

The Motherless Home.

[To my friend, Katherine Eleanor Conway, in memory of January 17, 1902.]

Before that sad day, when the Angel of Death swept over our hearts, on his plumed wings, and the mother we prized as the breath of our life, lay lifeless and cold on the morrow;

Before that dark day—did I wander afar, At duty's behest, or the promptings of Pleasure?

My heart, like the needle that turns to the star, Turned ever to Home, as its treasure.

And I weaned of joys, I grew sick of delights, Mid scenes new and charming, I pined for another.

Mine own quiet life, where Home's cheery lights, Were the face and the smile of my mother!

But since, from our midst, from the arms of our love, The shade of our dearest passed outward for ever— Let me do where I will like a wind-beaten dove, My heart's never home sick—no, never!

Indifferent, tho' weary—where'er I may roam, With sighs, that the bravest of wills cannot smother, I have heard, in Love's language, that Mother is Home, And Home, but a weak word for Mother!

O friend! as you sit at your desolate hearth, And gaze thro' your tears at the one vacant corner, Whence the shadow of Death seems to spread o'er the earth, And veil every joy, like a mourner;

In the lone, lonesome days that are certain to come, Let this comforting balm to your sore heart be given: That, if Home is but Mother, and Mother is Home, Both Mother and Home are in Heaven! —Eleanor C. Donnelly.

AN ANGEL WITHOUT WINGS.

A scene transpired in Madrid, and the location a miserable garret, with very little furniture and that of the poorest kind—a bed, occupied by an old man of sixty years, whose wife was seated at the left of his pillow. At the right of the bed sat, as comfortably as circumstances permitted, two members of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul; and one of them is the person who relates the following history:

"The greatest suffering you endure must be caused by the cold of the long nights of winter, for then you need more warm covering, and loneliness makes your abode more dreary?"

"Ah! no, sir; we are very happy, because an angel visits us every third night, and, with his assistance and yours we get along very well. May God reward you all!"

"Well! well! An angel did you say, nothing less has been visiting you?"

"Yes, sir," said the old man laconically.

"Very well, very well; and what is he like; is he very handsome? He has wings white as snow and a blue robe, has he not?"

The speaker looked at his companion as if to say: the mind of the poor old man wanders, and his aged companion is also failing.

The good old man, who was in full possession of all his mental faculties, replied in a most solemn manner:

"Yes, my friends, an angel! Very handsome, with beard and mustache, but without wings."

The visitors could no longer restrain a smile, thinking that they were dealing with a disordered mind, and he who asked the question inquired:

"Do you know that this angel is not like any of the pictures that I have ever seen in the museum? Be careful about him who wears the beard and mustache . . . he must have laid aside his whiskers. . . . Undoubtedly he must be an Alderman or a Lord Mayor."

"He is very nearly of your own age, twenty-two or twenty-five, and, like you, wears a Spanish cap."

On hearing the last remark the visitors could not restrain from laughter while the old man watched them seriously the termination of that outburst of feeling, in order to continue his statement in the same dignified manner.

"You laugh, gentlemen, and I am not surprised, because we erred by speaking of the dress of the figure before speaking of his beautiful acts, at which, as I relate them to you, I am sure you will not laugh; you will bless him as we have done."

These words led us back to more serious thoughts, and the old man continued:

"You must know that this young man gives us good advice, and consoles and comforts us with his wise counsel, and aids us as you are doing; but, besides, as soon as he comes in he takes off his cloak, arranges the covering of the bed, turns me on my side, a service which my poor wife is unable to render; he combs my hair, washes and cleans me . . . of everything . . . do you understand?"

"Yes, sir; and these are the things which our great father, St. Vincent de Paul called pearls when they are done with resignation and in the proper spirit."

"Exactly, and so he called them; and when he was satisfied that everything was put in order, including the fire, which he placed in a little warming-pan which he gave us that this poor woman might keep her feet warm, he would then sit down and say so many consoling things, relate so many interesting anecdotes, so many moral tales that we have often laughed heartily and have always been comforted; and besides all this he brings us good books which he reads for our instruction."

"Then you were justified in looking very serious when you saw us laughing."

"But at the time we thought, in our hearts, that the story of the angel was a mere illusion," exclaimed both companions almost with one voice.

"Yes, but he has done a great deal more than I have told you, for every time he brings us clean bed-covering and takes away the soiled ones that his sister may wash them. He washes my feet, pares my nails, and then—he kisses me."

When he mentioned this last act, big tears rolled down the furrowed cheeks of the poor helpless paralytic, who paused a moment, and then continued in a tremulous voice:

"I resisted these acts of kindness at first, but he begged me on his knees not to refuse, and I had no alternative but to consent. And now does it seem to you that I was justified in calling him an angel?"

"Yes, a thousand times," said one of the visitors, and the other added with an air of sadness:

"And we think we are doing good by simply paying you a visit! This youth, how bright an example he would be for our Conference!"

"Yes certainly, let us find him. Tell us his name and where he lives."

"I am placed in regard to him just as I am towards yourselves: I have never been able to obtain his name."

"He lives with his two sisters."

This story and the comments on it being ended, the members of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul retired, deeply moved, and reflecting on the means of drawing this young man into the Society that he might be a model worthy of imitation for the members.

Like highwaymen they watched for many nights, and at last identified him whom they sought; but in his humility, disclaimed all merit on his part, and objected that, if he entered the Society, it would be to obtain the praise of men, and that he would thus lose much of his reward.

He finally yielded to persuasion, and there was formed among those men a firm union for the love of God and the practice of charity. One of these I know still lives, and rejoices that he has not forgotten the narrative which is here given, for the time, to the public.

Here I would end, but I wish to ask this pertinent question:

What difference is there between true charity and philanthropy?

The answer is given without hesitation:

The same that there is between good money and counterfeit.

With the good we purchase heaven and without it no one can enter.

With the false we gain a banlieue which attracts the attention of so-called good society which is wholly devoted to show, and by a kind of automasia, whereby the name is substituted for the reality, except in rare and honorable cases the people are satisfied with the surrounding title.

And now to conclude, I will ask this other question, which, de doubt, has occurred to many:

Are there people of this kind in Madrid?

Yes, sir. The fact is well known, and they are not few. Cases even more remarkable are happening every day, although they are not seen by people generally, because they do not shine with the glare of wealth, nor with the horror of vice and all its consequences.

They will shine; yes, on that day of accounting . . . when all will be adjusted. Then there will be a reviewing of accounts, and these are the few who will succeed in collecting acts of charity sufficient to show a balance on the right side.—Leon Abadian de Santolucia.

Devotion to St. Joseph.

The following story was related at a church festival in England by Father O'Haire, the well-known African missionary.

"During several of the twelve years I spent in Africa, I had under my pastoral care the sole charge of a district as large as England. Periodically I made a visitation of my scattered flock. On one of these vast excursions I lost my way and found myself wandering without the slightest idea of the locality. I could see no one. It was a season of drought; no rain had fallen, and my horses were scarcely able to drag along my cart for want of water. At length I came to a Boor farm in this, to me, unknown valley. The whole country was scorched. There was, however, a water dam near the house and this was all drought. Approaching the Dutch farmer, I told him my story, and asked him if he would allow my horses to drink. Permission was granted. I told the farmer I was a Catholic priest; he was a Protestant."

"Oh, then," said he, "if you go into the out-house you will find a laborer who is dying—he is a Catholic."

"I entered there and found the poor fellow, a client of St. Joseph, near death. When I told him I was the Catholic priest of the district of the 'Cudstorn,' one hundred and fifty miles away, he lifted his wasted body and exclaimed in accents of deepest gratitude:

"Ah, St. Joseph, I knew you would send me a priest, so as to give me comfort before I die."

"What has St. Joseph to do with the matter?" I asked; and here is his story:

"When a boy in dear old Ireland, my mother, a good Catholic, taught me to say every day, 'St. Joseph pray for me that I may die a happy death.' I have never, for one day, neglected that prayer. I made my first Communion at ten, and served Mass until I was fifteen. I entered in the army at twenty-one, and came out to the Kafir war."

"Before leaving Ireland, I went in my uniform and bid my poor old mother good-bye, and as she kissed me tenderly, she sobbed, 'Don't forget your prayer to St. Joseph.' I came to the Kafir war. When it was over, and my time had expired, I was discharged and stayed by the Cape. There was no priest nearer to me than Cape Town—five hundred miles away. I hired out on this Dutch farm and here I have worked for years. Lately, I heard of your arrival in Cudstorn, one hundred and fifty miles away, and I set out in delicate health in the hope of going to confession and Communion. Arriving at your house weary, I was told you were away on the visitation, and might not be back for many months. After a week, I returned, and here I landed yesterday, nearly dying, and here is the priest to-day sent by St. Joseph."

"That night I instructed him and heard his confession."

"The next morning I said Mass and gave him Holy Communion, and soon after I gave him Extreme Unction and the last blessing. He then died, saying with his last breath, 'St. Joseph, pray for me that I may die a happy death.'"

GOOD THOUGHTS.

A slave has but one master: an ambitious man has as many masters as there are persons whose aid may contribute to the advancement of his fortune.—La Bruyere.

The safe conservatism which never moves lest it fall, is labor; it is the dry rot in the Church, and my heart goes out to the man who never tolerated it in his calculations. Safe conservatism would have left the apostles in Palestine.—Archbishop Ireland.

Without earnestness no man is ever great or does really great things. He may be the cleverest of men; he may be brilliant, entertaining, popular; but if he has not earnestness, he will want weight. No soul-moving picture was ever painted that had not in it depth of shadow.

It should be a source of humiliation to us that we are so little master of ourselves and so fond of our ease. Our Saviour did not come to seek his ease or comfort, either spiritual or temporal, but to deny, to combat himself, and to die.—St. Francis de Sales.

Christianity is perfect: men are imperfect. Now, a perfect consequence cannot spring from an imperfect principle. Christianity, therefore, is not the work of man, it can have come from none but God. If it came from God, men cannot have acquired a knowledge of it except by revelation. Therefore, Christianity is a revealed religion.—Chateaubriand.

"Unfortunately, there are many who are willing to overlook the great good a paper may be doing, but who are quick to point out some slight error which can easily be remedied."

The man who enters the Catholic editorial chair and is afraid to risk an occasional blunder has mistaken his calling, and is of little use in the battle of truth.—Cardinal Gibbons.

The worth of religious instruction depends on its practical character. Illustration and story will tend to make a truth intelligible, but their further object is to teach the child a duty of virtue, or to warn it from vice. In order to do this the example or story which serves as illustration must avoid what to the child is unreal or distant. A fact of history or from the lives of the saints often bewilders the child and loses its point of practical lesson if we cannot adapt it to the circumstances under which the child has learnt to view things or else omit such elements as would divert its attention by the novelty of circumstances which can no longer be realized.

Leave then to the hidden Providence of God whatever you find troublesome, and believe firmly that He who watches over all His creatures will take a loving care of you, of your life and of all your affairs. Drive from your imagination whatever annoys you; think no more of that which will happen to-morrow, for the same eternal Father who has care of you to-day will watch over you to-morrow and always. If He sends you trials or afflictions He will give you an invincible courage to bear them. Grasp firmly the hand of His Providence, and He will ever lovingly bear you up. Where you cannot walk He will carry you. It is the privilege of His children to claim His protection in times of trial and anger. What should you fear since you belong to a God who has assured you that, to those who love Him, everything turns eventually to their greater happiness?—St. Francis de Sales.

Into our lives, in many simple, familiar, homely ways, God infuses this element of joy from the surprises of life, which unexpectedly brighten our days, and fill our eyes with light. He drops this added sweetness into His children's cup, and makes it run over. The success we were not counting on, the blessing we were not trying after, the strain of music in the midst of drudgery, the beautiful morning picture or sunset glory thrown in as we pass to or from our daily business, the unsought word of encouragement or expression of sympathy, the sentence that meant for us more than the writer or speaker thought—these and a hundred others that every one's experience can supply are instances of what I mean. You may call it accident or chance—it often is; you may call it human goodness—it often is; but always, always call it God's love, for that is always in it. These are the overflowings of His grace, these are His free gifts.—Longfellow.

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AS INACTIVE or Torpid Liver must be aroused and all bad bile removed. Burdock Pills are best for old or young.

THE UNBROKEN SEAL.

Boston Pilot.

A play is now being produced at Palmer's theatre, New York City, under the sensational title "The Broken Seal," whose interest hinges on the betrayal of the secret of the confession by a Catholic priest.

This play is offensive to Catholics as a gratuitous libel on their religion. But leaving out the religious aspect of the case, it should be, especially in these days of "realism" in the drama and literature, an irrefutable argument against "The Broken Seal," that it is absolutely false to history and to life.

The first instance of a priest's betrayal of the secret of the confessional has yet to be recorded. Were it otherwise, can it be supposed for a moment that the enemies of the Catholic Church would have failed to turn to account so powerful a weapon against her? Priests are but men, subject to human infirmities and human temptations. Priests have lost their reason, and yet, in their wildest ravings, have never divulged the secrets of the confessional. Priests have formally renounced the Faith, and yet have never betrayed the trust reposed in them by their penitents.

The inviolable seal of the confessional has had its martyrs, the most illustrious of whom is St. John Nepomucene, who was put to death in 1393 by Wenceslaus IV., of Germany, for refusing to reveal the confession of his wife, Joan of Bavaria.

The inviolability of the confessional was first legally recognized in this country in 1812. The case came up in New York City, and was as follows: Pending the trial of a man and his wife as receivers of stolen goods, the property was returned to its rightful owner by the Rev. Anthony Kohlman, then administrator of the Diocese of New York, and when the case was tried an effort was made to learn the name of the thief through the priest.

Called to the stand, he of course declined to give any information as to what had been confided to him in his character as a priest.

After a long argument, the presiding magistrate, De Witt Clinton, gave his decision, upholding the position of the priest, in this wise:

"Although we differ from the witness and his friends in our religious creed, yet there is no reason to question the purity of their motives. They are protected by the laws and the Constitution of this country in the full and free exercise of their religion, and this Court can never countenance nor authorize the application of an insult to their faith or of torture to their consciences."

But it was not until on the thirties, and after many contests in which the question was involved, that the inviolability of the confessional was lifted out of the range of legal controversy by the appended statute, No. 833 in the section relating to the privileges of clergymen.

A clergyman or other minister of any denomination shall not be allowed to disclose confidences made to him in his professional character in the course of discipline enjoined by the rules of practice of the religious body to which he belongs."

In view of the public interest in the question, revived by the production of "The Broken Seal," the New York Herald collected a consensus of opinion on the subject. Judge Davis MeAdam, of the Superior Court, after expounding the law in the case, said:

"I cannot recall a single instance in which a priest has broken the seal of the confessional."

So, all the lawyers appealed to. So, Cardinal Gibbons, and the various priests approached on the question.

"The point of the whole matter is this," said the Rev. J. H. McGean, of St. Peter's church, "that if confidence in the secrecy and sacred character of the confessional were shaken in the slightest degree, people would remain away from it."

The unbroken seal of the confessional witnesses perpetually to the divine institution of the sacrament of penance and of the Catholic Church itself.

Never an Agnostic.

The following letter appeared in a recent issue of the New York Sun:

"An editorial article in the Sun of January 9th mentioned me as 'a writer of Agnostic antecedents.' If I had Agnostic antecedents it was wholly without my knowledge or collusion. I have never been an Agnostic myself, and have never had the slightest inclination that way."

Since your editorial alluded to my ancestry, it seems proper to say that I am descended from the Rev. John Lathrop (or Lothrop), who came to the Massachusetts plantation from Kent, England, in 1634. He was a great-grandfather of Oliver Wendell Holmes (see Abiel Holmes' memoir of Lathrop in the Massachusetts Historical Society's collections). One of his descendants was the mother of John Lathrop Motley.

The Lathrop family is old Yankee stock, and has produced many Protestant ministers. The Rev. John Lathrop was a Separatist from the Church of England and became a Puritan pastor of a church at Seitate, Mass. But his ancestors and mine, the Lowthropes of Lowthorpe, Yorkshire, England, in the thirteenth century, were devout Catholics.

Miss Bessie H. Badloe, of Burlington, Vt., had a disease of the scalp which caused her hair to become very harsh and dry and to fall so freely she scarcely dared comb it. Ayer's Hair Vigor gave her a healthy scalp, and made the hair beautifully thick and glossy.

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Scandal is Vulgar.

It has come to be more and more a maxim of good manners, not to mention good morals, says a writer in Harper's Bazar, that scandal is never to be talked in the drawing-room. So thoroughly is this recognized that if a woman is heard in good society talking of unpleasant personalities, she is at once set down as an accident of the place, and not as one who has been long enough with people of good breeding to acquire their repose and taste.

Very likely many of these high-bred people in question, who are to the manner born, hear gossip and scandal, and perhaps lend them a too willing ear; but it is in privacy, in the depths of boudoir or chamber, vice paying its well-known tribute there to virtue in the hypocrisy that whispers it in the dark, as it were, and will not listen to it more publicly. And it is to be confessed that of the two evils, the indiscriminate encouragement of evil-speaking is the greater, for the hypocrisy injures one's self, but the open course injures one's self and many others besides.

The forbidding of the enjoyment of scandal in public is, at any rate, an acknowledgment of its vulgarity if not of its wickedness. It proclaims, too, the fact that society thinks well of itself and its intentions, and has a standard of some loftiness up to which it endeavors to live, and that it recognizes an interest in the possible ill-doings of fallen mortals as something intrinsically low and coarse and calculate to hurt its own structure, an interest in such facts any way as indicative of an order of taste not to be desired, and its possessor a person not to be associated with. It may be simply as a by-product precaution, ease and pleasure being so much surer when no uncomfortable suggestion thrust in an ugly head, that unpleasant topics of an unwholesome nature are tabooed in the conversation of the finest drawing rooms. But whether this is so or not, it is plain that good society would like to be optimistic, it would believe in no evil and would speak no evil; it has found that the essence of good manners is also the essence of the golden rule and as the voice of scandal violates all its notions, it has laid upon such utterance with in its borders the penalty of ostracism.

A HAPPY HINT—We don't believe in keeping a good thing when we hear of it, and for this reason take special pleasure in recommending those suffering with Piles in any form, blind, bleeding, protruding, etc., to Betton's Pile Solvent, the best and safest remedy in the world, the use of which cuts short a vast deal of suffering and inconvenience. Send 50 cts to the Winkelman & Brown Drug Co., Baltimore, Md., or ask your druggist to order for you.

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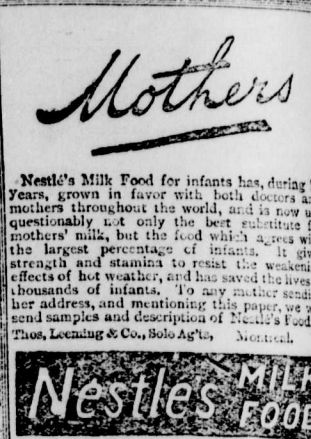
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