, and then I can do something for papa. I know if he could get good treatment he would not suffer so much. Oh, if you knew what it is to see your father always in pain."

Her beautiful eyes filled in a moment, and I could hear her heart throbbing in nervous excitement.

"He's all I have," she went on after a pause, "and day by day I fear the suffering may affect his brain. Dear papa! I think the end must be very near."

Just then the door of the inner room was thrown open and Muriel and Bessie came running in.

"Izzie 'Oyd, 'at you? I's so g'ad. Here's gum drops and c'eam candy!" and Bessie climbed into Lizzie's lap, while Muriel, after a hasty hug, darted away in search of Mrs. Ellis.

A few minutes later Mr. Ellis and Johnny came in for a handwarming. Johnny's mouth opened in amaze at sight of our visitor, and the temporary lockjaw might have prolonged indefinitely had not Lizzie obligingly come to his relief with a supply of the gum drops and cream candy.

Mr. Ellis seemed entirely changed. It was touching to see the strange, taciturn yet genial man allow his softer nature to expand in the company of this young girl, still almost a child. To her he behaved with a mixture of respect, tenderness and admiration. While she remained, he was indeed a charming host, and his pleasant answers to Mrs. Ellis' sallies quite bewildered me.

At length Lizzie rose to go, and Mr. Ellis prepared to take her in the sleigh. The children, greatly delighted at the prospect of a "cutter ride," pocketed the remaining sweetmeats, and permitted me to wrap them in some warm shawls ...ing ready for such hasty expeditions behind the kitchen stove.

* * *

Three weeks passed rapidly away. Lizzie came to me regularly every day for an hour's lesson. I did not know what it was that created the bond of sympathy between us, but I felt we were no longer strangers. After all, acquaintanceship does not wait on time, and Lizzie's was a clear, strong nature that, once known, ever repeats itself in the very simplicity of its strength. She gave me her confidence with the fearless candor of a child.

One Saturday morning we sat together over the books. Out-of-doors the snow was falling and Lizzie's glance wandered often from the printed page before her to the ever-whitening landscape beyond the pane. I knew that some thought was exerting powerful influence over her mind, and I was not surprised to see her presently cast aside the books and burst into tears.

"It's no use, Miss Morris, I can't study to-day. Oh why should all this be! I cannot bear it!"

I soothed her as best I could and waited for the confidence sure to follow.

After a few minutes she dried her eyes and spoke quite composedly.

"It's strange it happens just at the very time I want to be good. Indeed, my only intention is to do just what is best; but at times, try as I may to think only of papa and of caring for him, I feel something here," pointing to her heart, "which draws me away from him and makes me long for a life different from this. It must be just my own selfishness, I suppose. Yet, spite of all I do, it's there and remains. And sometimes it gets too strong for me and I can do nothing but cry."

"Lizzie," I said, after a moment's thought, "I know what you must do just now. We'll let the future take care of itself, or, rather, we'll leave it to the care of our Blessed Mother. I've been thinking of this ever since I've been here. You must be a Promoter. I know you wish to work for the Sacred Heart, and I am confident you can accomplish a great deal in this very house."

I told her then of the effort she must make to win back Mr. Ellis to the duties of our holy faith. Did she not know that he was fond of her and would do more for her than for any one else?

"It's all because I'm like the little niece, Eva," she said, after a pause. "She lived here when Muriel and Bessie were babies. She died about four years ago. I've heard that Mrs. Ellis did not care for Evie, and, since then, there's been this coolness."

"But, Lizzie, Mrs. Ellis is fond of you; that is why I am sure you could help this unhappy little household and make it a truly Catholic home."

"Yes, it's like her to be motherly to every one, and I fancy she tries to make up through me to little Eva. She is so kind-hearted, you know."

"Well, Lizzie, Mrs. Ellis has promised to take us to Mass to-morrow and we can see Father Coutts and make arrangements for your band. There are five members right here for you, and I know you'll have little trouble in getting the full fifteen."

"Miss Morris, can I be a Promoter? What can a poor little thing like me do?"

"Much, darling," I said, drawing the quivering little hand in mine. "Dear to our Lord are His little ones whom He makes use of in the designs of His Sacred Heart."

* * *

As time went on, Lizzie fully realized my expectations, and proved herself a most successful Promoter. Her band grew fast. Men, women and children of the neighborhood responded readily to her earnest pleading. Her influence was magnetic. Sometimes I could not refrain from teasing her a little.

"Lizzie," I would say, "you are a first-class beggar. Just wait till old age settles down on me. Doubtless I'll come knocking at your door and you shall plead my cause with the rich ones of the land. Perhaps, yourself, my dear."

She would laugh and shake her head, but the serious light in her eyes only deepened and I knew her thoughts were busy with the future.

Mrs. Ellis entered gladly into our design. She talked so much about the League that I thought it wise to warn her to moderate her zeal. Too much solicitude might prejudice rather than help our cause. We must bide our time.

Johnny accepted his League slip with some hesitation. However, on hearing that only one little prayer was required of him, he brightened visibly and with open-mouthed curiosity inspected the picture at the head of the page. The following evening, when I chanced to assist Mrs. Ellis to gather eggs at the barn I saw him draw out the "slip" and carefully con over the printed words. Then, making a telescope of his hands he took a one-eye view of the picture, concluding the ceremony with a few bars of "Form your ranks," which Lizzie had taught him.

Of course Mr. Ellis accepted membership at our Promoter's hands. It was in answer to her pleading that he consented to teach Muriel and Bessie the meaning of the "Morning Offering," making it aloud with them just before breakfast. Still he gave no sign of return to his religious duties, nor had the chasm between himself and Mrs. Ellis yet been bridged over.

Weeks and months glided by and leafy June was with us. The small statue of the Sacred Heart, my dearest memorial of home, became the altar-stone of Lizzie's fervent novenas. The children gathered wild flowers and placed them with the ruby light, a perpetual petition for the grace we yearned for.

On the morning of the feast of the Sacred Heart Mrs. Ellis came to me with a troubled countenance.

"Miss Morris, I don't know what to do. I've just put Muriel to bed. She's that hot and feverish, I never saw her so before. We'll have to

Roosevelt Praised by Archbishop Ryan

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wi... ...terizing him ... ...n below stairs:

"A telegram, Miss Morris. It's come this minute from the village."

Hurriedly I broke the seal. It was from Mabel and informed me that mamma had an attack of congestion and requested my speedy return.

Mr. Ellis kindly offered to make full explanation to the trustees. He was evidently much alarmed on hearing of Muriel's condition, and my fears coincided with his. The child's temperature was rising, and there was an odd, unnatural tinge on her peachy complexion.

* * *

I found mamma very ill indeed, and the ensuing days were those of unspeakable anxiety. At length she was out of danger and I could allow my thoughts to revert to Linteu. Had the Angel of Death who had passed reluctantly from the threshold of my home carried a child-soul in his heavenward flight?

A few days more and suspense was at an end. A long letter from Lizzie gave me the details of Muriel's last moments on earth. With a courage in advance of her tender years, the little darling had expressed her willingness to die that she might "better pray for papa in heaven," and then, for the first and last time, she received our Lord in the Sacrament of His love.

"Oh, Miss Morris," Lizzie went on to say, "the Sacred Heart has heard our prayers. Since Muriel died Mr. and Mrs. Ellis have been inseparable. Together they watched by poor Bessie, who had taken the fever just when Muriel was at the worst. You should have heard Mr. Ellis praying the Sacred Heart to spare him his one little lamb, now doubly dear. Since she is past danger, he is a changed man, and is now about to erect a church. Oh, Miss Morris, it is all the Sacred Heart!

"But, now, my dear teacher, my more than friend, I have kept my own great surprise for the last. You were only gone a few days when a letter came from that Mrs. Carroll who was my mother's dearest friend. She said she had only lately traced me out, that she had wealth and no children of her own, and would like to call me hers. Of course I told her about papa, that I could not leave him, and that he would not consent to move out of his dear old home. So she has come to see us, taking full charge of the house; and I am to do nothing but go to school and take extra lessons. Oh, Miss Morris, can it be true? I can scarcely believe it. Do you know what she said when she saw me? 'I think, dear child, you will one day be a nun like my sister, Mother Mary of the Annunciation. You'll wear a white habit and make a vow to save souls.' Oh, Miss Morris, will that ever be?"

"Vivat Cor Jesu, Rex cordium!" The words gleam in glorious colors from Muriel's memorial window in the church at Linteu.—From the Rosary Magazine.

Ancient Justice

The physician or surgeon who charges little or nothing for his skill when he treats a poor man has excellent authority for his practice.

The newly discovered laws of ancient Babylon made it not only proper, but obligatory. The first king of "Greater Babylon," as it would be called to-day, was Hammurbi, referred to in the fourteenth chapter of Genesis as Amraphel. He was noted for the justice of the laws he established in his kingdom. Two years ago, on a broken monument in the ruins of Susa, nearly the whole code of Hammurabi was found. A translation of it has just been made by a professor in the University of Chicago.

"If a physician operate on a gentleman for a severe wound with a lancet," reads one section of these revised statutes of Babylon, "and save the man's life, or if he open an abscess in a gentleman's eye and save the eye, he shall receive ten shekels of silver. If he operate on a freeman he shall receive five shekels."

But "if it be a man's slave he operate on," reads the next section, "the owner of the slave shall give two shekels to the physician."

Similarly graded were the physician's penalties—for in those days doctoring was a give-and-take affair in which the unsuccessful practitioner was made to pay for his failure.

"If a physician operate on a gentleman and cause his death," said the law, "or destroy his eye, they shall cut off the physician's fingers.

"If he operate on the slave of a freeman and cause his death he shall restore a slave of equal value. If he destroy his eye he shall pay in silver half his value.

"If he set a broken bone for a gentleman or cure his disease the gentleman shall pay five shekels.

"If he be a freeman he shall pay three shekels of silver.

"If he be a slave the owner of the slave shall give the physician two shekels."

As there was no aseptic surgery in those days, the courage of a physician in operating with a lancet was great indeed. Unskilled practitioners probably got out of the profession as quickly as possible. So, alas, the swindling contractor, for the law read:

"If a builder build a house for a man and do not make its construction firm, and the house collapse and cause the death of the owner, the builder shall be put to death.

"If it kill the son of the owner they shall put the son of the builder to death.

"If it kills a slave of the owner the builder shall restore to him a slave of equal value.

"If it destroy property he shall restore what it destroyed, and because he did not make the house which he built firm and it collapsed, he shall rebuild it at his own expense."

If within thy breast beats a heart warm, loyal, generous, an heroic heart, speak—oh, speak! If not, silence, thou sounding brass! Silence, thou tinkling cymbal!

Death Comes to All—But it need not come prematurely if proper precautions are taken. "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," and to have prevention at hand and allow a disease to work its will is wickedness. Dr. Thomas' Eclectric Oil not only allays pains when applied externally, but will prevent lung troubles resulting from colds and coughs. Try it and be convinced.

Rats Saved Men's Lives

A score of rats saved the lives of eight men at the Coalbrook colliery of the Delaware and Hudson Coal Company at Wilkesbarre, Pa., a few days ago. The miners were robing pillars in a remote portion of the old workings when they noticed the rats scamper past in little groups and flee up the gangway as fast as they could go.

"That's queer," said one of them. "Something must be going to happen. They're wise. Let's get out of here."

They fled no less precipitately than the rats and just in time, for as they ran there came a thunderous crash and the roof fell in all around the place where they had been working. An area of nine chambers was covered by the fall, and the men would have been crushed to death had they remained two minutes longer.

Sentiment is a strong man's concealment of what he feels, while sentimentality is a weak man's expression of what he doesn't feel.

We must be Christian gentlemen and gentlewomen, firm in the upholding and pronouncement of our Faith, but prayerful and charitable to our fellow-men, looking to God the Holy Ghost to enlighten, guide and strengthen us in our puny efforts, so that we may live such earnest and holy lives as they should live, who have received the marvellous grace of the Catholic Faith in Christ's one true Church.