

he thought, "who, as I have read, became a martyr nearly three hundred years ago."

Vested priests and white-robed choristers and hoary minstrels with sounding harps followed the aged dignitary; and from the mingled voices and trembling strings that harmony of tuneful prayer and praise went up to the listening ear of Heaven. It seemed as if the angels round the Throne had joined with the tongues of mortals to sing the glories of the Messiah newly born. The heart of Connor McDermott was moved by mingled emotions of awe, reverence and joy.

The gray-haired abbot ascended the throne at the left side of the high altar; and the sacrifice of the midnight Mass began. The tinkle of silver bells was heard, and every head was bowed in reverence. The arching roof echoed to the solemn strains of the "Kyrie Eleison." In triumphant tones the "Gloria in Excelsis Deo" pealed through nave and aisle. The odor of the incense was heavy on the air, and all this pomp and majesty of Christian worship swayed Connor with such deep emotions as he had never been conscious of before.

Then the aged abbot rose from his chair, and bowing on bended knee before the altar, murmured a brief prayer. Rising again, he ascended the steps, and turning round to the congregation, extended his hands in gesture of benediction. Connor McDermott thought that those dark, earnest eyes regarded him with a peculiar pitying, tender look. Then the aged man read the glorious gospel of the day, and proceeded to address his hearers in language glowing with inspired eloquence and melting with pathos.

He spoke of love, and especially of the love which Christ bore towards the sinful race of mankind—love so all-absorbing that for their sakes He gave Himself up a sacrifice, a bleeding victim on the cross. He spoke, too, of the love which all men should bear to one another—of the love of home and friends, and kindred and native land, which is called patriotism. He strove to impress upon his hearers, in words of burning eloquence, that it was the duty of all Irishmen to love, cherish and defend one another; and dissension and

division among them was a terrible crime. "Oh, my brethren," said the old man, "princes and people, chiefs and clansmen alike. I would say to you, you will never be happy till you join in unity of purpose and mutual love, whilst your enemies are joined in hate against you. Wherefore, Irishmen, in urging you to unite heart and hand to rescue your beautiful and unhappy country from her bondage, I would say to you, in the words of Ilim born to-day for your salvation—'this command I give you, that you love one another.'"

It was very strange; but even as the aged abbot spoke, Connor thought his eyes were fixed on *him*, and on him alone, and that all his words were directly addressed to him.

The Mass went on to its conclusion; and then again the white-bearded abbot ascended the altar-steps with mitre and crozier, and with hands outstretched gave the congregation his solemn blessing. But here again, Connor thought those eyes were fixed on him alone, that the aged, trembling hands were stretched out for him, and that the blessing was specially called down upon his head by those eloquent lips.

Mass being concluded, choristers and priests rose as if to depart. But, instead of walking out in stately procession, prelates, priests and people seemed to melt away; and when Connor McDermott suddenly started and looked up, the cold moonbeams were falling upon his upturned face. The chancel was again desolate; the ruined pillars looked bleak and shadowy once more; and the dark blue sky, studded with twinkling stars, was the only roof over the young head. Connor rose from his knees, cold and shivering, and looked wonderingly around him.

"I must have fallen asleep," he muttered. "'Tis mortal cold here. But what a queer dream that was. I never heard o' the likes: 'tis wonderful entirely. By my word, now, I'm glad I came here to say a prayer or two. That dream was worth all the trouble; and, for that matter, perhaps, it wasn't a mere dream after all. I think I see that wonderful old abbot still, and hear his words of blessing falling on my ears. And the music o' the harps, too, and the