

# One Easter at Highmore.

DR. J. WILLIAM FISCHER.

## I.

On a cold October morning in the early eighties, the humble little rectory at Highmore held two happy hearts. The final, decisive words that made Kenneth Cameron and Cecile Emery man and wife had just been spoken, and in the eyes of good old Father Francis—God rest his soul—there lurked a look of intense joy. Often in the twilight he had knelt before the altar holding sweet converse with his God, asking blessings for his children of the parish, and Cecile's name was never forgotten. Often he wondered whether she would really marry Cameron. He was rich, but what, after all, were riches, when the man she loved possessed not even that priceless pearl,—the true faith?

Kenneth Cameron was a man about thirty-five, well preserved and quite good looking, and in his open, frank countenance there was a look of strong determination. His father had been a minister in a little village surrounded by Scottish hills, and shepherds who tended their flocks on the hills were his parishioners. He was a good, honest, old soul, and when Kenneth, his only child, kissed him good-bye years ago and left Scotland to make a fortune in other lands, his heart nearly broke. Kenneth came right to Highmore; he was poor then, but he had pluck, back-bone and endurance, and thus, in a few years, he had made and saved quite a fortune. Now, he was the wealthiest man in the city, and his marriage to pretty Cecile Emery—the brightest rose in all the country side—was just, at this moment, the general topic of the hour. Cecile Emery came of good, sound Catholic stock, was quite accomplished, and in every way suited to become the wife of Highmore's wealthy broker.

"May God bless you both!" Father Francis said thoughtfully, as they were about to leave the rectory. "And remember your promise, Kenneth! You have plucked the fairest flower in all my parish and I hope that bitter sorrows may never mar or blight its beauty—good-bye!" and he shook hands

with both of them vigorously and closed the door. When they were gone, Father Francis sank down before a statue of the Blessed Lady and prayed that the man, whom he had just made happy, might not be lost to the Church, and some day would receive the gift of faith. Cecile was a saint of earth, he, thought, and surely her pure, Christian character would do much to this end. Words and exhortations had been useless; they had fallen on barren, hard rocks. Cecile had married the man she loved; she was happy, but in all her joy, there was the undertone of a regret, and she dreamed of the future and wondered in her soul if her dream would ever come true.

For days and days Father Francis' words rang in Kenneth's ears: "Remember your promise!" the strange mystic voices said, and he could not hush them. Perhaps, in some far-off day these self-same voices would remind him of his sacred pledge. Let us hope that, when they did speak, he heard them!

Thirteen years had passed. The Camerons were still counted the wealthiest family in Highmore, and, to outward appearances, really deserved the distinction. Kenneth had changed little in these years, and Clyde, his young son, now ten years old, was the dead picture of him. Cecile had changed much in looks. One would hardly have known her, with her troubled, sad face. The years were weaving light silver strands through her hair, and no one in all Highmore but herself, knew the reason. Kenneth had been a traitor to the promise he made to Father Francis years ago, and this was the strange power that made her so unhappy. The fires of bigotry that had been burning in Kenneth's soul, lit up in all their virulence, one morning after breakfast. The baby was a month old and had not yet been baptized, and Cecile's suffering, mother-heart was bleeding with anguish.

"Don't you think it is time baby was being baptized, Kenneth?" she asked, gladly.

"Baby baptized?" he interrupted hot-