

"I am very desirous to meet your cousin," I said, at last, when the pause in the conversation had grown intolerably long, and she had done nothing to relieve it.

"Which cousin?" she inquired.

"Oneda, Miss Halliburton," I explained. "Her uncle, Major Halliburton, has been a friend of mine since my boyhood."

"He tells me you call her 'Dido'."

"She looked up at me with her beautiful, romantic, Irish-blue eyes, full of a shy wildness, like those of a frightened gazelle. A wave of rich color swept the soft oval of her cheek."

"I am Dido," she murmured, in low, embarrassed tones.

TO BE CONTINUED.

SOULS FROM PURGATORY PREVENT A MURDER.

It was fair-day in the town of the Pyrenees. This fair is held twice a year—on the feast of St. Michael, for the 8th of May and the 29th of September. It lasts for several days and is of great importance for the market place and the mountain hamlets the people flock to it in vast numbers.

A wealthy farmer brought to this autumn fair his numerous stock. He had good luck in finding purchasers, and, at the close of the half-yearly market, had the satisfaction of carrying away with him a well-lined wallet, in exchange for his flocks and herds.

Not all were as fortunate as the jolly farmer. Not all who hovered around the stalls and booths of the market place had sold their wares as profitably as he, and some, indeed, had nothing to sell, and no money with which to buy.

The latter was the case with two men who had nothing better to do than to watch their more fortunate neighbors.

They beheld the happy farmer rejoicing in his luck, saw the exchange of horses, cows and sheep, for gold, silver and bank-notes, and even saw the farmer's leather wallet close upon a small fortune.

These two men were friends in "ill-luck," as they called their improvident manner of life. "Good fortune" was no friend of theirs, they declared; and, taking over their mutual disappointments, they grew embittered, discouraged, gloomy and envious.

"Why should those who already have so much receive more?" one asked the other.

Their eyes met; and their thoughts were the same. The farmer's way home was their way too. Across mountain and stream, through valleys, glens and lonely paths, within sound of a rushing river, whose bed was deep and whose current swift, their own road lay, and so did the farmer's.

"Let us lighten him of his load; he will never miss it," said one.

"He is strong; suppose he resists?" answered the other.

"We are two."

"But if he still resist?"

"We are two; your health, like mine, is cold; your children and mine are hungry and naked."

"But if he should still be too strong for us?"

No reply, only a long look into each other's gloomy eyes. After awhile one asked the other: "Would you do him harm?"

The question was low, the voice faltering that asked it. The reply was weak and in an uncertain tone.

behold him. For the third time, he is surrounded by a group of men. Trembling and afraid they shrink back into the sheltered hedge.

One fell on his knees.

"Come," said the other, "let us go; we are not to do this devil's work."

"But he had to help his weaker companion to his feet, and take him by the arm and lead him."

"I shall go at once to the priest," said the fear-stricken man; "come thou with me. We have been saved from doing an evil deed."

They sought their parish priest and told their story. That they were sincere, he had no doubt; but to prove their truth, the priest sought the farmer and asked him, in a general way, for news of St. Michael's fair—what luck he had had, and of the events of the road.

The honest farmer suspected nothing, and told how he had sold his cattle to good advantage, how he had supped with his friends, and then set out for home.

"Alone?"

"Yes."

"Did you stop anywhere?"

"Yes." When he was passing a sanctuary of our Lady, he had suddenly remembered that it was the anniversary of his father's death; and he had stopped there to recite the rosary for the souls in purgatory.

Ah, thought the priest within himself, these souls for whom he prayed were his companions and protectors on that fearful road. But he continued his interrogatory.

"Some of your good friends came part of the way, at least, with you?"

"No; it was late, and I would not let them do so. I know the road too well to need guide or guard," was the farmer's reply.

Ah, thought the priest again, how little he suspects how much he needed both guide and guard that night, or who they were that kept him company in that dread hour!

"But you met someone, either coming or going, between this and the village?"

"Not a living soul," was the decided answer.

The priest was convinced—convinced and grateful. He had gained two souls to his flock, and the farmer's life was safe, thank to the protection of the Holy Souls.

HOW I CAME HOME.

CONTINUED FROM LAST WEEK.

But to return to myself. My only resource was to try as far as possible to be in the mind of the Church if I could not be outwardly of its body; above all, to wait and pray for further light and guidance. My Catholic longings, however, were not satisfied; I could not forget what I had heard. Dr. Newman says truly: "If who has once seen a ghost cannot be as one who has never seen it."

Doubts as to the truth of the Church of England had been sown broadcast in my mind; and I could not but feel that the only legitimate and honest conclusion to which the High Church teachings of my life could lead was the one at which the Archdeacon and Dr. Newman had already arrived.

Whenever we went abroad, we used to go to Benediction or early Mass, and I often discussed the whole matter with my husband. He knew perfectly what my feelings were, for I never had a secret from him in my life.

He admitted that the Catholic religion was more suited to some temperaments than the Protestant; that one's religion was after all, very much that a clever writer has called "a geographical accident," by which he meant that if we had been born in Russia, like his mother, we should have been brought up in the Greek Church; if in France or Italy, Austria or Spain, in the Catholic, and so on.

like the prophet, in— Street, of which the sole ornament was a bronze head of Christ which we had given him at Rome. I recollect nervously confining myself to the business on hand; but at the end, I could not resist kneeling to ask for his old blessing.

He gave it me without comment, kindly but sadly; and then we did not meet again for months.

I pass over the intervening years of my life till my husband's death. They had been passed in arduous work and in ever-increasing anxiety for the health of one who was dearer to me than life.

At last, the blow came; and then it was that I fully realized what it was to be in a Church in which I did not believe, and which did not recognize prayers for the dead. My mother-in-law had once said to me (in speaking of my sister-in-law's death), that it was the only thing she could not bear in the Church of England.

And to me, it was simply impossible. I had prayed for him daily for twenty years. How could I leave off now? Besides, if there were only a chance, however remote, however doubtful, that such prayers could benefit him, how could I withhold them?

A very touching letter from our old friend, speaking of him as I felt and knew he would do, in reply, I asked him where I could find such prayers as I had sought for in vain among Anglican manuals of devotion, begging him likewise to say some Masses for my husband's soul; for he was then a priest.

He complied with my wishes in both cases, but never sent me any renewal of intercourse either in person or by continuing the correspondence.

That year of overwhelming misery went by. I spent it in the south of France; seeing no one scarcely but my children and the poor, and holding no conversations on religious subjects.

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order, beauty and light within."

But to continue. My Hungarian friend introduced me to all that wonderful hidden life of Rome which is utterly unknown to ordinary visitors—I mean the beautiful network of charitable institutions which nowhere exist in such perfection as in the Eternal City, and of which, as an English Protestant, I had hitherto seen nothing.

In this way I became acquainted with many eminent and holy souls, both men and women, who did more to remove my prejudices by their daily lives than volumes of controversy would have done. Still, I had difficulties, especially with regard to devotion to our Lady. I remember perfectly well having been given a Catholic manual, and carefully cutting out and pasting down all such portions as were treated of the Rosary or the Immaculate Conception! On one occasion, at Countess A—'s House, I again met Dr. Manning. But he did not encourage me in any way, and I felt that if I wanted his advice, I must seek it directly, he would not be the first to open the subject.

At last, I sought him, and he, after going on for so many months in my own mind, and intensely anxious for explanations which would clear away my doubts and difficulties, I wrote to him and asked him to see me. Even then he hesitated; and I mention this because it is the fashion for Protestants to affirm that he moved heaven and earth to make excommunicates, whereas, as far as I was concerned, the reverse was the fact. He emphatically left me alone. And although, at my earnest request, he at last consented to give me some instruction on certain points, and met me at a convent for that purpose once or twice during my stay at Rome; yet, in each and all of these cases, it was that I sought him, not he! Even later, what I have learned has been principally from books to which he referred me, and which I was to study and work out the conclusions for myself without his aid. I think he was afraid of his personal influence over me from my old associations, and wished me to be thoroughly persuaded in my own mind without any human motive. He did use the greatest possible service, however, at this time, by kneeling by my side at Mass once or twice, and pointing out to me the exact places in the service, which ever after I was enabled to follow with ease and comfort. If Catholics who are helping Anglicans into the Church would only do this more often, one of the greatest stumbling-blocks of Protestants would be removed. I think that Catholics who have been used to the service of the Mass from their infancy, and can never recollect the time when they did not understand it, have no idea of the difficulty it presents to Anglicans as Protestants; they have not a notion of following the intentions of the priest without the words; and I do not think they can arrive at it either, till they have thoroughly mastered the sense of the whole. To do this, they must begin by studying the service exactly, and by the constant habit of saying one beautiful and sublime whole, culminating in the Great Sacrifice.

The result of my visit to Rome was that I resolved to halt no longer between two opinions, but to try by every means in my power to arrive at the truth. I felt, in fact, that I could no longer set it aside—that to do so would be resisting grace, and imperiling my very salvation. When I returned to England I found several of my most intimate friends in the same state of mind as myself, and we agreed that all we could do was to go on studying the question, and above all to pray earnestly for light and guidance. One practice we followed—which I would earnestly recommend to all honest seekers after truth and the Divine will—namely, the daily repetition of the prayer to the Holy Ghost, "Deus, qui corda fidelium," etc., and of the *Veni Sancte Spiritus*. I have known many people helped into the Church by this means.

After all, it was not a question of A. or B. It concerned not the individual soul, but the souls of all who are to be saved for us. Also, whatever may be the effect of arguments or logic on the human mind, I am more and more convinced that conversions are not brought about by those means. I have seen people entirely convinced intellectually, and yet remain outside the Church, and it is the gentle wind of God's Spirit which moves a soul to follow its inspirations. That is what people mean when they say, "they believe not with the intellect but with the heart," and that "true or false before the matter at hand, the Catholic Faith does not approve itself to their intellect or their reasoning powers, but that there is a Spirit stronger than theirs—even the Holy Spirit of God, which touches them to the quick, so that they can find no answer but in the words of Samuel; "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth."

With me (as with so many others at this very moment) all human considerations were perpetually urging me the other way. I had been left sole guardian of my children by my husband's will; but I had already received notice that if I took this step my husband's family would either remove them from me, or, at least, make them wards in court. Of the justice of such a course this is not the place to speak. Enough that it is the law of England that children can thus be forcibly estranged from their mother and natural protector, in spite of the will of the father, if that mother, by following the different faith I had promised my husband on his death-bed that I would never leave his children; nor entrust them to the guardianship of others. And I found myself therefore in a great strait, not knowing exactly what the powers of the Court of Chancery might do for me (in which case my promise would be broken) or that they would be exposed to influences which above all others I most dreaded, while I should, powerless to interfere; and that, from my own act. In this great moral difficulty, too, I had no one to advise or

help me. I felt strongly also how useless it would be to seek counsel from either side. My Anglican friends would, of course, say one thing, and my Catholic ones the other.

But there were other circumstances which increased my difficulties. With the Catholic yearnings of my whole life, I had indeed my husband to begin, and I had myself completed, the restoration of all the churches on the property. We had taken away all the pews, put in large altars, restored the patron saint in each church; and, as crucifixes were not possible, had put a representation of the Crucifixion, not in small medallions but in large and separate figures, in all the east-end windows; so that the people might, at any rate, have their thoughts led up to that great Mystery of our Redemption. Moreover, since my husband's death, I had restored and fitted up, in the most Catholic manner possible, the chapel in the house, which formed part of the church of the old Benedictine Monastery which formerly stood on this site. Here I had persuaded the chaplain to use the Complete service on Sunday evenings and other prayers on Fridays, taken from Catholic manuals. I was organist, and I had carefully selected none but Catholic hymns; while the Communion on all saints' days and festivals, on which occasions the chapel was always beautifully decorated with flowers and lights. All this, it became a Catholic, I must give up.

But there was one thing which touched me even more nearly. My husband had built a beautiful church in the village at the cost of £30,000. He and I had completed its adornment by bringing the rarest marbles and mosaics from Italy; beautiful lamps from Venice, and carving and painted glass from Germany. Here, too, he was buried; and my greatest consolation, since his death, had been to pray in the church, and in the crypt, where his dear coffin lay, and which I had fitted up almost as a private chapel. How great would be the struggle before I could give up the daily service in this church, associated as it was with all the happiest years of my life, and now sanctified by being his last resting-place, no one but myself and God knew. In all my years of office, also, the Bishop of the diocese had been my very dear brother; how then could I take a step which I knew would not only injure him in the estimation of his flock, but also wound him to the very heart? Besides all these reasons, human pride was ever present because I was the possessor of the whole neighborhood, where I was looked upon as the promoter of every good work, and consequently admired by good people of every class? How exchange this for scorn and obloquy, and the contempt and distrust of all those whose good opinion I most valued?

I dwell upon these temptations (for such they were) because I see every reproduced more or less in almost every case of conversion; and I know that hundreds are kept back at this moment by similar considerations. To me, the suffering was peculiarly great, because all my life long I had leaned so much on human sympathy and human approbation. I had been the spoiled child of my father, the spoiled sister of my only brother, the spoiled wife of my only husband, the spoiled wife of one of the best and noblest of men. Since his death the same affectionate love and appreciation had surrounded me, both for his sake and my own. And all this I felt I must relinquish if I became a Catholic, and go out, emphatically, into the world. My whole nature shrank from it to such a degree that I recollect saying to a friend who was talking on the subject of the difference between the two Churches: "Don't enquire, don't try and see if you would not be as utterly miserable as I am!"

TO BE CONTINUED.

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