

PRETTY MISS NEVILLE

BY B. M. CROKER

CHAPTER X

"THE DEATH COACH"

"And nothing can we call our own, but Death— King Richard III.

I was determined not to see Maurice again before his departure. Supposing grandfather were to send for me, and institute a formal and appropriate leave-taking. Suppose he were to order Maurice to see my engagement, and our parting, with a kiss!

I became hot all over at the mere idea. However, it would be no less terrible to Maurice than it would be to me, I said to myself, with a giggle of triumphant complacency, as I fled with accelerated haste toward a favorite hiding place—an old copper beech—and hoisting myself nimbly into the fork, climbed up among the shady branches, where having found my desired haven, I seated myself, very much out of breath, and with an usually brilliant complexion.

I remained in that thick, wide bough of the beech, till I heard the work-people's bell ring at 6 o'clock, and then I knew that he must be gone, and that I might descend in safety; so I lost no time in scrambling down, and returning to the haunts of man. I found that no one appeared to be aware of my engagement to Maurice; I was still treated as a child, and snubbed and lectured as much as ever.

Grandfather never alluded to it; neither did Mr. French. Could I have dreamed of it? I asked myself more than once. As autumn advanced, grandfather distinguished his accustomed walk round the farm, then his outings diminished to the garden, and finally altogether; he was what the country people called "greatly failed," and would sit cowering over the fire for hours at a time. I pitted him, and did what I could to brighten him up; bringing in all the news about the place—descriptions of the new calves, of the turk-rick, an account of the sudden death of Patsy White's fat pig, etc., and even braced up my courage, and offered to read to him every evening, an offer he accepted indifferently, saying: "I might if I liked," but after a little he looked upon it as a regularly established custom, and I read the paper to him for at least an hour after dinner. When I had picked out every morsel of news of the smallest interest at Gallow, he would lean back in his chair, cover his head with his red silk handkerchief, and remain perfectly silent until bedtime.

Whether he was asleep or not it was impossible to say; I think not, as I often heard him muttering to himself, and sighing heavily. Usually as the clock struck ten, he would take his stick, whistle to Snap, and hobble off to his own apartment.

Early in the spring, in bleak March weather, a bad cold confined him to his room.

"I will never go down-stairs again, never leave this alive," was his invariable answer to all inquiries. In vain I endeavored to cheer him up.

"You are not so old as Patsy White," I would say, "and he walked into Kilcool to second Mass last Sunday."

"I'll never see Kilcool again, and I don't care either," grandfather would reply. "My day is over, and I'm not sorry; you are provided for at any rate, Nora—no Beresford ever broke his word." He seemed to take great pleasure in this reflection, and would repeat it over and over again, with unwearied satisfaction.

"You and Miss Fluker will live here till Maurice comes home," he said to me one day. "Be a good wife, a good woman—like your grandmother, God bless her!"

He had never alluded to grandfather before, and now he constantly spoke of her. "Will she know me, do you think?" he asked earnestly.

"This thirty-five years since she left me—a young, active, good-looking fellow, and now I'm an old crippled, broken-down dotard." I looked on this kind of talk as a very bad sign, and when big Mary informed me, in an awe-struck tone, one morning, as she stood at my bedside, armed with my hot-water can, "that ere last night Peter Cassidy had seen the Death Coach, turning into the berry-in-ground," I no longer entertained the slightest hopes of grandfather's recovery.

"The Death Coach," so called and firmly believed in by the country people, was invariably described as a big black carriage, with a black hammercloth, a black coachman, and four coal-black horses. Previous to the death of a Beresford this sombre vehicle was constantly seen driving about the roads on moonlight nights, frightening the belated wayfarer into fits. I had never beheld it, thank goodness! but I had heard it spoken of over and over again. Big Mary declared that it had passed her in the avenue one evening, and she stood aside thinking it was a real carriage. It had four black horses, and was driven by a coachman with a three-cornered hat on his head, and a decorated coat of curly hair. She did not see his face, nor those of the two footmen stuck up behind. According to Mary, the wheels only made a faintly creaking noise as the coach swept by and turned off the avenue and drove right through the closed massive gates of the berry-in-ground.

"After that," Mary would say, "I never remember anything till I found myself in the scullery, with little Mary a-holding feathers to me nose."

Tom Connor went so far as to declare that he had actually driven in "the Death Coach."

He stated that he and two other boys were returning from the fair of Dundrum, about 10 o'clock at night as sober as His Holiness himself; his two companions went into a cabin to get a light for their pipes, leaving him standing alone on the road when what should come by but a splendid coach-and-four! Seeing Tom, the coachman pulled up sharp, and an elegant gentleman stepped out, with his hat in his hand. I quote Tom's description verbatim: "Would a sate home be any convenience to you, Mr. Connor?" says he.

"In troth an' it would, says I, 'for I'm a mighty poor walker at the best of times, and it's four miles to the Cross of Gallow, if it's a yard."

"And in you thin, says he, 'handiest an' purest piece of drivin' I was going to take a ride in."

"In was second I found meself in the stable yard of Gallow, just as if I had been dropped there by the fairies, with the coach, and hares, and all standing forment me, just as I got out.

"'Good-night, Mr. Connor,' says the coachman, touching up the wheels, 'I'm going round to take some of the family out for an airing,' pointing his whip toward the berry-in-ground; and with that he turned the horses and drove out of the yard (an awkward corner even for a pair), the handiest an' purest piece of drivin' I ever lapped my two eyes on."

"When I walked into the kitchen, I looked so mighty queer and unsteady, that says little Mary: "Tom, alannah, whatever ails you? You're not yourself at all!"

"Sure I'm after taking a rowl in 'the Death Coach,'" says I. With that she let a screech you might hear in Kilcool. It's herself can tell you the turn I give her: and the two boys that was wid me were bet up entirely to make out what became of me; and how it was I got home so long afore them."

"Whether it was 'the Death Coach,' or the bleak, bitter, spring weather, grandfather showed no signs of getting better. The doctor declared that he would be all right again when the warm days came, but I think he scarcely meant what he said. One morning I was awakened by Miss Fluker, who was standing at my bedside, in her red flannel dressing-gown, with a very long face.

"Nora," she said, in a hushed, low tone, "Nora, your grandfather has gone at last!"

"Dead!" I exclaimed, starting up. "Yes, he was quite dead when Mary went in to give him his tea, at six o'clock this morning. He must have passed away almost in his sleep."

Miss Fluker sat down on the edge of the bed, and we both commenced to cry, I profusely, as was my wont—Miss Fluker very moderately indeed.

I was very sorry for grandfather, though I had never been what I could call fond of him. I was too much in awe of him for that; but he was my only relation except Maurice, and somehow I felt utterly alone in the world now.

There was a certain stir in the house. The strange, wizened, little gentleman came down from Dublin, and took everything into his own hands. He was grandfather's solicitor. The funeral was conducted with the utmost pomp and quite regardless of any expense. It was attended by crowds from far and near, and was considered the greatest and grandest funeral that had been seen in the county for twenty years. So said big Mary, with unconcealed triumph, as she brought me my dinner on a tray to the school-room. Miss Fluker remained down stairs, to preside over a handsome cold collation, that had been provided for mourners from afar. In her best black silk, and with her handkerchief to her eyes, she posed as a dear and valued friend of the family, and old Mr. Beresford's right hand!

I was obliged to descend to hear the will read, and I never felt so miserably shy and awkward in all my life as when I made my way into the drawing-room, thronged with strangers—to me, but all old friends according to their own showing, and benevolently anxious to hear how things were left.

Everything went to Maurice, except a thousand pounds which grandfather had scraped together in some marvelous manner; that was left to his beloved granddaughter, Nora O'Neill, as well as all the lace and jewels belonging to her late grandmother, Mary Beresford—the said jewels being heirlooms; but as my heir and nephew, Maurice Beresford is under a solemn engagement to marry the aforementioned Nora O'Neill, I am in no way defrauding him of his just possessions." At this clause the eyes were turned to me as though worked by one spring. I felt myself becoming crimson to the roots of my hair, as I said with my hands locked in my lap, and my eyes now glued to the floor. Mr. French was appointed my guardian until I was twenty-one years of age; and with a few trifling legacies to servants the will was concluded, and the meeting broke up.

After a week or two we resumed our old monotonous life once more. We missed grandfather a good deal, although of late he had been confined to his room. His vacant place at table, his empty chair by the fire-side, were daily, silent reminders of "the poor ole master," as the servants called him.

However, Miss Fluker soon promoted herself to his seat at table, and Snap appropriated his chair by the fire-side, and it would have been a bold man, or dog, who dared to question his tenancy—he presented

a vision of flaming eyes and distended jaws to any one who came within what he considered a respectful distance. In the mornings I read English history and classics with Miss Fluker, and practised an hour on an old rattle-trap, called by courtesy a piano. We dined at the bar; but bar had healthy hour of one, and my afternoons were altogether mine own—too much my own, if the truth were known. I had no confederates. Deb was away from home on a protracted visit to her grandmother, and I had no one to speak to, and no companion save Carlo.

Miss Fluker generally betook herself to Kilcool to see her friends the Misses Curry, two old maids that Rody and I had nicknamed "Plain Curry" and "Chicken Curry." "Plain Curry," or Miss Curry, was really very ugly. She wore not the traditional wreath of roses, but a profuse bay front, with a well defined black net parting, which was anything but a good match for her luxuriant grey eyebrows. She had a terrible cast in one eye, and had long ceased to think of herself as being either young or beautiful—a hallucination she still rigidly adhered to with regard to her sister Selina, or "Chicken Curry."

She talked to her, and spoke of her, as if she were still a gay young thing in her teens; whereas Miss Selina was five-and-forty if she was an hour, although she affected a very juvenile style of dress, wore coquetish little hats, large false plaits, and quantities of pale blue ribbon encircling her skinny throat, and floating yards behind her. She bitterly bemoaned the scarcity of young people in the neighborhood—young men especially—and really and truly considered herself what her sister called her, "an unsophisticated girlish darling."

Both Plain and Chicken were inveterate gossipers, and knew to a spoonful what people were having for dinner from the mere smoke of their kitchen chimneys. Of course, they were well up in all our family affairs, and could have passed a stiff examination on the amount of Maurice's income, what he allowed for keeping up Gallow, etc., etc. And as for my proceedings, they were viewed with microscopic inspection. I did not get a new pair of shoes or have two helpings of pudding without their knowledge. I knew that I formed a fertile topic of discussion, as Miss Fluker frequently enraged me by saying: "Miss Selina Curry thinks it such a pity you are so familiar with the people about the place—you should not be allowed to speak to them, in her opinion;" or "Miss Curry is quite concerned to see you hold yourself so badly; she noticed you particularly last Sunday in church; and she says she never saw a girl of your age with so little manners;" or, "Both the Misses Curry think you have such a singularly ill-tempered expression," and other gratifying and flattering criticisms.

Miss Selina Curry and Miss Fluker were sworn friends. They kissed with effusion when they met, called each other "darling Selina," and "dearest Sophia," and went into raptures over each other's dress and personal appearance. It was indeed a most touching sight to see them seated side by side on the ginger-colored sofa that adorned the Currys' drawing-room, hand locked in hand.

Oh, those terrible teas, at which I have been a reluctant guest! Tea? Hot water, milk, and sugar, a few chunks of moldy sponge-cake, and a small plate of bread and butter. Nor was there a feast of reason and a flow of soul to make amends. Mr. French and Miss Selina, Miss Fluker, and Miss Curry, talked "parish" and played whist; while I stared out of the window on that lively prospect, the grassplot before the door, in summer, or amused myself with going over the sketches, annuals, shells, and rubbish of the Curry drawing-room, for the hundredth time, if the festivity took place in winter.

At 10 o'clock some very weak negus was introduced on a black tray; and after many thanks for a delightful evening" from Miss Fluker, and sunny exclamations from our hostesses, we would wrap ourselves up, and take our leave, escorted to the gates of Gallow by gallant Mr. French.

Mr. French was quite alone, and sometimes I would walk down to Kilcool and pay him a visit. He and his house, his wardrobe, and his "spirited" children were kept in order by an old family servant called Honor Casey, a square-faced elderly woman, with a warm temper and heart to correspond, who held the reins of government at the Rectory, and between whom and the Misses Curry a feud had raged for years.

Mr. French devoted most of his leisure to the attempted resuscitation of the Irish language. To this end he slaved away for hours in his study, at times totally oblivious of dinner, and tea, and the outside world—till brought to his senses by Honor.

He had little or no authority over his son and daughter, unless roused, and carried out of himself, as was the case on "Mandarin Sunday." He did a great deal of good in an unobtrusive way, and never could say "no" to any one. Consequently the rectory kitchen was the rendezvous for half the vagrants in the county. He would meet them when out about the parish, listen sympathetically to their various stories, and send them up to the house to have their wants supplied—"tay and sugar, a bag of praties, or a lock of male" (meal), as the case might be.

Honor would receive the intruders with anything but open arms, but

their unflinching answer—"The master sent us." His reverence bid me give you a call," silenced every objection.

"An' it's another can o' buttermilk the day, Peggy Mooney 'Tis a cow to yourself you'll want." An' it's you again, Paddy Kearney? 'Tis trying here all together you'll be next."

"'Troth and you have no shame nor decency, Kitty Maher, aitin' us out of house and home like this! Bad scran to you for beggars!"—would be some of her angry expostulations as she served these regular customers.

"'Tis little we mind ye, Honor honey; we all know your bark is worse nor your bite," the beggars would rejoice, as they shuffled themselves smilingly away.

During the summer holidays I had a long letter from Maurice; a very nice letter too—no lectures, no advice—hoping I was well and happy, giving an amusing sketch of his Indian life, and winding up with messages and inquiries for each and all of the community.

I also received a very warm invitation from Deb's grandmother, Mrs. West, asking me to accompany her and her grandchildren to the seaside.

I eagerly accepted her offer, and went away from home for the first time in my life, escorted up to Dublin by Mr. French.

Mrs. West was a very clever, charming, elderly lady of what is now called "the old school." She took a fancy to me, and treated me almost like another grandchild, and my visit stretched out to six months instead of six weeks. Two months we spent at the seaside, where I enjoyed myself beyond description, and added swimming to my sparse catalogue of accomplishments; the other four months were passed in Dublin, where I had the benefit of singing-lessons, and French and drawing classes at the Alexandra College. My wardrobe was modernized, my manners softened and toned down, thanks to Mrs. West's friendly advice and playful hints. I no longer whistled as I went about the house, nor sat with my elbows always on the table, nor burst into a room as if I were pursued by a mad dog.

I acquired a taste for reading; had made acquaintance with Sir Walter Scott, Tennyson, and many other delightful people, and returned to Gallow vastly improved in mind and body. I found myself treated with a considerable accession of respect by the entire household. Big and little Mary no longer called me "Nora." Now I was "Miss Nora," or "Miss O'Neill." As Miss O'Neill, my manners were more assured and self-possessed—my wardrobe lent them dignity.

Some one very wisely says that "no one is beyond the influence of their clothes;" and certainly, in my neat-fitting black costume and dainty Oxford shoes, I was by no means inclined, as of yore, for stalking through mud and bursting through bushes; and I felt that my dress involved a certain dignity of demeanor till now entirely foreign to my nature. I was conscious of being quite a stylish young lady, when I made my first formal call on the Currys, and I inwardly chuckled when I mentally compared the awful dowdy figure I had often seen at their ginger-colored ottoman to the vision of elegance that I now flattered myself I presented to their bewildered eyes.

Miss Fluker by no means approved of her grub thus bursting into a butterfly. She repressed my new ideas by every means in her power, lectured me sharply on conceit, extravagance, and love of dress; consigned my best dress and buttoned boots to the limbo of a wardrobe in her own room and did her best to make me look as uncouth and contrived as ever. But I rebelled stoutly, and refused to let down my hair and take up my frocks and found myself entering upon a new lease of life called me "Nora."

I was a stronger and more inveterate dislike than ever to Sophia Fluker. She little knew, and as little cared, how severely I mentally criticised her. She was a fixture at Gallow till I was twenty years of age, and she did not trouble her head to study appearances, as far as I was concerned. But, indeed, her violent temper, her indolence, her meanness and her greediness were only too patent to the whole household. I never knew such a woman for tea; she aroused her from her slumbers, tea awaited her at breakfast, tea was served at 4 o'clock, and various ill-timed cups of tea might be seen going upstairs at all sorts of odd hours. She invariably had a share in the kitchen tea, a most unwarrantable indulgence, as I know she stunted and little Mary in their tea and sugar money, although she had a handsome allowance from Maurice.

I also know that she made a fine privy purse out of her pickings and parings—nothing could be plainer than our fare (indeed, I might say humble, as far as I was concerned); and the way she bargained away the milk, eggs, butter, and vegetables would have reflected credit on a Jew! Our staple food was fowl; fowl roast and fowl boiled, fowl minced or fricasseed, fowl hot and fowl cold. Needless to state that the Kilcool butcher held us in deserved disdain.

"Faix, Miss Nora," exclaimed big Mary one day, as she contemptuously dashed the dinner on the table, "I wonder you're not afraid the feathers will grow out of you; ye ought to be ashamed to look a fowl in the face!"

TO BE CONTINUED

He who meets life as though it meant something worth finding out, and who expresses his best self, is the one who has the permanent basis of happiness.—H. W. Dresser.

THE RAILROAD MAGNATE

A TRUE STORY

By Rev. Richard W. Alexander

The telephone rang loudly in my room—"Well?" I said.

"Are you Father so-and-so?" "I am."

"This is the X—Hotel."

"Well?" "My husband is very ill. Can you come to the Hotel—Room 400?"

"I will come at once."

The voice was feminine, beseeching and full of sorrow. The hotel was one of the swell hotels of the city.

I took the holy oils and went on my mission. I found the lady to be a refined, educated woman, a good Catholic, the wife of a Southern man high up in a railroad company. He was of no religion, but had a kind and liberal heart. A gentleman, and a most courteous one. No matter how busy he was, if some poor timid little Sister asked to see him, and begged some favor of transportation for the poor, or for the Sisters, the pass was always given, and in answer to her gratitude she would only say, "Pray for me and mine," and needless to say the promise was fervently given. And now he was stricken, ill unto death, and his wife said:

"Oh! Father, he is so good and kind I cannot see him die, or let him die outside the Church!"

I asked her if she thought he objected in any way to her religion, if he was at all bigoted.

"On the contrary, Father, he said only yesterday that he couldn't help thinking of those good little Sisters who used to come to him for free transportation for a thousand charitable purposes—for missions of charity or mercy, and he was wondering what was in their religion that made them so self-sacrificing. He has always given me full sway in the practice of mine, and I have prayed for him all our years together that he might be of the faith before he dies. Because of these sentiments I sent for you."

"Is he worse than usual now?" I asked.

"I don't think so; I cannot give up hope. May God spare him to me!"

"Let me go to his room. Introduce me for what I am—a Catholic priest," I said.

"Let me see if he is strong enough," was her answer.

She went into the adjoining room and in a few minutes returned with a joyful countenance.

"He says he will be extremely pleased to see you, Father."

We entered the room of the patient. A man a little beyond middle age, a fine, prepossessing face and a splendid head crowned with iron grey hair. He reached out a finely-formed hand, and smiled a greeting.

"I have often met gentlemen of your cloth, Father," he said, "when I had the advantage of you. Now you have the advantage of me."

"I would be sorry to have the advantage of such a man as you are," I said heartily; "you deserve well of every one who has ever met you."

"My wife thinks that, Father, but I never heard anyone else say so on such short acquaintance."

"It isn't my profession to flatter," I said, "but it seems to me a higher Voice than either your wife's or mine has led me to you, and I mean to have a chat with you as only a friend can have with a friend."

"Just then, as if God's finger had moved visibly, the trained nurse entered and said the wife was wanted at the telephone, and both left the room. I was alone with the sick man. At once I seized the opportunity God gave me. I spoke boldly of his soul, of the absolute necessity of religion, of the meaning of the judgments of God. He listened, and when he spoke I felt a miracle of grace was working in his heart; for he said simply, he had been thinking it over for a long time; he believed all the mysteries of religion; he was convinced that the Catholic faith was the only true logical faith; he had watched his good wife, had listened to her, and had seen those Sisters of Charity and Mercy spending their lives for the betterment of others. The motive must be sublime, founded on absolute truth. And "Father," he said, "when those little nuns looked up at me, with tears of gratitude in their eyes, for a simple pass on our railroad, and told me they would pray for me, I felt as if some power was protecting me and keeping me for better things. Do you know I have never been baptized in any church? I would like you to baptize me in the Catholic Church."

"Gladly will I do so," I rejoined, "but had we not better wait until to-morrow, when I can tell you more about our holy religion?"

"I know enough about it to want to be baptized. Do it now, Father. Call my wife, if I will rejoice her heart to see me made a Catholic Christian."

As if in answer to the request, his wife entered.

"Mary, this Father is going to baptize me," he said simply.

His wife burst into tears, but they were tears of joy. It took only a few minutes to baptize this good, straightforward, sincere man, and I never saw such peace and content on a human face as settled on his when the ceremony was over and I said good-by.

"Come to-morrow, Father, there is

some more to be done," he said as I left.

How I pondered over the infinite love of God on my way back to the rectory. It was the prayers of his wife and the reward no doubt of his charity to those good religious that obtained the grace of conversion.

Next morning the papers had long columns about the railroad magnate who had been ill for some days at the X—Hotel.

He had died during the night.—The Missionary.

WOMAN SUFFRAGE AND THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND MARRIAGE SERVICE

A number of Woman Suffragists have made up their minds that the indignities laid upon their sex by the Church of England marriage service must cease. They are good enough, in general, to offer the authorities alternatives; either expunge the offensive matters, or else impose them on the bridegroom also. Thus, with regard to the question: "Who gives this woman to be married to this man?" they demand its removal, or the introduction of a similar question with regard to the bridegroom. Here they might have left well enough alone. Although the father or guardian of the bride is supposed to give some sign in reply to the question, he is often so distracted that he omits doing so, and the ceremony goes on. But the Suffragists are too much in earnest for such a compromise, so much in earnest that they have lost their sense of the ridiculous. True, the bride of eighteen, almost fresh from the schoolroom, so common a generation ago, is rarely seen to-day. Nevertheless, the youthful bride, if not always a fact, is a social fiction, of which the parent or guardian under whose tutelage she is supposed to have been up to her wedding day, is the sign. On the other hand, the bridegroom is never supposed to be a youth. Even if he be so, any allusion to his youthfulness is avoided as indiscreet. But as a general rule he is well out of adolescence, and has acquired in his trade or profession the means to support a home. It is quite natural for a middle-aged gentleman to give away the bride; for an elderly gentleman to reduce to momentary pupillage a florid, well-groomed man of the world of thirty or thereabouts, known on the exchange, or on the street, or in the courts, or at the operating table, as one who has made his way, would be absurd.

They do not stop here. Again they offer the alternative: either abolish the subordination of the wife to the husband included in the promise required from her to serve and obey, or introduce the subordination of the husband to the wife by making him give the same promise. Here they demand a metaphysical impossibility. Both can not be subordinate to one man; but in the case of heiresses, hunters, one must admit it to be rather absurd to hear a man with little more than the clothes he stands up in, perhaps with a large amount of debt, saying to the woman of millions, "with all my worldly goods I thee endow." Perhaps a new rubric might be introduced into the Book of Common Prayer to provide for the omission of the words by the bridegroom in this case, and, should the Suffragists wish "to create in his heart a sense of economic dependence" very real, to require the saying of them by the bride.

But their demands go still further. They object to the statement that "out of man's bosom took her beginning." They do not offer here the alternative they propose with regard to subordination; for they perceive that to add that "out of woman man in the same way had his beginning," would make a marriage service fit only for a madhouse. They demand, therefore, the removal of the words as perpetuating "a foolish and unscientific myth degrading to woman and flattering to an already excessive self-esteem on the part of man."

The bitter hostility to men which characterizes so much of the agitation for woman suffrage does not make for happiness in wedded lives; and one must fear for the future of a bride who looks upon her bridegroom as one whose excessive self-esteem has to be curbed. But this remark is merely practical. A much graver evil is the identification by the ladies who are leading this particular part of the movement of the cause of woman suffrage with the denial of the Holy Scriptures and of the Christian religion. For they go on to protest also against the admonition drawn from the Apostles that the man shall love his wife as Christ loves the Church, and the woman be loving and amiable, patient, and obedient to her husband, and in all quietness, sobriety and peace, be a follower of holy and godly matrons. We prefer not to quote their words regarding the first of these; with regard to the second, "We demand,"

say they, "that as the husband should equally comport himself in all quietness, sobriety and peace, and be a follower of holy and godly men, he equally should be told so." They do not seem to have studied their marriage service dispassionately, else they would have seen that this, which they demand, is told the husband implicitly in the summary of his much graver and more difficult obligations. If he is to take in a very special manner Christ Himself as the rule of his married life, it is obviously unnecessary to order him to be a follower of holy and godly men.

We have no liking for the Book of Common Prayer. As for its marriage service, whether in the English book or in the American, we must say that, compared with the Catholic rite it is necessarily a degradation, as the Protestant notion of the married contract is a degradation from the Catholic doctrine. But we do not quarrel with it because it retains the scriptural and Christian doctrine, though this is robbed of its fulness by the denial that Holy Matrimony is a sacrament. Neither are we expressing an opinion one way or the other on the question of woman suffrage. We simply point out that if its advocates make it turn on absurdities and what is worse, the denial of divine revelation and Christian teaching, they may drive all who reverence these into the ranks of their opponents.—HENRY WOODS, S. J., in America.

UNITY OF TRINITY

THREE IN ONE AND ONE IN THREE—INCARNATION THE FOUNDATION FOR ALL CHRISTIAN BELIEF—ITS REJECTION MEANS REJECTION OF WHOLE CHRISTIAN FAITH

The Incarnation is the grand central truth around which all other truths, so to speak, revolve. Hence, to reject the Incarnation, in its orthodox sense, is to reject the foundation upon which all Christian truth rests. It was implied in the ancient prophecies and was included in the expected Messiah. It is the germ of that dual truth which may be found in every human being.

This profound mystery tells how the Word was made flesh—that is, how the Son, the Second Person of the adorable, indivisible Trinity, and who is God, assumed flesh from the chaste womb of the Virgin, and made that human nature by hypostatic union with his Divine Person, His own nature, just the same as His Divine nature.

The Incarnation includes the Trinity, which forms the basis of orthodox faith and is so essential to Christianity that its denial would mean the rejection of the whole Christian faith. Objection is sometimes made that the Trinity is a denial of the unity of God, or that there is and can be only one God. This objection can be founded on nothing but a misconception of the Catholic teaching regarding the Trinity. On the question of the unity of God there can be no difference, for the Catholic teaching is that there is and can be only one God, Who is the Creator of all things visible and invisible. The common interpretation which misses the vital truth in the Incarnation separates the Divine Essence in which the unity rests, and then contends that the orthodox meaning of the Trinity makes three and three one, which would be not only unreasonable but impossible. This is a false assumption, for no one maintains that God is one in the respect that He is three, or vice versa. The Catholic doctrine as contained in the Athanasian creed is, that "we venerate one God in the Trinity, and the Trinity in the Unity, neither confounding the persons nor separating the substance."

The Unity of God is here expressed, also its contents or interior relations. Unity without an object could not be equal to God. The idea of the Deity is not expressed by saying that He is One, but must include the word one God, thereby implying a living being, who is more than simple unity. But a living being means an active being, since to live is to act. Therefore to be eternally and infinitely living must mean an eternal and infinite action. But every action requires a principal, a medium and an end. Unity, when applied to God, is not a mere abstraction, but means an active Being, who possesses in Himself the conditions of activity, namely, principal, medium and end, which in the orthodox sense means the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. The Father is the principal, the eternally active, generates the Son, who is begotten and becomes the medium. The Holy Ghost, who is neither made nor created nor begotten, proceeds eternally from the Father and Son, as the end or consummation of the Divine Life.

This distinction of the three Divine Persons does not mean a distinction of the Divine Essence, nor deny the unity of God's nature.

God is represented as "a most pure act"—that is, a being endowed with the faculty of thinking and loving; as God's attributes are all infinite, the faculty of thinking and loving in Him is possessed in an infinite degree. To deny this double faculty in God would be to place the Divinity lower than the creatures of His own creation. They are eternally active. From all eternity He loved a simple unity without any essential interior relations. There was nothing to love. Then unity, pure and simple, gives only unity, no matter how often it may be multiplied by itself. Any other concep-