

HERMINA.

1. ON THE WAY TO GOD'S ACRE. Your sadness shall be turned into joy.—S. John, xvi., 20.

"Twas toward the end of April. The air was pure, and there reigned all around one of those profound calms which lift the soul above all that is earthly and waft it to the beautiful regions of the supernatural. As late as yesterday the country fields were wrapped up in their soft white winter mantles, and the sun, pale as the snow it was so mercilessly driving away, was shedding its mellow beams from a cloudless sky. In the grove the bird was rehearsing its song, while the fragrant odor of a few forward blossoms was borne towards us in delicious little gusts on the wings of the gentle breeze.

Along the rustic foot-path, so narrow that two of us could hardly walk side by side, we were wandering, almost aimlessly, and chatting joyfully. "To-morrow," we said, "would be Low Sunday. . . . The month of May was rapidly approaching, and Nature was preparing its choicest flowers to grace the altars of its Queen." "Twas nearly two years since Canada had opened its hospitable arms to receive us, poor exiles from the Mother Country. And thus we fell a-talking of hopes that never left us. Ah! when would they be realized?"

Not far from us, on the path which winds round the mountain, some persons were walking along slowly and in silence. We could see that a cloud of sadness weighed heavily upon them. Whither could they be going? Towards the cemetery where one of their loved ones was sleeping his last sleep. Ah! what a price must be paid for happiness here below! Above all, for that happiness which is born of love, that tyrant who makes all men captive, and whose yoke all men bear with submission. The little group in front of us seemed to have learned the sad lesson but recently. They were still quite young and appeared crushed beneath the cruel blow which had fallen upon them. Poor bruised hearts! Nevertheless they were strong and generous in the very throes of their sacrifice, for upon their brows bent humbly and submissively under the hand of God, I thought I saw the divine radiance of our holy Faith, which in their inmost soul was burning so brightly, and nourishing the sweet hope of the future au revoir. And I said to myself: "Tis of you that the Saviour said, 'Your sadness shall be turned into joy, and your joy no man shall take from you.'" We followed at some little distance that they might mourn unseen, and when we came near the weeping willows that line the entrance of the cemetery, they were carrying the remains of the dear departed one to its resting place beneath the soil.

II. IN THE MORTUARY. The maid is not dead, but sleepeth.—St. Luke, viii., 52.

Still musing deeply on what we had seen, we arrived at the door of the mortuary. We entered. As we crossed the threshold, a cold, death-like shiver, which I think I feel yet, ran through all my members. Oh, the strange contrast between the icy coldness of that place and the cheering warmth of the air without! Silently and deeply penetrated with that reverential awe which the neighborhood of Death inspires, we glanced rapidly at the long rows of coffins which had been brought there during the long winter months. As for me, I wanted something more. I desired to open a coffin and gaze upon the corpse that slept within. I was about to raise the lid of a coffin very near to me, when some sudden and irresistible impulse made me turn upon my heel and cross to the other side of the mortuary. Without hesitation I directed my steps to the coffins which lay there. My eyes fell upon one of rather small dimensions. It had been placed on the lowest range of all, and I had to bend down to read the label nailed upon it. "Hermina M—" was all it said. At this moment my heart began to beat quickly and a profound emotion seized me. I knelt, and with a hesitating hand I lifted the little beech-board which covered the glass lid. Dressed in splendid garments of white silk, there lay Hermina. Her slender hands were modestly crossed upon her breast. Her face, though somewhat browned, reflected the peace that reigned in her soul when the finger of Death had touched her. "Hermina, it cannot be that thou art lost for ever. The calm that even the throes of death have not been able to drive from thy countenance bears witness to the purity of thy soul. And yet! At the age when thou didst leave the world it is so easy to forget oneself amid the dazzling pleasures of the world, and oh! what sad sad falls are written in letters of

blood upon the pages of the recording angel. Where is thy soul, Hermina? In the blissful mansion which Jesus has prepared for them that love Him? Oh yes, it could not be otherwise. And yet, one must be so pure. O angel of God, who wast her guardian, tell me if her soul was white and spotless as a mine when thou didst present it to the Sovereign Judge." And my eyes, fascinated as by some irresistible charm, remained fixed upon the sweet countenance of Hermina. My emotion had long since died away, and I gave free course to my thoughts. "Not yet twenty years old, yet departed so soon. Her frail body had decayed like a tender flower which blossoms in the morning, fades in the burning heat of the midday sun, and before evening had dropped its weary head and withdrew; but her soul had flown to rest. Ah! why was not I too called away at thy age, Hermina? But such was not Thy will, O my God. Thou wilt that I suffer and toil for a time far from Thee. But I heed not the sufferings, I fear not the toll, provided that my soul remain pure and spotless. I shall have all eternity wherein to love Thee, and then sorrow shall not come near me and my joy will be full."

"Twas with regret that after one last long gaze I shut down the little beech-board and went out into the evening air, repeating to myself the words of the Divine Wonder-worker: "The maid is not dead, but sleepeth." Still, as Hermina's angel had not given me the assurance of her reception into the abode of saints, I recited a fervent De Profundis with my companion, imploring God to wash away speedily every stain that might be depriving her, even for a little while, of the bliss of His Eternal Presence.

And when, at night, sleep came to close my eyes, my last thought, and my last prayer, were for Hermina.

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For Princess Ena.

The portrait of the Pope, which the celebrated painter, Carolus Duran, has been commissioned to paint, has been ordered by the Empress Eugenia as a wedding present for the Princess Ena.

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Sisters of Notre Dame Beatification of the Venerable Foundress.

The Roman correspondent of the Liverpool, Catholic Times states that though it has not yet been authoritatively made known what Beatifications will take place in May and June, it is probable that arrangements will be made for the Beatification on May 13 of the Venerable Julie Billiart, foundress of the Congregation of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, this being the second step in the process of her canonisation, as she was declared Venerable on June 26, 1889, by Pope Leo XIII. The Venerable Julie Billiart was born July 12, 1751, in Cuvilly, a village of Picardy, in the Department of Oise, France. Her parents were Jean Francois Billiart and Marie Louise Antoinette Debraine. She attended the village school taught by her uncle, Thibault Guilbert. The Abbe Dangecourt, her pastor, was attracted by her piety and zeal, and directed her training. She became a member of the Confraternity of the Sacred Heart, and with her own hands made a banner of white satin in honor of Our Lady, which is still preserved at Namur. Her father met with business reverses, and she went to work in the fields to earn money for her parents' support, and also made long trips to other towns to dispose of merchandise he had as yet unsold. She made frequent visits to the Carmelite Nuns at Campiegnie. These were brought about by her skill in church embroidery. She became almost blind, and with one of her sisters, who had been blind for many years, made a pilgrimage to Montreuil, where a copy of the Holy Face was held in great veneration. Their faith was rewarded, and both were restored to sight. In the winter of 1774, while she was sitting at work by her father's side, he was shot at, but though no one was wounded, she suffered from nervous shock for thirty years. Her patience and good works won for her the title of "the Saint of Cuvilly," and she was taken to visit the Bishop of Beauvais.

In 1782, owing to injudicious medical treatment, she was rendered completely helpless, and had to use crutches. Later she was confined to bed, but many came to visit her. The French revolutionists found in her an object of hatred, just as their present representatives do in her daughters of religion. She had to be secreted and moved from place to place, and suffered great privations. While at Campiegnie she had a vision of a multitude of virgins surrounding our Lord on Calvary and dressed in a habit she had never seen. It is the one now worn by the Sisters of her Order. She witnessed the execution of old and infirm religious and lay persons in the reign of terror. Countess Baudouin wrote asking her to come to her at Amiens and there she met the co-foundress of the Order, Francoise Blin, Viscountess de Bourdon. It was at Bettecourt that these devoted women began together their work of instruction, but in February, 1803, they returned to Amiens. In May, 1804, the Venerable Julie Billiart joined, at the request of a priest, in a novena the intention of which was not made known to her, and on the first Friday in June those making it had the satisfaction of knowing that their prayers were heard, for she was cured of the paralysis that had long afflicted her. While on a visit to the houses of her Order in 1813 she had an audience with Pope Pius VII, then a prisoner at Fontainebleau. After the battle of Waterloo she and her Sisterhood nursed many of the wounded at Namur. Many trials were endured, but she left her Order in a vigorous state when she died on April 8, 1816. She was buried in Namur city cemetery, at the foot of a large crucifix.

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Vol. LV. No. The Ed. London, May 9— course of the great Education Bill to-n of Commons, Mr. B I may excuse mys the House by sayin o have a somewhat perience upon this sessions, in three I different countries, and taken some par sion of problems wh concrete form by th a Protestant majori Catholic minority. I and took my groun principles, and havi that ground I wa when I heard from Minister of Educatio a statement with re THE RIGHTS OF which I am afraid w another, and what s the connection in w the natural and obli tion. Speaking of t woen Roman Catho as the case might b ous Protestant deno said: "all minorities is the badge of th air, some suffering m inevitable in the car measures of a gree which the majority c lieves to be essentia or its existence. Th as far as possible to for my part my beli pressed it twenty y Protestant community ferent from the fone ment of the right ho may venture to quot represents the groun before, and which I since, and which I ho ing strong, we ought THE STRONG SHO BE— generous to the weak full heaped and runn measure to be given b the weak, and by so exemplify true Chris we will exemplify tru ciples, we will do our promotion of true Ch for the spread of the are the general view approach all question cription. This is a and we are concerne Irish Catholics, wh with them from the which they sprang tra evil days to which I and who are natura last degree of the re and suspicious of a with them. I say it jealousy. It is a nat which you ought to r far as possible aver of your legislation. Th interference brought th and THIS FEELING IS BLOOD, and you must not them, you must not with them, you must ous in the future to excuse or pretence motives about what (cheers). Do your pe in such a form that yo obliterate those sad r create in them a con will respect their con in this country of the whom we speak, are poor and lowly. They ers, whose share of goods is small, and per reason they look to joy come (cheers). Now, I attempt to deal exha or to touch at all upo topics which are to be this Bill. I may say the observation made member who proceed seemed to have some in his declaration ag rights to have some p cation of their childre tion has been made co