

"Send a priest, oh! Blessed Virgin,
 "Send a priest, oh! Gentle Jesu,
 "Send a priest, that he may bless me,
 "Give me absolution, bring me
 "Thee, Thy Blessed Self, to feed me,
 "Ere I start upon my journey,
 "Through the Valley of the Shadow."

Father John, the Benedictine,
Listened, wondered, then made answer;

"See, our Blessed Lady heard you,
 "As she always hears, and sent me,
 "After all these years, to bless you,
 "Give you absolution, feed you
 "With the Bread of Life, to stay you
 "Through the Valley of the Shadow."
 "When?" she asked; no more. "To-
 morrow."

Said the monk, and, on the morrow
 Brought to 'Mary with the necklace'
 Jesus, Son of Mary Blessed:
 Spoke the words of absolution,
 Words of peace, of benediction;
 Fed her with The Bread of Angels.

Yet once more the Benedictine
 Went along the road to Holcombe,
 Asked for 'Mary with the necklace.'
 "Dead, Sir," was the awe-struck answer,
 "Died last night;" and then they told him
 All her story, as they knew it:
 How she came from Ireland, married
 Robert Smith, a collier, lost him,
 After many years of wedlock:
 How the parson could not get her
 Into church, nor yet the preacher
 Into chapel, yet how kindly,
 Neighborly and Christian "were she;"
 How she used to sit in summer
 By her doorstep, and, in winter
 By her "bit o' fire," and, sitting,
 "Twist" her "necklace" through her
 fingers,

Whispering to herself, and smiling,
 Seemed like one who waited, looking
 For a dear one, "long in coming."

Father John the Benedictine,
 Sang the dirge, the Mass, the blessing
 Over "Mary with the necklace."

Calm she lay, and in her fingers
 —Stilled at last—she clasped her "neck-
 lace,"

"Twisted" now no more, yet clung to
 As in life—but still, I doubt not,
 Whispering, now, in Heaven, her "Aves,"
 Which the Blessed Queen had answered
 After thirty years of waiting.

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