

## A House of the Good Shepherd

Just where the stone forest of the city meets the green fields of the country is a great brownish gray building that stretches out its wide wings as if they were the wings of a dove. This is the House of the Good Shepherd that gathers within its walls the scarlet women, the outcasts of the street, and gives them shelter and protection and leads them to the feet of Him who had pity on the Magdalene of old and washed her sins whiter than snow.

One of the most cruel and pathetic things in life is that when a woman has once sinned, society is united to push her down further into the mire of wrong-doing. Almost every door is shut in her face. Almost every honest avocation is barred to her. Women draw their skirts away from her and stab her with their averted glances, and she finds no place of repentance, though she seeks it with tears. It is then that she may turn from the world to the House of the Good Shepherd, where welcoming hands draw her across the threshold and white-robed nuns take her to their breasts and bind up the wounds that life has dealt.

Everybody in New Orleans knows vaguely of the noble mission of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, but few know specifically of the scope and magnitude of the great humanitarian work that they are carrying forward, and so the other day a woman reporter of the "Picayune" knocked at their door and begged to be told something of this great charity for the rescue of fallen women.

Standing within the gateway and waiting for the far-off pattering of feet one had a curious sense of being stranded for an instant on some island of the blest. Without the world beat in, noisy waves up about the high convent walls. Without all was peace, serenity and quiet. Without was sin and temptation and struggle and despair. Within was infinite calm and rest, and you could understand how the poor storm-tossed souls who had once known this sheltering haven and had gone forth from it came back again and again to it, and that their last desire was to die within these shadows.

A moment more and the footsteps had reached the gate and a Sister, robed in spotless white, conducted the visitor along the long hall, past tiny reception rooms, each with its prim row of chairs and its latticed screen, behind which the inmates of the convent could speak to strangers, on and on to the presence of the superioress, Mother Julitta. Everywhere was immaculate cleanliness, and everywhere was a representation of the Good Shepherd. He looked down from the walls in compassionate tenderness from exquisitely painted canvases. In niches and from altars His statue, wreathed about with pink and white roses of spring, smiled a pale and luminous benediction on the passer-by. It was the very poetry of symbolism, holding over before the erring the One in whose sight the lost lamb was more precious than ninety-and-nine who were safely sheltered within the fold.

Nor did this beautiful symbolism end here. It reappeared again in the snow-white robes of the sinless nuns of the Good Shepherd, in the brown garb of the Magdalenes who have turned from evil ways, but who can never fully get back their white purity; in the black dress of the penitents, and it was emphasized in the fact that the members of this order are not addressed as "Sister," but as "mother," because it is their holy mission to comfort the unfortunate creatures that come to them even as a mother comforteth one who mourns. No stage ever showed a play full of such dramatic contrast as is daily enacted in these quiet convent halls when the women, who are the very embodiment of all that is purest, noblest and highest in womanhood, stretch their hands down to the lowliest creatures in the guise of a woman and strive to draw her up to them.

But beautiful and poetic as is the atmosphere surrounding the House of the Good Shepherd, no sentimentalism is allowed to enter into its conduct. The work of rescuing a fallen woman, of weaning her from her vices, of inspiring her with new ideas and strengthening her to meet temptation is a very practical one, and is carried out by the nuns of the Good Shepherd along absolutely practical lines.

There are three classes of women who may become inmates of this institution. The first are women who repent their evil lives and who desire to reform, and who come of themselves seeking its shelter. The second are women, mostly young girls, who go astray, and are placed in the institution by their friends in the hope that its restraining influence and religious teaching will check their footsteps on the downward path; while the third class are women, and these, two, are mostly young girls, committed to it by the court. In the latter class are girls so young as to be mere children, who have not yet done anything wrong, but who are surrounded by such evil influences and such great temptations that they are sent to the House of the Good Shepherd simply as a sanctuary to protect them from the dangers that beset them.

As soon as a woman comes to the House of the Good Shepherd she passes into the charge of Mother Mary of the Divine Heart, a woman of great intellect and great heart, human, tender, sympathetic and loving, who listens to her story and places her into the penitential class. She is then given work—work that fills every minute of the time except the hours of devotion and the brief interval of rest, and that takes the place of the idle excitement she has known and sends her tired to her bed at night. The shortest period for which an inmate will be received into the House of the Good Shepherd is six months. At the end of that time the penitent can leave it if she so desires or if the court or her friends permit. If she wishes to stay on, however, she may do so indefinitely, and as a matter of fact there are twenty-two women now in the home who, next year, will celebrate their silver anniversary—twenty-five years—there, and one who has known no other home for thirty years.

Sometimes the penitent goes back into the world thoroughly reformed and marries and lives a noble and happy life. Sometimes she still lacks the strength to stand alone and falls again and comes back to the House of the Good Shepherd as to a refuge. Often she realizes that her safety lies in being upborne by the arms of religion, and she enters the order of the Magdalenes and spends the balance of her life within the convent. The vows of the Magdalenes are taken once a year for ten years, after which time the perpetual vows are made.

At the present moment there are more than fifty Sisters in charge of the House of the Good Shepherd, besides 79 Magdalenes, 150 penitents, and a large number of colored girls who occupy the building given by the negro philanthropist, Thomy Lafon. These women form a vast, industrious hive of busy bees, in which there are no drones. It is intended not only to provide work for the inmates, but to make the home as near self-sustaining as possible, and to this end various enterprises have been inaugurated.

In long rooms, each presided over by a white-robed Sister who is most competent of superintendent, are long rows of sewing machines run by electricity, at which the brown-garbed Magdalenes or black-robed penitents as the case may be, manufacture day after day hundreds and hundreds of overalls and jumpers and coarse shirts and trousers. In another room are silent groups of women making the exquisitely delicate lingerie for which this convent is famous. To the Sister who designs for this department are brought the latest caprices in Parisian fashions in underwear, the latest frivolity in frills and ruffles, and she cuts and arranges the work that is to be done by the patient Magdalenes, who spend their lives in setting fine stitches in dainty garments whose like they shall never wear. There were tiny baby caps, each as fine as a mother's loving hand had made them laying on the rough tables before them; there were billowy trousseaus for happy brides, and shirt waists so gossamer they might almost have been drawn through a ring, yet embroidered with delicate flowers and butterflies and wreaths, and to look at them it seemed to the observer that all the thoughts and memories and stories of these quiet-faced women must be stitched into them.

In another department the House of the Good Shepherd conducts a large laundry, in which they have just installed the latest and most improved laundry machinery. Here are all the new-fangled devices for washing,

wringing and drying clothes by machinery, and nothing is done by hand except the fine ironing and clear starching. It is hoped to make the chinery, and nothing is done by hand as it is generally known that the House of the Good Shepherd is prepared to do first class work. The Sisters are specially anxious to get the work of hotels and restaurants, and while they have the patronage of some of the largest hotels in the city they still have not as much work as they can do.

In the building given by Thomy Lafon, where the colored inmates are segregated, the negro girls are taught to wash and iron by hand as well as to sew. Indeed, in reality, in addition to being a reformatory institution, the House of the Good Shepherd is a big industrial school. Most of the girls, white and black, who come to it do not know how to do any kind of work, and each before she goes away is taught to sew or cook or wash, so that she has some honest craft by which she can make a livelihood and those who desire to go back into the world are quietly placed in good families, if they care to be, where they prove valuable servants.

Reformatory are not as a general thing cheerful places, but what struck the observer most in the House of the Good Shepherd was the note of quiet and peaceful happiness. Over all was the unmistakable atmosphere of the home. It whispered to you from the rows of comfortable blue spread beds in the dormitory; it winked at you from the shining copper pots in the vast kitchen; it called to you in strident notes from the whirr of the sewing machines; it smiled at you from the peaceful and happy faces of the women, and it breathed to you in the incense about the altar. It was the very incarnation of life that had righted itself and was finding that peace that passeth all understanding in well doing.

Such is the work of the House of the Good Shepherd, such are the results it attains. It is a helper for those who wish to reform, an asylum for those who find the scorn of the world too hard to bear; a refuge for those temptation has driven; for, as one poor creature said who had found shelter in it, "if I could not have come here I would have thrown myself in the river." The need of such a place is attested by the fact that it is overcrowded and that the calls made upon it for food and shelter stretch the slender resources of the nuns to the utmost. No charity could be worthier or more noble, and the pity of it is that in this great and generous city it should be hampered for the lack of a little money.—Dorothy Dix in the New Orleans Daily Picayune.

## A New Passion Play

Encouraged by the financial success of the season of 1900, the Oberammergau Passion players are preparing to revive in 1905 "The School of the Cross" in order that they may not remain idle until 1910, when the "Passion Play" will next be given.

The manuscript of "The School of the Cross" bears the date 1662, and the play has often been given as a counterpart of the "Passion Play" from the close of the eighteenth century to 1875, when King Ludwig II of Bavaria and the then Crown Prince Frederick of Germany were present. Next year the play will be presented in celebration of the unveiling of a group representing the crucifixion, which was presented by King Ludwig to the actors in the "Passion Play" for erection on Mount Calvary, near Oberammergau.

"The School of the Cross" consists of a prologue and five "lessons of the cross," and treats of Old Testament themes, each being followed by a living picture from the New Testament, whereas living pictures from the Old Testament precede the scenes from the New Testament in the "Passion Play." Rehearsals of "The School of the Cross" have already begun.

### A LARGE BEQUEST.

The will of the late Hon. William R. Grace, ex-Mayor of New York, who died on March 21, was filed in probate last Friday. It was executed five years ago, and bequeathed \$100,000 to Grace Institute, of New York, founded by Mr. Grace, "for the instruction of young women in useful industries to equip them for earning a livelihood." Grace Institute is in charge of eight Sisters of Charity, with Sister Marie Dolores as Superior. It has at present about five hundred pupils.

## OUR BOYS AND GIRLS

A PLUCKY BOY'S REWARD.—"Good morning, Mr. Wilson, I believe."

The pleasant face gave the speaker a welcome at the desk of the swell florist not always accorded to visitors possessing no business cards.

"That's my name, young man. What can I do for you?"

The florist looked keenly over the young fellow's face and took note of his sturdy figure and roughly neat clothing.

"I am out of work, sir, and venture to ask to see you personally. I need a job pretty badly. I will do anything—sweep out the office, tend hot-house or drive team—"

"Sorry," and the florist looked it, "but we have no vacancies. This is our dull season. We laid off several men last week. You'll have to excuse me now," he said, rising abruptly.

"I see a particular customer has just come in. Good morning," and the man hurried to the front of the shop.

Nine boys out of ten would have accepted defeat and departed, then and there, but this young applicant was the tenth.

He lingered with a vague notion that perhaps he could think of something to say to the proprietor that would please him or interest him, and that would be the opening wedge he needed. The florist returned to his desk presently.

"Still here, eh?" he said, shortly. "Yes," replied the boy. "I just waited because—well, because people sometimes change their minds, and I'm not throwing away even the slightest chance."

"I have nothing for you," was the curt answer, and in disappointment the boy turned on his heel. Before he reached the door he was hailed.

"Just a moment," said the florist; "do you know anything about orchids? I have a rich customer—she was just in—who commissions me to secure new and rare varieties for her and it has—just occurred to me that you might—but—well, the hunt for orchids is difficult and dangerous—"

"Let me try," eagerly. "I'll not stop at a little danger. If you'll tell me where to go and what to get, I'll not come back empty-handed."

The florist told the youth that he had recently lost one of his best hunters in a Philippine jungle. He explained the danger, the uncertainty of reward, and the probability that the headwaters of the Amazon would furnish the best specimens if they could be reached.

He would pay the ocean passage both ways and advance \$50 in addition if the applicant was determined to try his luck, but would not advise him to go on a long trip without wages or certainty of success.

"I'll risk it," said the youth, "if you are willing to trust me."

"I'll do it. You have grit. Perhaps you'll win. You are sure of selling rare orchids to my customers at a high figure if you get them."

Six months later a half-completed raft lay moored to a gum tree on the upper Amazon. A haggard youth was putting the finishing touches to it. He had neither hammer nor nails, nor saw, nor ax, but he was happy in the possession of a wonderful lot of orchids.

Away up on the rugged cliffs of the Andes he had gathered the choicest specimens. No human being had crossed his path for a full month. He was not sorry, seeing that his last visitors had been savages, who had shot his horse to death with poisoned arrows along the river bottom.

With saddle, rifle and hunting knife he had managed to escape, after hanging an ozier crate of brilliantly beautiful orchids high up in a tree to await his return. He had no need to mark the spot. The peril of his adventure had fastened the place indelibly on his mind, and the orchids were safe from the unappreciative native marauders.

The saddle served him well in the raft making. So did the willow-like reeds from the river, which he bound into ropes for the lashing of the saplings. His ride of 2000 miles was begun one morning with the precious crate of wood orchids transferred from its tree cradle to the raft.

Twice he was shipwrecked in the treacherous rapids of the broad river and twice he had to rebuild his raft. Once his craft stuck fast on a putting stump two miles from shore but he hung on and was rescued by a friendly Indian.

From the seaport town, which he reached at length, he cabled the florist the news of his success. Thirty days later he stood once more before the desk of Mr. Wilson. But this time he left the shop with permanent employment—and a check for \$3000.

STELLA'S LESSON.—Six girls of a graduating class were gathered

at a window overlooking pleasant grounds, and talking eagerly about the future. Their plans were various reaching onward with no thought of grief or sorrow. Wealth, admiration, fame were among the attainable. Music and art would each have its devotee. One would continue her studies at a higher institution; another would become the mistress of a beautiful home.

One had not spoken, and when the question, a second time, was asked impatiently, "Louise, what are your plans?" the answer was eagerly awaited.

"I shall help my mother," said quiet Louise.

"Oh—oh, we all mean to do that, of course," said one, "but what plans have you? You can't mean just to stay at home in a poky way and not try to do anything."

"Girl," said Louise, "I do mean to do just that, for the present at least. My business shall be to help my mother in any way that is possible for me to help her."

A glance at the puzzled faces around her, and she continued.

"Shall I open my heart to you a bit, and let you read a sad passage from it? You remember Stella Morton? You remember that I once visited her during vacation? Her home was very pleasant and a large family of brothers and sisters made the days pass merrily. Our pleasures kept us so much out of doors that we saw little of Mrs. Morton—a delicate, quiet lady, always ready to bestow sympathy when needed. I noticed that the girls were not so tidy and helpful about the house as I had been taught to be; but as I did not see who supplied all deficiencies I thought little about it. One day a picnic had been planned, and I heard the girls impatiently commenting upon the illness of the one servant, as it threw upon them some disagreeable household duties. How Mrs. Morton ever accomplished the delicious lunch we ate that day only such overworked mothers can explain—the little assistance given by Stella and Alice must have been most unsatisfactory."

"We returned by moonlight, so tired that we went to our rooms without seeing anyone, if, indeed, anyone was up at that hour. By and by—I don't know how long we had slept—a frightened voice called Stella who shared my room, and soon we all knew that gentle, tired Mrs. Morton was alarmingly ill. At sunrise she was gone, without hearing the voices so full of love and sorrow. Girls, I can't describe Stella's grief. She placed her own delicate hand beside the thin, toil-stained dead one, and said: 'See, Louise, at what cost mine is so fair; and I have been vain of my white hands.' She kissed the cold fingers again and again."

"One day I found Stella at her mother's work-table, holding up some unfinished piece, evidently left in haste, 'Louise,' she said, 'mother asked me to do this, and I really meant to; oh, why didn't I do it at once!'"

"You can understand what an impression all this made upon me; and when, a few days later, I was called home by the illness of my own mother, the feeling was intensified. Mother was very ill, and as hope grew fainter my distress was hardly less than Stella's. One night when my sister and I were too anxious to sleep, I told her about Stella, and we then pledged ourselves to take from mother every possible care, and to make our home our first object. To make the promise more binding and real, we exchanged rings. Mother's illness made it seem more natural and easy at first, and everything moved on so smoothly that I really think she regained her health more quickly. All the mending and sewing were done promptly under her direction, and we always silenced her by saying we liked to do it. She seldom knows what is prepared for tea or breakfast; we beg her not to inquire, for we know that she enjoys little surprises. The boys and the dear baby are better and happier for having so much of her time and attention."

"Last summer I visited Stella again. She is the light of the home. Only for the discipline I had passed through could I understand how she was able to accomplish so much. Once, when I expressed something of this to her, her eyes filled with tears as she asked: 'Do you suppose she can see us—that she knows what I am trying to do?' Her hands were not fair and delicate, but I thought them more beautiful. Why, girls, I never see a pretty hand now without wondering if it has a right to be fair and white. So I am going home to help mother; I shall be happy, because I know it is my duty."

As Louise finished speaking the retiring bell sounded. Not a word was spoken, but the kiss that each bestowed on the flushed face of the speaker told of the impression her words had made. Those mothers alone can tell whether the influence was lasting.—Pittsburg Observer.

## The Montreal City and District Savings Bank.

The Annual General Meeting of the Shareholders of this Bank will be held at its Head office, 176 St. James street, on

**TUESDAY, 3rd May next, at 12 o'clock noon.**

for the reception of the Annual Reports and Statements, and the Election of Directors.

By order of the Board,

A. P. LESPERANCE,  
Manager.

Montreal, March 31st, 1904.

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What is daintier or more becoming to a Lady than a neat Lawn Shirt Waist; can always be made look new and clean.

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144 only, FINE LAWN SHIRT WAISTS, trimmed with Swiss embroidery, Valenciennes lace, insertions, tucking and hemstitching; regular \$5.75 to \$10.00; sizes 36 and 38. Special, at, \$3.50

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