

The Two Mothers

It was night in the little thatched house by the roadside. The last cart had creaked on its homeward way, and silence had fallen on the house, silence broken now and again by the sharp cry of a child in suffering.

A group in the kitchen gathered around the smouldering turf embers and talked in subdued voices. Over all these lay the hush of expectation that comes before a death. The neighbor women had been in and out all day, but now, as the time grew shorter, they had left the mother with the child alone, but for her old mother, who sat on a creasy stool by the hearth, and watched both with eyes of suffering.

When the child cried the mother drew a sharp breath as though she endured intolerable suffering in silence. They were saying down in the kitchen that the baby was too young to have laid hold upon her life, but to her he was as much a human personality, loving and understanding her as though he were a man and old.

"Oh," she cried, when once again the child had cried, "if he is not to live would I keep him to suffer? Oh, why must he suffer, he who has never known sin?"

The old woman made no answer to the unanswerable question. "Pray, Jewel," she said, "there is great power in prayer. Many a child have I seen come back that was farther from me than he."

"If prayer would keep him I would never do anything but pray again," said the child's mother, but no spark of hope lit up her hopeless eyes.

"Whisht, dearie, whisht. Pray that the will of God may be done in regard to him."

"I cannot pray. What am I to say to Alick when he comes back and asks me for his son?"

"He will comfort you and love you better because of what you suffered without him."

"I was alone in the terror before he was born. I was alone in my agony, but afterwards I had the child. Now I shall be more alone than any woman in all the world."

"You had your father and me. You were our darling before you ever laid eyes on Alick McCarthy and his fine red coat."

The girl did not seem to have heard her. She was watching the tiny face on which the shadows were growing darker.

"He is easier, I think."

"The pain is leaving him, acushla," said the old mother, her eyes full of a deeper pain.

"His breathing is easier. Oh, what it would be if he could live, I think I should die with joy."

"Pray, child!"

"Mother, God is powerful and kind. Do you think if I could give him the child that He would give it back to me?"

"If He saw it was good, child. He can do better for him than you can. If He takes him, it is in love."

"But He cannot want him as I do. I would rear him to be a good man. Her eyes prayed for hope to be given her. The old mother came out of her corner and looked at the child.

"Give him to me for a bit, and do you go to the altar in the other room and pray. Rest, if you can, child. I am troubled about you, for 'tis only a few weeks since you left your bed. Give him to me, I will call if there is any change."

The young mother let the child be taken from her knee. He lay quietly, without a moan. In the dark room adjoining one little star of light Our Lady's altar.

The statue glimmered whitely above it. There was a handful of flowers set on each side of the poor little vases. The arms of the figure were outstretched benignly, and the head was bent a little forward.

A sense of rest and quietness came over the young mother. She knelt at the foot of the statue and rested her cheek against the altar cloth. In the whitewashed wall a death watch was ticking monotonously. She put her hands to her ears to shut out the sound and began to pray.

Now that the suffering child was no longer before her, she prayed with passion. She reached out her hand and clutched at a fold of the statue's garment as though it were a living woman.

"You saw your Son die," she cried, "but He was with you three-and-thirty years. You nursed and fed and washed and clothed Him. You had all that joy. Ask Him to spare me mine if it is His will; if it is His will."

She added the words with difficulty, hardly as if her heart were in them, but she felt that if she did not say it her prayers would have less chance. She lifted up her head and prayed with exaltation. She lay at the statue's foot and prayed with anguish. She was so still that the old mother in the next room said to herself:

"The Lord has sent her rest and sleep to strengthen her against what is coming. Blessed be His Name."

How long she prayed she knew not. Once, when the silence in the other room had lasted long, the thought came to her that the child was dead. She thought in a strange stupefied way of how Alick would hear it. Would it be at night, in the barracks room with the rildrady and jacks going on about him, or would it be in the morning, as he came from parade all gay with the soldierly smartness she loved in her hero? Would he think she had been careless of the child and let him die, or would he wish he had married that other girl who was noisily full of health and life, and would have given him strong children? She was paying the price of her delicate nervous prettiness which had made her a pet with the officers' wives, and something infinitely precious and per-

ducible to her young husband. Then another cry broke the silence, one tender and more feeble than before. Her heart came out of its sluggish lethargy, and she would have sprung to her feet and gone to the child.

Her eyes wandered an instant from the statue. As she rose to her feet it was before her again, and a low cry broke from her lips. The arms of the Mother of Jesus were no longer extended. They were clasping a baby close, close. The benignant eyes were on the little face; the lips smiled upon it with a maternal kindness. And the child, the child was not Jesus, but the little one that lay dying in the room without.

The young mother fell down, covering her face with her hands, and crying voicelessly: "O, dear God! O, dear God! O, dear Mother of God! But when she looked again the statue was as before—the arms were empty and stretched in blessing."

A few minutes afterwards she returned to the cradle side and stretched her arms for the child. "Give him to me," she said. "He's going fast," said the old mother.

"O dear God, yes, he's going fast," she said. "Do you think I would keep him from what he's going to?"

And her eyes, as she strained the child to her, were those of one who looks on heaven.—Katharine Tynan, in the Catholic Weekly, London.

HELP YOUR BABY.

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A French Lesson.

A rabbit was brought into a class room filled with little children. "I am going to kill this animal," said the teacher, "and I want you all to watch carefully and tell me if you see his soul escape." When the pupils declared that they had seen nothing, he replied: "That proves the rabbit had no soul. You, too, are animals—when you die, that is the end."

"Were all mothers capable of instructing their children the influence of the schools might be overcome, but the large majority of French women are wage-earners, whose long hours of toil leave them neither time nor strength to undertake the moral education of their little ones. This has always been supplied by the good Sisters. Their banishment has been the most cruel blow inflicted on France by the men who are endeavoring to crush out not only Catholicism, but all belief in God."

"When the masses," declared Herbert Spencer, "are deprived of all religion there will be a moral interregnum."

Calve's Charity Suppressed.

One of the most depressing results of the French Government's recent suppression of the religious orders has been the closing up of numberless charitable institutions in which a great work was done for suffering humanity. One of the most widely known of all the charitable institutions which have been closed as a result of the Government's policy is the home which Madame Emma Calve, the great singer, conducted on her estate in the south of France for the benefit of the overworked and sickly young girls from the surrounding country and for the industrial education of the children of the simple peasant folk to whom she has always been much as queen.

Much has been written about this home, which was one of the most comprehensive and original private charities in existence before the French Government ordered the expulsion of the kindly Sisters of Mercy whom Madame Calve had had in charge for years. It is closed now. The windows are barred, and the great doors are locked, and a solemn quiet reigns where once everything was full of life and activity. It will never be opened again until such time as the nuns are permitted to return, because Calve's plans for its continuance always embraced a consideration for the moral and religious, as well as the purely scientific side of the education of the in-

mates.

LOCATION OF HOSPICE.

The building stands just below the great rock upon which the Chateau de Calve, Calve's reconstructed feudal castle, stands. It is a long, rambling structure, covered with vines and nesting in one of the most gloriously beautiful valleys in all Europe, the Valley of the Tarne. On one side are the vineyards and on the other great rolling meadows sweep down to the river. There is a balmy purity to the air, a seeming fragrance which has been widely commented upon and which gives the visitor a thrill of exquisite enjoyment, a feeling of what someone has aptly called "glad-to-be-aliveness."

The home was divided into two parts, one for the young children and one for the older girls. The children were taught useful trades. The little girls were instructed in sewing and dairying and the little boys were taught carpentry, cobbling, vine culture and the elements of farming. This part of the home was a delightful beehive of activity before the suppression and was a favorite haunt of tourists in that part of France, who delighted to watch the little peasant children, in their quaint caps and woollen sabots, busy at their appointed tasks.

REST HOME FOR GIRLS.

The other part of the building was a "rest home" for sickly and overworked city girls. A competent physician was in charge, and the poor, underfed girls from the surrounding country, worn out, exhausted and haggard from excessive exertion in the fields and elsewhere, were given every attention possible. No questions were asked when an application was made for admittance. There was no red tape. If there was room the girl was taken in and she could stay as long as she felt that she needed rest and care.

Upwards of one hundred girls have been quartered in this home at one time.

Every penny of the expense of this great establishment was borne by Calve herself, whose greatest pleasure was the direction of its destinies when at home. Every day found her at her desk in the little office devising new plans for the care of her children, as she called them. Frequently she has been seen with her arms around two of the girls walking through the woods near the Chateau, laughing and chatting with all the animation and light-heartedness of a child of ten. And every Sunday there would be a vesper service in the little chapel, at which the great singer's wonderful voice would be heard.

CALVE IS REBELLIOUS. All this is changed now. The home is closed. The sisters, who were Calve's devoted assistants, have been forced to go to England or to Spain, and the feeling of the peasants against the Clemenceau is bitter and intense, but not as bitter or intense as Calve's own feelings.

"These men are trying to put God out of France," she said recently. "They would inaugurate a reign of free thought and atheism, for they are all unbelievers, skeptics and scoffers, all of them. They are succeeding in their plans now, but God is just and righteous, and there will come a day of reckoning in the near future when they will stand with blanched cheeks and throbbing pulses facing an outraged people."

All Saints' Day in Paris.

All Saints' Day, which according to custom the French people observe as a public festival and a decoration day, when they flock by thousands to the cemeteries to place flowers upon the graves of departed relatives, friends or national heroes, was celebrated this year with greater popular enthusiasm than has been noticed for many years. It was ideal Parisian autumn weather, mild and gray, with occasional glimpses of sunshine, and 120,000 visitors, each bearing fresh floral mementoes, among which violets, chrysanthemums, dahlias and purple sweetbrier predominated, passed through the entrance gates of Pere Lachaise Cemetery alone.

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(3) If the settler has his permanent residence upon farming land owned by him in the vicinity of his homestead, the requirements as to residence may be satisfied by residence upon said land.

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W. W. OORY, Deputy Minister of the Interior.

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THE TRUE WITNESS is printed and published at No. 35 St. Antoine street, Montreal, Canada, by The True Witness Pub. Co., 6-Place St. Jacques, Montreal.

Subscription price \$1.50 per year in advance. Single copies 5 cents.

Entered as second-class matter, Nov. 14, 1907, under No. 1111, Post Office at Montreal, P.Q., authorized for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Post Office Regulations, approved Oct. 3, 1903.

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