

KITTY.

[From the Messenger of the Sacred Heart.]

The weather-stained little cottage across the way, with its bare windows staring dismally at the passers-by, had been so long untenanted, that I felt a positive pleasure when I noticed one fine morning, its windows and faded door thrown open to admit the warm spring air, and some persons busily at work within. On the following day the scant, poor looking furniture arrived. "Poor people our neighbors evidently are," I remarked to my sister, and poor they surely were.

Next morning, a balmy Sunday morning, as I stepped out on the sidewalk on my way to early Mass, a little girl came from the cottage door, and coming up to me, asked shyly if I could tell her where the Catholic church was.

I introduced myself to my little neighbor, and invited her to my pew. The child's face brightened, and we chatted familiarly until we reached the church door.

Kitty Lee, that was the name she gave me, was very plainly but very tidily dressed. I noticed that though shy she was not awkward, but perfectly well-bred, and decidedly an intelligent child.

Woman-like, my heart went out to her at once, and I mentally registered myself Kitty's friend from that hour. During Mass I was much edified by her rapt attention; her dark, luminous eyes were riveted on the altar, from that her gaze did not wander once, though she was in a strange church and among strange people.

On our way home she told me that they came from Michigan; that the family consisted of her father, mother and herself; that her mother had been an invalid for some time, adding, with a quiver of the sensitive little mouth, that "Mother was not growing any stronger."

Next day I called on Mrs. Lee, and saw that consumption was well advanced in its fatal work. The poor little home had only the barest necessaries, but the scant furniture was neatly arranged, and all was scrupulously clean. Mrs. Lee was surely a woman of refinement, and she interested me not less than did Kitty.

After that I visited her daily, for poor Kitty was her only nurse, and did all of the house work, though she was but thirteen years.

After some time, finding that they were not members of the Holy League, I explained its object to them. Both eagerly desired to be enrolled in its ranks. "And Mr. Lee also," I said (I had not yet met him) "will not he too join it?" A flush passed swiftly over the pale face of the invalid.

"O, dear Miss R—" she said, "you know how careless and how wilful too, men often are in these matters. I think we had better wait a little."

"Certainly," I said, as cheerily as I could, for I felt I had unwittingly laid bare a cause of anxiety they were too willing to conceal.

"We shall wait, and Kitty will join me in praying not only for him but for a brother of mine who is not yet a member. Shall we not, Kitty?"

Kitty's eyes smiled back as she said, "I'll try, Miss R—"

"That reminds me, Miss Lee," I remarked, "of a beautiful thing I once heard a celebrated missionary say in a discourse addressed to the Children of Mary. As it was the prayer of Martha and Mary, he said, that touched the Heart of Our Lord and moved Him to raise Lazarus from the dead, so must the prayers of sisters, mothers and wives ever rise to God and move Him to have mercy on erring brothers, sons and husbands. 'That is part of your mission,' the Father said, 'and there are few families throughout the land that have not a Lazarus lying dead, and 'tis your pleadings with the Heart of Jesus that must restore him to life, the beautiful life of grace.' I have often thought since I heard that sermon," I added, "that we do not make sufficient use of the magnificent power of intercessory prayer."

The tears were falling fast down Mrs. Lee's face, and Kitty's too, were flowing. "Ah!" she said, "tis lack of faith in us, for our Lord's promises surely stand true. God forgive us that we avail ourselves so little of His mercy, and starve in the midst of abundance."

One evening as I was leaving the cottage after my customary visit to Mrs. Lee, I met her husband on the doorstep. 'Twas our first meeting. Kitty,

who had accompanied me to the door, introduced us to each other, by saying, "Father, this is Miss R—" He bowed with a quiet grace, thanked me briefly for my visits to his wife, and passed in. "A drunkard surely," I said mentally, for the face, once unmistakably handsome, bore as unmistakably the disfiguring marks of intemperance.

Evening after evening as Mr. Lee passed our door, returning from his employment,—and the wonder was how he kept any position,—I noticed his gait becoming more unsteady.

Day after day, his wife drifted nearer to the shore of eternity. At length when she felt the end was close at hand, she told me her story, the story of a broken heart. Why should I repeat it here? Similar stories are, alas, being reproduced daily. And the pitying Angels of God are recording with tears the tale of man's degradation.

"Strange, is it not?" said the dying woman to me; "but of late I have had hope, that seems almost a certainty, that my husband will reform. I know Kitty is wearying Heaven with prayers for him, more especially since the day you told us what that good missionary said. I think every cross,—and she has her share, poor child,—is borne patiently for that purpose. But O, Miss R—, what will become of her when I am gone?" I promised the weeping woman that I would do everything good in my power for Kitty.

A few days afterwards her sad life ended; then began truly Kitty's life of brave, patient endurance. She was all loving and dutiful attention to her father, who, for a few weeks after his wife's death, showed signs of reformation, but, alas for the weakened will unaided by the grace of God, which he sought not, for again he had recourse to his deceitful comforter.

Poor Kitty! she never spoke of his fault, but was assiduous to please him at all times. His meals were prepared with care, his clothing washed and neatly mended by this child of thirteen years, who, I believe, added the perfume of prayer to the every kindly office.

One of our promoters, who, admired the child's tender devotion to the Sacred Heart, had given her a large, exquisite painting of the Sacred Heart. Another supplied lamp and oil and a miniature altar and Kitty was radiant with pleasure.

"I shall bless the house where an image of My Heart is honored," that's one of Our Lord's promises, is it not?" she asked me one day.

"Yes, Kitty," I answered; "and our faithful Lord keeps His every promise."

Then the poor, tired little head went down on my lap, and the child sobbed piteously; but, as if to defend her father against my unspoken thought, she said: "Father used to be so kind and good, and indeed, indeed, he is yet, only when he drinks. He has been drinking hard only for three years. While he received Holy Communion he could master himself; but he can't do it alone—I mean he can't keep himself right without Our Lord; and now, he does not even say a prayer. I get so frightened sometimes. Dear Miss R—, wouldn't it be awful if Our Lord got tired waiting for him? I think of that all the time, and pray that the Sacred Heart will take pity on him."

"Our Lord will wait, Kitty," I steadied my voice to say, for I felt that the Heart, Whose love is deeper and broader than tenderest human love, outraged though it had been, would, even for the sake of the little bleeding heart that offered itself in expiation, send again its rejected graces to the poor fallen father.

"Do not lose courage, the Heart of Jesus never loses its mercy."

"O, I never really give up hope, I know that would offend Our Lord, and I never, never wish to do that," was the fervent reply, and my little friend composed herself, and I rose to leave, humbled by the brave faith of this simple child.

One evening at dusk I went across to the cottage to make Kitty my daily visit and give the usual lesson in housekeeping, while Kitty, all unconsciously, gave me such beautiful lessons in patience, in meek submission to God's holy will, in tender, loyal devotion to the Sacred Heart.

As I stood at the open door-way, I paused with my hand upon the bell-pull. A loud, angry voice, and then low, entreating tones of my little teacher, reached me. "O Father, please don't. Miss Edith gave the lamp—"

"Stop, I'll break the thing to pieces,

I'll have no more of this silly waste." Again, the pleading voice: "Father, dear father, do not strike Our Lord's image!"

I could bear no more, but rushed into the little sitting room where Kitty stood at bay (I can express her attitude no better) before her little shrine, her arms outspread to shield the pictured Heart from insult. O, what a sight! I shall bear its teaching forever graven in my soul. The child typified, to me, all holy, fervent souls whose love, and prayer, and self sacrifice, and loyal-hearted devotion come between God and the ingratitude, the selfishness, the sins of His thankless creatures symbolized by this man, who in his madness struck blindly, as all sinners do, at the Heart of his bountiful, merciful God.

I sprang to Kitty's side. "Stand back, you unfortunate man," I cried; "do not dare to touch this picture!"

Some instinct of manhood prevented his striking me.

"I tell you, Miss R—," he shouted, "it's eyes are staring at me whichever way I turn. I can't stand that upbraiding look."

The man's eyes were blazing with delirium. "Come to the next room, Mr. Lee," I managed to say, for I was trembling in every limb. "You are ill. Pray excuse the way in which I spoke. Rest here," and I led him to the faded sofa. He submitted, and in a little while Kitty, whom I had sent flying to my sister for a potion whose efficacy I knew, came in. He took the medicine without a demur, but muttered, "God! how those eyes follow me."

Soon the composing draught did its work. He fell into a heavy slumber. I sat beside him, but Kitty hastened to kneel before Our Lord's imaged Heart, and pray. I watched her through the half-opened door, the thin hands closely clasped, and every line of her face showing the intensity of her desire.

Ah! what did not the pleading heart of the child say to the listening Heart of God?

Loneliness, poverty, neglect, unkindness: to be freed from none of these did my little friend pray; well I knew that.

"She will win," I thought as I watched, "and the anger of the Omnipotent God will yield, will melt, before the earnest, persevering prayer of a child."

And she did win. For weeks Mr. Lee lay ill, but rose from his bed a new man. As soon as he was able to walk, he staggered into the room where the sentinel lamp burned, and falling on his knees sobbed out his deep contrition.

Once more he knelt before the long deserted altar-railing, and once more did God take up his abode in the soul of His repentant creature.

Six months after, they left the city. The influence of some kind persons had obtained a good position for Mr. Lee, which took him to the far Pacific Coast. I shall probably never see Kitty again.

"Dear Miss R—," she said at parting, "I should feel so sad to leave you, only now it seems as if I never could be sad again, Father is so good. Please put my thanks in the Messenger; I shall not see it, but I'll know it will be there. O, didn't God answer well?"

And so I send Kitty's thanksgiving in this form, dear Messenger, adding that whatever your readers may think of my little heroine, there was beauty, and pathos, and poetry enough in her life to make it seem charming to me. And there was faith, and endurance, and patience, and prayer enough in it to shame me into being a better woman.

E. R.

Worse Than Orphaned.

The suit pending in the courts at East St. Louis, on behalf of fifteen-year-old Daisy Graham, to free her from her mother, and also from her adopted mother, Ada Huntley, a notorious woman of St. Louis, is now going on. Public sympathy is with the girl and her good friends and guardians, the Sisters of the Ursuline Convent. The woman Huntley says:

"I loved the child as if she were my own, and did all I could to keep her from learning my true life. I can now only let matters take their course, since she knows my life. I can't do anything, and it is wrong to think I would. They might have known that it was the child's happiness that I cared for, and nothing else. She never expressed a wish I would not gratify, and she could have anything I possessed for the asking."

"I don't know who has done this, and all I want is that she be sent to some other convent. I have not been fairly

dealt with in this matter, and both the girl's happiness and what little happiness I had have been wrecked without cause or reason. The Sisters and all those who ever took care of the child for me knew who and what I was. All I ever asked of them was to keep the child in ignorance of my life. Why they told her, or what reason they have for doing all this now, I do not know."

Those interested in the child's welfare will pay no attention to any promises the two women may make, but will see that the child is legally freed from them.

Since the foregoing was put in type, the Judge has decided that the girl should be given into the custody of William A. Dill and wife of East St. Louis, who had some time previous with the consent of the mother, been decreed an order of adoption. Mr. Dill is manager of the Terminal Railroad. He and Mrs. Dill will make Daisy heir to all their property, and will keep her at the Alton convent until her education is finished.

A Cruel Exhibition.

"I have fancied," said a woman the other day, "that the hunting field developed only a most manly sport, and one against which no objection could be brought, particularly in these days of anised seed bags. I never saw a meet until a short time ago, when visiting some friends in a hunting country, but I am in no hurry to see another after my experience. The field got on well, and we in the carriage drove half a mile down the road to see them cross. Shortly they came, the dogs in full cry and the riders almost abreast. Two fences were taken and then the course turned, and we were preparing to go on again when a delayed rider suddenly appeared at full gallop. So the carriages stood still to watch him.

"His horse was evidently refusing to jump, which had put him behind, and as he approached the fence near us I could see him dig his spurs into the horse's sides to urge him on. The animal came up magnificently to the very rails, when he stopped and stood still. His rider swore and wheeled the horse, riding back half way across the field and then advanced again, pounding his spurred heels against the horse at every bound and plying his whip vigorously across his flanks. But the animal stopped as before when the fence was reached. And then their ensued to me a most painful scene. The rider was maddened and mortified beyond all control. Again and again he rode his horse back, beating him about the neck and head with his heavy loaded whip and using his spurs like trip hammers, the animal refusing every time to take the leap.

"Once the infuriated rider gave his mount a blow above the eye that rang out like the crack of a pistol. The horse drooped and quivered and seemed about to fall, and I turned my head to avoid the sight. But he did not, and shortly raised his head to receive more cruel thumps and blows. It was a contest between brute and brute, with, it seemed to me, the dignity on the side of the four legged one. The animal did not balk nor kick nor betray any viciousness; for some reason he could not take the leaps, and being denied speech took the only way to show it."—Her Point of View in New York Times.

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"Instructor: 'What does the soldier do when he dies?' Soldier: 'I don't know.' Instructor: 'You don't know, you donkey, that when a soldier dies he simultaneously severs his connection with the army.'"