

THE CATHOLIC SWEETHEART AND SPINSTER.

(Mary Sarsfield Gilmors in New York Freeman's Journal)

Popular fallacy ascribes perfect happiness to heart-free girlhood; but in truth there is a pathetic side to its dainty comedy.

Where she but left to her own soul—wherein Christ, with the spirit of love and light, lives and acts—she would solve in due time, and with no risk of error, the deep and delicate problems of womanhood and vocation.

In the first blush of self-consciousness and life-knowledge, a girl is not only a sensitive plant, but a sensitive-plate, indelibly and disproportionately impressed by the special spirit envying her; and many a precocious and disastrous marriage not made in heaven results from the social microbe inoculating even the immature school-girl with an unholly horror of coming into the unpopular title of "old maid."

"To be, or not to be—love and marriage?" in truth is the vital question of every girl's life; but it should be left to ask and answer itself in God's good time; and the spiritual and social crudity that anticipates it in mere wanton frivolity has an account—a grave immortal account—to render!

But the Catholic "engaged girl" and her elder sister whose single blessedness is established as a permanent state of life have escaped the perils of youthful mistake, and solved the problem of girlhood differentially, yet with equal rectitude, each according to her vocative lights!

Comparison of the social value and personal happiness of these representative types is neither just nor delicate. Under Divine law, each legitimately is a spiritual law unto itself, bringing free will to the service of destiny!

Yet the truism is irrefutable that "All the world loves a lover;" and the pretty, poetic, blushing, smiling, magnetically joyous and hopeful "young sweetheart"—as the beautiful old name signifies the maiden loving and beloved—undoubtedly monopolizes popular favor.

To sustain the ideal of love in the face of realities, is the characteristic mission of the Catholic sweetheart. To her alone is marriage a sacrament of the spirit, and not a mere social convention.

In these, too, lie her supreme charm, her resistless spell for her lover. Materialism is bred in men, but they are born idealists, and like Esau, pine for their bartered heritage.

ness of character, the Catholic man is rare who is not grave and nobly stern at heart. He has tests and touchstones which the average woman fails all unknowingly, and standards of judgment of which he reveals no sign.

The sweetheart has reached the true-time, the halcyon days of her life, though she does not realize it. Before her eye the burden and heat of the day of maturity, the untried rapids of married life; behind, the travail and stress of maidenhood, to which peace has come through love alone!

The Catholic sweetheart has not giggled or boldly coquetted her way into marriage-engagement "for fun," or in desire for a solitary ring!

Her dearest friend or bitterest foe is "dead in love" with him! Above all, she has not cast to the winds her selective privilege, lest fastidiousness result in celibacy!

For men have souls, though the sweetheart of devotional practices, especially if a brotherless youth, has failed to familiarize her with masculine simplicity of spirit, is apt to resent the spiritual torpor and unresponsiveness she seems to discover in her happy-go-lucky lover, and to jump at the conclusion that all men are soulless.

The girl of material standards, of lax ethics, of frivolous sentiments, of selfish ideals or rather non-ideals of life, fails this supreme challenge, and disappoints love's most dear demand. She may be courted and married by men at their worst, but she is not truly loved by them—and where true love is not, marriage is a tragical failure.

But the Catholic sweetheart will make marriage a success, if the social evils of the day have not brought God's curse on it. From her cradle she has been prepared for this special apostolate.

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What she is in spirit and in truth, however, it is for her lover alone to learn, in the communion of love's more sacred hours, or of life's deep or crucial experiences. Superficially, she is neither more nor less than a



normal girl—a girl as proud of her lover, as happy in loving and being loved, as simply pleased with her gifts, and gratified by her social honors, as gay at the dance and the dinner, as absorbed in her trousseau, as thrilled in anticipation of the mere external glory of the wedding day—as the most inveterate little worldling with whom love dallies and trifles.

That "love begets love" is a truth stopping short of the whole truth. Love begets nobler charity—true Christian altruism. Before first love youth, in spite of its popular reputation to the contrary, is hard and cold and unconsciously cruel.

But the representative Catholic spinster has the single vocation, and her problem is what to do with it. That the world makes it hard for her, there is no gainsaying. It cedes her such tribute as it must, but its concession is grudging.

Is there no union of heart, then? Is there no maternity in the spirit? A whole class of celibate men serve religion, art, science, philanthropy.

Well may the heart of lover and husband rest in her, his pearl of great price, whose value is indeed

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above the rubies. In her he has no light love, the mere vane of his fortunes; no false love, to fail his love's holiest visions; no fair-weather love, to flee when shadows gather.

What, then, of her sister, the Catholic spinster? In sacred truth can she plead justification, and recompense and vocative mission—or is her life as tradition is fain to convince us, a desolate and barren waste?

Let us put to her censor the intelligent question: Who is justified in assuming that the spinster is unloving and unloved? If hearts know their own bitterness, may they not know, too, secret sweetness.

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Entry may be made personally at the local land office for the district in which the land is situate, or if the homesteader desires, he may, on application to the Minister of the Interior, Ottawa, the Commissioner of Immigration, Winnipeg, or the local agent receive authority for some one to make entry for him.

The homesteader is required to perform the conditions connected therewith under one of the following plans:

(1) At least six months' residence upon and cultivation of the land in each year for three years.

(2) If the father (or mother, if the father is deceased) of the homesteader resides upon a farm in the vicinity of the land entered for the requirements as to residence may be satisfied by such person residing with the father or mother.

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SOGG

Irish Affection

When I served on the station, frequent house-to-house visits in my district formed, as with mixed feelings, no part of my ordinary duties. I was not a visitor, but a worker, and one could hear there of the interests of religion, non-Catholic atmosphere, Irish city. The streets of my district were inhabited by the poorer working class, almost needless to say, dominantly Irish by birth. There were whole streets Catholic as they are in Dublin, and one could hear there of the interests of religion, non-Catholic atmosphere, Irish city.

To go amongst them in a pleasure to me in one of pain in another. It is sure to receive their Irish welcome; and it was a painful thing to see so many of them had given up their religion.

They were poor, too, wretchedly so. Poor they were to Liverpool in the famine, for the most part, their children remained or knew as return cargo at a non-coal boats, in "the bad" after long years of toil as their material condition was at all improved, from where shot out as so much the quays, friendless, stark worse still, possibly alienated.

I confess it often brought me to my knees, in among them, an aged sitting by a cold, cheerless stove, in some miserable with a sad, far-away tear-dimmed, weary eyes, dreaming of a cottage in land, situated, maybe, in a valley, in which she spent her girlhood, but which she saw again. I must return to my theme, which is the Parish.

Some time after I was tied down in the Mount the bright thought struck me I was not overburdened. I might, profitably to my with agreeable variety to produce the English system to-house visitation among the excess, perhaps, of my as I afterwards thought, in abundant exuberance of my enterprise, I accordingly on one fine morning for a visit, taking the leading rather "boreen" up the side. I had a blackthorn and was armed with the which my predecessor had.

I may say, in passing, I considered this book defective complete in many particulars. My intention to bring improved and amended edition with marginal notes regarding entries, notes perhaps, prove useful to ratings. This, to my mind, further proof of the necessity of course on which I was embarked. I noticed, in looking book, that the compiler, careless, at times, in regard of the members of families, in cases more where they were all grown in the record of "Honorary dow," whose family consisted of one boy, the younger was registered as years of age; and after the oldest girl, Mary Briggs, was, in the age column, a interrogation, with ditto column opposite the name of other girls. In another part this entry: "Sarah Morrison, age, 31—(moryagh)" led to remedy such defects.

In every house I visited, needless to say, a kindly and invariably an invitation and take an air of the through the weather was thickly in view, however; and I was not a little surprised to find that, in some cases, before replying to these questions, the people thus looked at me in surprised

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