

A LETTER FROM HOME.

When far from our loved ones, the silent tears starting Bedlam the rough pathway where friendless we roam, The balm that can soften the sorrow of parting May often be found in a letter from home.

AN EVERY-DAY STORY.

BY MAURICE FRANCIS EGAN.

THE old man had worked hard, the veins in his reddened hands were swollen. As he sat in the sun, with his head thrown back against the wall, one could see how white his forehead was in comparison with the sunburned and weather-tanned skin of the rest of his face.

His eyes were clear and blue, with an occasional sparkle in them which was quenched soon enough. Only once he showed a sudden interest in what was going on around him. It was when a hand-organ struck up "The Kerry Dance."

"That's Nora's song. And it always brings back to me the old days in Kerry, before her mother and me ever thought of coming to America." The sparkle went out of his eye, as his daughter-in-law, a thin, yellow-haired energetic Connecticut woman, came down the steps and called his little grandchild into the house.

The old man sighed, pulled out his pipe, and suddenly put it back again, with a furtive look at the door, from which his nervous and keen daughter-in-law had just disappeared.

"O, the joy of the Kerry dancing!—The sunset, pink and gold and purple that day, made a background for a brilliant spark which the hand of Liberty upheld in the Bay. Water and clouds seemed one, blended in a lake of slowly changing tints. From the Park on the other side came a sultry breeze laden with the scent of clover. Across the lake opposite, lots at this season of the year smooth as a tennis lawn, a little child, in a red frock, moved slowly, carrying a steaming pail towards the clock factory, where one or two lights already shone in the windows. The organ, now far down the street softened its notes, but still played the "Kerry Dance."

What was the old man thinking of, in this alien land? His eyes were closed. A flash of light shone on the cross of the church which arose among the trees. It touched his eyelids and he looked up in a startled way and grasped his stick.

"This is peace," I said. He sighed, "There is no peace for an old man like me, sir, on this side of the grave."

"Why, you ought to be peaceful and happy, too." "I am alone." There was a soft cadence in his voice and a sad tone.

"Alone? Haven't you your son and your two grand-children and your daughter-in-law?" I could hear her voice within, seeking the servant in a strident way. Why had Howard been allowed to dabble in the water and why had not Lincoln his best apron on? These questions, repeated *ad nauseam*, were very evident.

"Howard and Lincoln," said the old man, in a low voice, with a careful glance at the door, "they're the names of my grand-children, and my own and my father's before me, Helen Murphy."

There was a bitterness in this simple statement which opened my eyes. The quaint faces of the old man, stout, chubby, bent, dressed in an alpaca coat, out of a pocket of which the clay pipe peeped, was out of place against the prim brown stone wall, with its "gentle" stucco ornaments, as rich brogue was out of place beside the high-pitched tones of his active, nervous, and excessively "gentle" daughter-in-law. And somehow I thought of Mrs. Platt's "In Primrose Time" with a great sympathy for the old man. He seemed to belong to that land when, in May,—

"Everybody wears the lovely lavender Of our sweet Lady Spring, And though the robin in a bright procession To towards the chapel's choir,— Good friend, there he but few sins in confession, In Primrose time."

In the fading twilight, beside this rheumatic old man, who could not move of his own accord, the simple and blithesome pleasures of his springtime rose before me. "Lincoln," cried the shrill voice inside, "I told you to keep away from your grandfather!" The old man was indeed alone. By and by, his son, trim, slender, bright-eyed, with a business manner and whiskers cut in the approved way of the time, came along.

"Better, father?" "Well enough, John." And with a slight bow to me, he passed into the house. He came out in a short time and helped the old man in.

I was comfortable enough where I was. The dinner bells had not begun to ring yet, so I took the old man's chair, and watched the changing sunset, smoked and wondered why the twilight to-night should be sadder than usual.

Madam, the daughter-in-law, came out upon the step, with Howard and Lincoln, two thin, over-groomed youngsters. Madam had evidently been handsome once. But nervousness, over-anxiety about household matters and the necessity of making as good an appearance as her neighbors, had wrinkled her light skin, thinned the blonde hair which she tied in a small knot at the back of her head. Her frock,—or wrapper, or gown, or whatever it was,—was speckled in anxious struggle with the sewing-machine. It was a marvel of ruffles and ribbons. The unhappy children, too, were ruffled up to their eyes.

But I can't allow it, all the same. People oughtn't to cultivate such pleasures. But he's Irish you know,—poor, old man!" Silence.

"May be you thought it strange that I called the children in. I came out just to apologize for it. But the real truth is,—lowering her voice,—that Grand-papa has such an awful brogue and I'm desperately afraid Howard and Lincoln might catch it."

If it had been small-pox, this sentence could not have been breathed more solemnly through her nose.

"It does seem hard, and John, though he was born in this country, sometimes thinks I'm not quite right. But since I caught Howard saying 'rag' at his aunt's,—you can imagine my mortification,—I have interdicted all communication."

"Mrs. Murphy," I began, feeling very hot and indignant, "you and your husband—" I paused. One may do a great deal of harm by speaking the truth at the wrong time; so I changed my words,—"seem to suffer a great deal."

"Oh, we do I assure you. Our friends are so nice. Americans of good family like myself. I sometimes awake in the night all in a cold perspiration, thinking of what an awful time we'll have when Grand-papa dies. Of course our friends will come and we can't keep out our Irish relatives. And they are so common. I just put it out of my mind the other day when the old man said something about his 'wake.'"

I settled him on that point. He said he didn't expect a very cheerful funeral, if I had the directing of it. Such talk! I wonder an old man can be so afraid of death in such a frivolous way. I wish I could get him in an institution. I do dread a mixed funeral—so!

Howard began to sing, "I want to be an angel." His mother listened with complacency.

The old man grumbled, too, because the children are not baptized. It's time enough, I say, though John worries a little about it. I haven't quite decided on their names yet. Sometimes I think I'll call Lincoln Reginald. Pretty, ain't it? Besides, I am a Baptist, and I'll just take my time. Another thing," continued this complacent and hateful woman, encouraged by my silence, "the old man wants a priest. I offered him a Bible and Baptist spiritual consolation, but he got real mad. He's so set and ignorant. John does not like to go over to the priest's house. He does not go to church often now, though he was strict enough when I first married him, and if he had kept it up and the Catholics in our town had not been so Irish, I'd almost have joined his persuasion. One church is as good as another, if the people are genteel in it. I think the old man will have to do without his priest unless he gets very ill indeed."

I made a mental note of this. The next day, Brian Murphy saw Father Lightly. The elegant Mrs. Murphy said he was quite a gentleman, though she did not see how a minister of religion could reckon it to his conscience to recommend milk punch three times a day to a man who has one foot in the grave."

After the old man had unburdened his mind to Father Lightly, he grew more serene. Even the spectacle of his two nephews, beribboned and beruffled, starting out to join the baptists in the usual anniversary procession of the Brooklyn Sunday Schools, only made him shake his head and say,— "The poor children! If they had only had the luck to have had a decent Irish woman for a mother. 'Twas an ill day that brought us to this country."

One of the neighbours happened to have a wheeled chair. It was easy enough to borrow it and easy enough, while smoking a cigar before dinner, to push the old man to the church, which the sexton always opened at the Angelus.

Madam was glad enough to get the old man out of the way. "He spoiled the look of the stoop," she said, and the old man was almost happy, when, just as we had turned the corner, I lit his diseased pipe for him.

"Sure, sir," said Bridget, the servant, meeting us on one of these pilgrimages, "you never did a more blessed thing. Oh, my heart's so with the gentility of the female brigand."

When we became more intimate, as we naturally did, we went slowly along, in the twilight under the cool shade of the Park trees, he seemed anxious to find excuses for his son. He seemed to grow lighter in weight at every step, though his bulk did not perceptibly decrease.

"John means well," he often said, "but a man's meaning is nothing, if he has no heart, no soul, no the same thing. She means well, too, of course. I'm afraid it's my own fault, that things are as they are. Nora, my wife, and the other Nora, my daughter that's dead, were always against it."

"Against what?" "Against sending John to the public school in our town in Connecticut. He was such a good boy. He was the making of a priest. I taught him to say the rosary myself. And when he wasn't knee high to a burdock, as the Yankee says, Nora would ask him, 'what will you be, John, when you grow up?' 'A Bishop, ma'am,' he'd say, and it made the old woman laugh and she'd say, 'With God's help you'll be a good priest at any rate.' He was on the altar. And many a time I've thought he looked like a little angel, with his blue eyes and early hair, in his white surplice. We were so proud of him, that's a fact." And the old man sighed, "Howard's a little like him. It's with a sore heart I say that child's name. Ah, sir, it's a heavy cross on an old man when he can find no joy in his grandsons. They're so different. Their mother—I'm not saying anything against her, for she's only herself, after all—can't help making them look down on me. But oh," broke out the old man, with intense bitterness—"it's hard! It's hard when I think of little Johnny's early head barely reaching to the priest's elbow and him serving Mass and having his Latin all by heart! Oh, the sorrow of it! The sorrow of it! To be alone—alone! May God grant you may never feel it, sir."

We had stopped under a big oak. The flock of sheep were tripping over the green, with their shepherd and his dog after them. In the dusk, they looked like white capped waves rushing up the hill in graceful undulations. All sounds were softened and mellowed. The old man's voice was more gentle and tranquil than usual, and the soft, rich scent of his native place seemed somehow in harmony with the half-drowned tinkle of the sheep-bells.

"'Twas our own fault. We thought he was too clever for the parish school. And we sent him where he'd get out of his Irish ways—and he got out of them—all of them. 'Twas at the public school, he met Mrs. Amanda I mean. She was as pretty as a picture. I don't wonder John liked her so being older. But it broke Nora's heart. She'd set her mind on his being a priest. She found fault with the girl and said things about her—you know how mothers are when they don't think of marrying—she ought not to have said. It only made John the more set. He got a good place in the clock factory and he rose and rose, and Amanda seen that there was nobody more respected among all the Yankees, though his name was Murphy. Nora wouldn't hold her tongue. So John said less and less and went with Amanda more and more. And one day when Nora was going out to church with the big rosary she often carried

on her arm—a new white ruffled cap on her head, she saw and Amanda turn away their heads and go down a side street to avoid her. That day he went to meeting for the first time with Amanda and that day the old woman took to her bed. She never got up again."

We made two pilgrimages to the church after the old man gave this glimpse of his life. A few days later I was asked to go in haste for Father Lightly.

Bridget came in the evening of this day and asked us for a crucifix. Her eyes were red; she said the old man had died unconsolable. "The only thing that roused him," she said, "was the sight of the shamrock in the bit of green earth my brother brought me last St. Patrick's Day. They grow like weeds, sir, and there's a big bunch of them. And it's thankful I am that they were here to give the old man a little reminder of home. It will not be long before he goes to his last home now." And Bridget wiped her eyes. "Oh, I am sorry I ever came to a country where the people learn to look down on their own."

On Sunday I met Madam going to church accompanied by Howard and Clinton. There was a crowd on her door, and her words corroborated the meaning of the symbol, which was anything but sad for poor Brian Murphy.

"He's gone at last," she said, in a manner suggestive of relief, decorously tempered by resignation. "It's going to be very quiet of course I mean the funeral. No service at the house, though of course our minister will look in and may be make a prayer or so to the relatives. Of course his friends won't come—they don't know anything about it. The old man looks quite respectable for once in his life. I've ordered a vacant chair, three feet high, for the head of the casket. It's real cutie-wo-wo, in the midst of life we are in death."

And this charming person passed, with her children, on their alien way. Their father was at home in darkness with the dead.

It was a very decorous funeral, Mrs. Murphy's pastor made a tender prayer to the relatives, who rustled in new clothes. The old man looked very serene. The furniture was gloomy, cold, respectable. I do not know whether John Murphy prayed for his father's soul or not.

I blessed Bridget with all my heart, when she stole into the room, before the astonished group, and laid the crucifix and the bunch of shamrock on the old man's breast.

"I couldn't help it, sir," she sobbed, "rest the funeral was over; I'll tell he wouldn't rest easy so far from home, if he hadn't the blessed cross upon him."

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Behind the Scenes.

When Francis Joseph II, was crowned King of Hungary at Pesth June 8, 1867, he was required at one point in the ceremony to ride to the summit of a mountain in the principal square in the city, and with the Hungarian crown on his head, strike with his sword at the four quarters of the heavens to indicate that he would repel all enemies from the cardinal points of the universe.

This mount was composed of earth, brought from all the provinces of Hungary and 50,000 people were looking at the emperor-king as he rode up the incline and drew his sword as he reached the top. On reaching the summit the horse reared and poised himself on his hind feet.

There was breathless suspense in the vast multitude of the rider should be unhorsed or the crown be thrown from off his head. Evidently occurrence would have been of the greatest moment, as it could not fail to be regarded as an ill omen for the Monarchy, and sure to be followed by national disaster.

The horse remained thus poised as the emperor made the required strokes with the sword. As the weapon returned to the scabbard the animal dropped gracefully to the ground and there was a sign of relief when the multitude caught its breath again.

"I could not help sharing in the general excitement," said an on-looker who narrated the incident, "although I knew that for three months Franz, the great circus man of Vienna, and one of the best horse trainers of Europe, had been training that horse on a similar mound of earth in the yard of the imperial stables at Vienna. Every day for the previous week or more the Emperor himself had ridden the animal and rehearsed his performance with all care. The horse knew exactly what he was to do and did it according to his teachings."

The Girl Who Is Careless.

She is the girl who is a never-ending source of anxiety to her entire family. From the time she gets up in the morning until she goes to bed at night she is seeking that which she has lost, and upsetting the system and plans of everybody else. The stomach in time is not put in her track; the buttons hang loosely on her bodice, and her hair has continued inclination to fall; she thinks nobody notices her boots, and so she doesn't lose time, as she calls it, in putting a coat of polish on them when they are rusty, seeing that they have fresh strings when they need them, or putting on buttons if they require them. She will let a letter, an important one, wait day after day for its answer; she will keep busy people waiting, and she thinks that "it is her way" is a sufficient excuse to give anybody.

Now, the careless girl, careless about her clothes and her belongings, is apt to grow careless in speech—not so careful as she ought to be as to what she says, and not so careful as she might be to the familiarities she permits from other people. Just think over the careless girl and see if there is anything in which you are like her; and if there is, pray to be delivered from it as you would from great sins. For after all it is from the little weaknesses that the sins grow.—*Index's Home Journal*

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THE FARM.

Some Valuable Hints on Closing Autumn Work.

In preparing for the approach of freezing weather and protecting vegetable growth, the work may be done in an efficient manner, or it may be superficially performed and partly accomplish its intended purpose. The vegetables which are to be covered with earth should have the advantage of a drained soil with the pulverization. Wet soil, in clods or masses, affords but little protection; frost passes through it freely, and it freezes to a greater depth than dry and finely pulverized earth. Hence the importance of thorough drainage for vegetable gardens; and it is often a matter of strict economy therefore to place the drains only half as far apart as in common farming. The farmer who has drained his fields with ditches two rods from each other, would gain an important end by ditches only a rod apart in his vegetable garden.

The great advantage which we here refer to is in admitting a fine pulverization of the soil, and retaining it in this condition. It may be then used for winter protection. Cabbages and celery, for instance, when wintered out of doors may be more effectively protected, and with a thinner stratum, with such finely pulverized soil. Raspberries and tender grapes, when prostrated, are shielded much better under such a small covering. But this is not the main advantage by any means. The farmer who cultivates his garden by plowing has a most important advantage (provided his land is well drained) in reducing the soil to a fine state of pulverization by many times plowing and harrowing. The frost will not penetrate the earth nearly so deep. It will become clear of frost much sooner in spring. Planting may then be done earlier, crops will have a sooner start, the soil will be warmer at an earlier day, and the advantages will be headed out of a winter early.

Some details of late garden autumn operations may be in season. Raspberries of early varieties may be set out if the soil is in the excellent yellow condition mentioned, and if the plants are well rooted. A portion of the earth is left on; the roots are spread out, and the plant buried in the soil to a moderate depth. A mulch of rotted manure placed over each plant will protect it through winter. This treatment will not be likely to succeed on a wet, heavy, hard soil, or on any but the one prepared as above described.

Small trees, or those newly set, may be protected from mice in winter with small compact mounds of earth; but these cannot always be made on home grounds or in door yards, in which case a roll of sheet tin may be easily and quickly placed about the stem. The mice will not climb up this tin. Sheet-tin sheets may be bent into shape about a large round stick or pole, and then placed in position with a few seconds' work, their elasticity bringing them into place.

Thinly sown, closely-grown raspberry canes may be done late in autumn after the leaves have fallen, if the thinning will not expose them too much to winds and winter storms. A convenient tool for this purpose is a hooked knife, attached by screws to a rod like a broom handle. It is ground sharp and is ready for work. It will prevent the laceration of the hands, and may be operated rapidly.

Those who have not yet protected the strawberry plants are still in a good season, as they need not be covered till the ground is frozen. Chopped corn-stalks or straw may be used if spread thin enough to admit some air to the plants. Dead leaves, sometimes employed, do so compactly and smother the plants. The best of all are evergreen branches, which admit sufficient air to the plants.

Early froezing, which often spoils fruit and garden vegetables, is not always fully understood in its effects. Apples may be partly frozen, but will not be much injured if thawed very gradually. Placed them in an ungarment at 25°, and they will slowly recover. Or, put them in water at 25° and they will thaw and become increased in size, or, still better, bury them very compactly in the earth earth described early in this article. Potatoes are frozen sooner than apples, and are rarely preserved. But they are much injured if left in the soil where they grow, because by freezing in the soil they make a compact mass of earth about the tubers, with no air between. Nuts, which when accidentally frozen after drying, will be killed if thawed in open air; but if the roots are completely buried in the earth they will escape without injury.—*Catholic Telegraph*

Enslage and Horses.

Mr. A. J. Case writes to the Country Gentleman as follows, regarding grounds for the conclusion that ensilage is not a food for horses and mules:—In February, 1881, I had a quantity of cured corn-stalks from which horses and mules in a yard had been fed for two months. The fodder was well cured and the animals were thrifty. But in feeding large stacks, whole there was necessarily waste. In my absence my foreman undertook to save hay by feeding the own fodder to six mules and a horse in the stable—some of the mules had the ensilage cutter, set to cut 1 inch, and was substituted for hay in the mangers. After a day or two the animals were all dead, the symptoms being inability to swallow, and great thirst. In about a week from the first feeding the seven were dead. Thinking it might be some epidemic, he notified the State Commissioners of Diseases of Domestic Animals. They came, with their veterinarian, and held a post mortem. They found some inflammation in stomach and intestines, but could find no evidence of epidemic or poison; thought the food might be the cause, but reached no positive conclusion. In the fall of that year, having good ensilage, upon which the cattle were thriving, I fed some to a brood mare and weanling colt, giving them all they would eat. A few days afterward both died, exhibiting precisely the same symptoms as had the mules and horse; other horses and mules, at the same stable, fed no ensilage, remaining perfectly healthy. Putting together these two sequences I judged them to be consequences; hence concluded that cut corn-stalks were not a safe fodder for horses and mules."

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The Capture of Paris by the Allies. The Allies had pressed forward without taking any notice of Napoleon's movements, and at early morning on the 30th they had opened the attack on the north-eastern heights of Paris. Marmont, with the fragment of a beaten army and some weak divisions of the National Guard, had about 35,000 men to oppose to three times that number of the enemy. The Government had taken no steps to arm the people, or to prolong resistance after the outline of defence was lost, although the erection of barricades would have held the Allies in check until Napoleon arrived with his army. While Marmont fought in the outer suburbs, masses of the people were drawn up on Montmartre, expecting the Emperor's appearance, and the spectacle of a great and decisive battle. But the firing in the outskirts stopped soon after noon, it was announced that Marmont had capitulated. The report struck the people

with stupor and fury. They had vainly been demanding arms since early morning; and even after the capitulation unsigned papers were handed out by men of the working classes, advocating further resistance. But the people no longer knew how to follow leaders of their own. Napoleon had trained France to look only to himself; his absence left the masses, who were still eager to fight for France, helpless in the presence of the conqueror; there were enemies enough of the Government among the richer classes to make the entry of the foreigner into Paris a scene of actual joy and exultation. To such an extent had the spirit of caste and the malignant delight in Napoleon's ruin over-powered the love of France among the party of the old nobles, that on entry of the allied forces into Paris on the 31st of March, hundreds of aristocratic women kissed the hands, or the very boots and horses, of the leaders of the train, and cheered the Cossacks who escorted a band of French prisoners, bleeding and exhausted, through the streets.—From Pyl's History.

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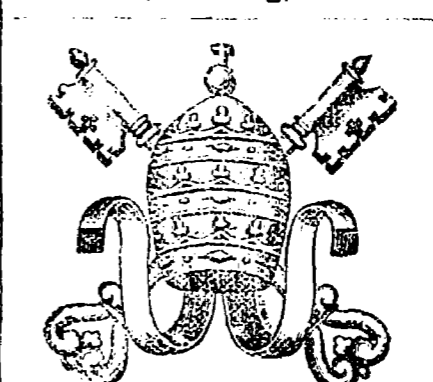
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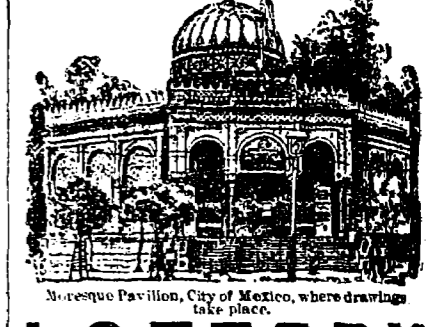
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