### WHEN FARMS WERE ABAN-DCNED.

Just over the hill on the old Mill Road as you go out of Charenton, you will notice the two homes, one a white cottage, long built, and lying deep back in the field behind a little grove of lilac shubbery; the other, a dwelling of more pretention, but so fast toppling toward ruin that the very vagrants from the wayside, and painters who come out from the with their etching-folios, regard habitation as in great manner

The huge, homely chimney rears itself still boldly up but every other portion, from the eaves to the door sill, has yielded more or less to the persist ent forces of demolition. The oldfashioned gables are weather stained and riddled; the slanting roof shakes and riddled; the stanting root shakes with the wind as if it would slide cff to the ground; the pale green shutters hang loosely on their fixtures, and the white paint of the clapboarding has grown washy where it has not altogether disappeared. The great front door is never opened now the eagle shaped knocker that has hung there for ten decades has grown brown with its crusting of oxide, and the grass parterie, which runs down from the threshold to the two great elms bending over the road, is no longer a smooth-shaven lawn, but is a general free camping ground for the flowery children of Mother Nature. Hollyhocks side by side with dock weeds, ribbon grass close at hand with lamb's quarters, violets so tender and sun flowers so hardy, are all huddled together in that community of abode, and live out a life of sweetness even amid that anarchy. It is the realization of the visionary's social dream.

It was here that they lived, both lads of nineteen, when the war broke out Mike Hartley in the little house at the lilacs, Harvey Stedman in the big near the road. Between the two households lies the well kept ceme tery where Charenton has been bury ing its generations ever since the epoch of King Paillip's War. Puritans of the old days and Puritans of the recent, many of them good men, some of of them wicked men, repose beneath the tufty verdure, waiting for the trumpets of the resurrection.

Mike and Harvey were comrades; yea, almost brothers. In those years there was no high school in Charenton; and when the two boys had ed together through the last class of the grammar grade, Mr. Stedman came one evening to the little Hartley abode and very generously, in his whole souled way, offered to young Mike the same chance in life that he was offering his own, single son. This chance was the opportunity of learning the trade of carpentering; for Harvey's father was himself the master joiner of the village. Mike, in his heart of gratefulness, never forgot this act of purest kindness, and Mr. Stedman died, Mike cherished his obligations toward the son as all the more tenaciously binding.

Neither was very rich; neither was ktremely talented. Yet Mike, rating the roadside manor as a residence veritably palatial, looked up to young Stedman as to one surreunded with lavish wealth, and Harvey on his side, having noted Mike's cleverness in the school rooms, thought, that Harvey schoolrooms, thought that Hartley was nothing short of a human genius. the first five lustrums of one's life it is easy to become a hero worshipper.

Politics were stirring in those impulsive days. Excitement ran high ; the voice clamoring for abolition had d every village population from Bunker Hill to the Berkshire valleys, in districts further south blows were struck that left rankling wounds, and bitter words were hurled that provoked many a caustic memory. Mike was an abolitionist of the better but ineffective sort. He instinctively looked up to Douglas, of Illinois, as the ideal patriot; and when he spoke of the matter at all he said that the genuinely best remedy for the critical case would be for the nation to buy the slaves a any cost short of bloodsh ed; pay any price in the money of the land, and then turn the Africans over into the body of American free men. In a vague way Mike felt that at twenty one he would be in principle obliged to cast a different ballot from the ticket which he knew Harvey Stedman was going to vote. But as yet their interest in national questions was merely platonic; it hung fire, and did not fret them much. Even the fiery campaign, which had just wound up with Lincoln's triumph, had failed to stimilate within them the momentous enthusiasm, so well-nigh general throughout the North. Southern States had proclaimed their manifestoes of secession, Southern Senators were resigning their seats; but, nevertheless, the declarations of secession were not heeded with genuine or general seriousness. The widespread belief at the time was that in a few months, after the noisy storm of discontent would have spent it elf; after all the froth and talk and bluster, the States from below the Dixie line would come back, like real but wayward children, to their places in the national house

Mike used to say that " most of it is talk." Haraey used to call it "the bluff game of politics." Politics! The politics that interested them most were the fishing-pole and the fowling-To come in from the brook with a string of beauties, speckled with the tints from the rainbow, or to or to come back from the heart of the lowland thicket with a brace of plump partridge; these were the victories that made their young faces beam with

Politics! One candidate was as

go and break your neck for the sake of Of course it would be a fine either? dream to unbind the gyves of the Bondsman. But how? Mike an-Bondsman. But how? Mike answered: "By fair means." Harvey answered: By any means at all: All are fair." This was the state of All are fair." This was the state of their minds when suddenly upon that memorable day of mid April, the firing upon Sumter came like a stab in the

The telegraph wires did not run through Charenton, then ; and it was late in the afternoon, upon the arrival of the stage coach, that the villagers heard the dreadful news; it was, in fact, late in the dark of the evening that Harvey heard the tidings, and it was Mike himself, who brought him the word. Harvey had been off to the gristmill, and having come back with the load of grain, he finished his chores and was putting away the animals in their stalls for the night. Suddenly he heard a shrill whistle echoing from the fields beyond the cemetery. He knew at once it was Mike's familiar call, and so, passing out into the air, he swung his lantern circle wise in the direction of the Hartley cottage. Anon the whistle was repeated. Stedman, thereat, settling down his lantern on the gravel, put his two fingers to his lips and whistled back a piercing answer to Mike. Then in the succeeding stillness he heard Hartley's voice.
"Hold on, Harve! I'm coming

Harvey took the light and drew up close to the cemetery wall, bare excep

for the nervy vines of poisonous ivy.

There he waited. He knew th something was up, for he could hear Mike hurrying. This meant a great Mike hurrying. This meant a great deal; for an injury which had happened to Mike's right ankle in his earliest chilhood had put restriction upon the latter's control of the right foot, he had so trained himself, how foot ; he had so trained himself, however, that in his ordinary walking gait no halting could be detected, and indeed, by recurring exercise he had se schooled himself that he could bound over the surface at a fairly rapid pace. The only difficulty came whenever he tried to strike a regular running gait; no discipline could perfect it; he might skip, bound, hop, but the buoyant, free, easy run h could never attain. Harvey knew all this, and hence it was that Mike's heavy tread hurriedly approaching through the graveyard occasioned him surprise. Hartley seemed to be clear-ing the little sodded mounds at an extraordinary rate. All of a sudden there was a sound as of a collision, a sharp cry rang out from the darkness and the heavy thump of the approach ing step ceased to resound. Some accident had occurred. Harvey, lan tern in hand, bound over the hastened down to the spot. The state of affairs was at once perspicacious. Mike in the darkness and the hurry had stumbled headlong into an open grave.

"Are you hurt, Mike?" "No"; he replied, brushing the loam from his face and raiment. "It gave me quite a shakeup, though, it came so quick. Who's going to be buried here, I wonder.

"It's the Addis family lot. O'd Deacon James dropped off this morning, they say. "That's news to me. Did you hear

the other news?" "What other news?" "Why, in the newspaper! So you

really haven't heard it? No. What is it?"

"Why they've fired on a fort down What do you think of that?" South.

Washington and set up Jeff Davis as

"You don't say, Mike!"
"I'll be darned if I don't, Harve. I've got the paper right here. Hold up that light a little higher and you'll hear it all.

So there beneath the open heavens and beside the old orthodox graveyard Mike read the details, column after column. In the exaggerated language of despatches, struck off in the heat of that feverish crisis, it told the story of Major Anderson's capitulation. Startling vagaries were added to facts that were true; and apprehensive rumors were set down which later on revealed themselves baseless.

"Now, what do you say?" asked, as he closed the recital. "They'll be beaten out of their boots before they get up to put them

on. Mike folded the paper and replaced it in the side pocket of his coat. There was a momentary lapse of thoughtful silence, and then Mike said, very seri-

"Harvey, you and I'll have to go into this.

"The soldiers will settle it, Mike, never you fear!"
Hartley shook his head. "No," he said, "I don't think so. Besides this, the paper states that to morrow morn ing the new President is going to issue a proclamation and call on the country for volunteers. If he does I'm going. It's hard to throw up home and friends, but I'm going to do it, Harve. I'm go-

ing, if I have to go alone. You ought

to come, too

The alarm had indeed rung. Before the week's end there was a public re-cruiting in little Charenton. The town hall was draped with drapings of the patriotic colors, and the flag of Old Glory rustled high on the flagstaff There was music in the streets above. and the martial songs of the nation were heard in the rolling of the Speeches were made that

good as another, they reasoned. Why for the names of volunteers. The first to step forward at the signal was young Harvey Stedman, and jus: behind him, ready to take the same wet pen from his hand, was his fellow joiner, the young, broad shouldered Hartley. As the two signatures went down upon the scroll of honor, the townsmen of Charenton, assembled and witnessing, cheered and cheered till the walls sent

back a chorus of resonant echoes A few days later the conscripts met for official enrolment. The medical examinations had been made, the civic standing of the volunteers had been looked into and the report of accepted volunteers was then officially proclaimed The first name announced and accepted was that of Harry Stadman. The name which immediately followed was that of Michael Hartley. When it was uttered the officer in charge an "Excused from service nounced: "Excused from service.

Mike stood up with indignation mir-

rored on his broad face.
"Why am I refused?" he demanded, and the power of a giant's lungs wa in his voice.

'Physically disabled," was the reply. "What's that," shouted Mike. "The medical examiner has reported that you are not able to run."
"I know I can't run. Is that the

eason that I am not admitted as a Union soldier? "You lack no other qualification,"

it was told him. "Well, captain," said Mike boldly, "if I thought that for soldiers you needed men who could run, I would never have taken the trouble to put in

my name for enlistment."
The officer smiled gladfully.
"That's the talk we like to hear," he Young man, your name will said. remain upon the service roll.

Thus it came about that upon that very day Mike and Harvey, fitted to uniforms of blue, were hurried along to the South in the first regiments that answered the great President's call.

Upon New Year's Day, 1863, a regiment lay bivouacked in an open area beside Stone River. The soldiers of that regiment had been in action the day before, and the hour was dark and late when an opportunity was given them of spreading out their blankets and lying down to a few hours of need They were awakened in ed slumber. They were awakened in the gray of New Year's morning by the sound of bullets pattering around them like nuts falling from a tree. Bugles rang out at once, and an officer, already up in his saddle, came dashing His face wore something of a along. sleepy look and his hair showed dis

"Come, boys," he shouted. "Quick work now. The devils are after us again; they're heading this way in Stand up stiff against them, remember, and fall back in good order when you get the signal."

It was one of the sudden surprises so frequent upon the firing line. Hastily throwing themselves into array, the bluecoats faced the roll of Southern musketry. It had come perciptibly nearer, the bullets no longer dropped like harmless nuts but came whistling past their ears in mad earnest; soldiers of the regiment were dropping here and there in their tracks Behind the regiment, itself, at only a furlong's distance, stood the artillery men of the same division. The latter were drawn up in position in a piece of sparse woodland, and watched eagerly their chance to open fire. Unfortunately this opportunity was delayed. were forced to stay idly at their lanyards, unable to boom their guns until their own regiment comrades, massed in the open space just in front, and firing back volleys over the "Get out!"
"And they swear that before a month goes by, they'll take the City on the ground they were yielding, would have ground they were yielding, would have ground they were yielding, would have be with the city of fallen back entirely out of the range of the Union cannon. the Union cannon.

The advance of the Confederate grays was firm and steady. ever they halted, it was but for an instant, and even then it was to raise their guns and pour out a rattle of murderous musketry, before which the lines of the Union regiment grew thinner and more disordered. An impulse of panic ran along the line; some of the soldiers started back in pell-mell precipitancy, and even the color-bear er turned timidly aside. The next mo-ment a bullet laid him dead at the foot of his flag-staff. Another's grasp seized it and raised it towards heaven Four minutes later the Stars and Stripes went down again. A third claimant pounced upon the fallen ban ner and up it went resolutely in his

firm arm.
"Hold it steady, Mike," sang out his nearest comrade, "it will be my turn next.

"All right, Harve," he answered and a grim look settled over his broad, honest face.

A Southern cannon had opened fire on the right. A belch of flame shot forth, and then, instantaneously, some mighty object came ploughing into the earth beneath Mike and Harvey Some moments later, when Harvey opened his eyes, the Confederates were passing over him, and, with that chivalry which penetrates even into the heart of war, the gray-vested sol-diers took care not to touch him in passing. He had been terribly wounded. An officer passed by An officer paused long enough to offer him a blanket and to hold a drink to his lips. Harvey was growing faint with pain and ebbing blood, and as he gazed, there at his side, lay Mike's dead, mangled body horrible to look upon. A portion of the regiment's banner, torn into shreds and soiled with loam, had wrapped it-

self under the corpses of the heroes. Late in the afternoon the Southern Infantry were driven back across that very ground. The action was there-fore terminated for the day, and with drums. Speeches were made that touched the heart and quickened the spirit, and then, when the fires were all aglow, the books were thrown open in the cessation which ensued, the constitution of her dogmas. A puny, rickety, pass-

their brothers who had fallen ; and here, upon that cold, midwinter field, they found Mike and Harvey dead, side by side, with the folds of the regiment's standard endearingly touching

Their bodies were laid away together beneath the Tennessee battle ground; but far off in the North, at Charenton, little girls in white dresses go in procession every year in May; and there, beside each of two shapely stone me mortals, chiseled with the grace of deft workmanship at the quarries of Rut-land, the soft young hands reach tenderly down to place on the green sward a fragrant circlet of tributary flowers. Two stone memorials-Harvey's is in the famous old Puritan graveyard on the road to the mill, the other is in the newer cemetery at the lake-sidewill notice a large granite cross at the gateway, and the word underneath: Requiescat! - Joseph Gordian Daley, in the Sacred Heart Union.

#### A FACT AND ITS EXPLANA TION.

The keen-sighted author of "The Triumph of Failure " puts this remark into the mouth of one of his characters: "I never yet met a Protestant who was not anxious to talk religion, nor a Catholic who was not anxious to avoid it. Why?" Because," answers another character, "we are so sure of our religion it does not interest us. You know that there must be doubt in order to create interest." Most readers will, we think, endorse the remark, though it sounds somewhat too sweep ing. The explanation, however, does not explain. The reluctance of Catholics to talk religion springs, we submit, not from a sense of security begotten of convictions of the Church's infallible authority, but rather from their failure duly to qualify themselves for intelligent discussion of religious questions. Indifference, not simple faith—cowardice, not pious simple faith-cowardice, not confidence-are the real causes of the

phenomenon alleged. It seems to us that people take a strange view of God's purpose in es-tablishing an infallible Church, who think that Catholics are exempted from all thought and consideration in the matter of religion-that, when they say "Credo" their duty is done, and that because they are secure of the truth they are justified in losing all interest in it. "Our Lord," says the interest in it. author of "External Religion, quires of educated Catholics, besides certain intelligence about their belief proportioned to their general ability and opportunities; nor can any man be credited with deep or vital faith if it is not a faith that seek intelligence as far as intelligence is possible for him ; if, from being a matter of practical utility for him, it does

not come to be also one of intellectual Again it is hardly true that interes in religion—such a feeling of personal concernment in religion as fixes one's attention upon it—is inspired only by doubt. The seeker after truth is interested in his way, while they who have found it or have never lost it, can be interested in it as a possession to be used for their own spiritual betterment, for the defence of Catholic teaching against the everlasting hostility of history, science or criticism, and for the enlightenment of those whose eyes are still held. But, out of the multitude of so called educated Catholics, how few they are who realize their duties or their opportunities Their knowledge of their wonderful faith is restricted to a few commonplaces of the catechism imperfectly reinstruction imperfectly assimilated. Though bound to be able to give a reason for the faith that is in them and to make it intelligible to those who in quire of them, they are content to live in ignorance. This is something in ignorance. This is something which outsiders cannot understand. That more scandal does not arise than actually arises is due to the charitable fiction that Catholics, in speaking about their beliefs, habitually practice a sort of "disciple of the secret.

ginning of Christianity when intelectual interest in religion was so neces sary or so potent for good as it is to day. Difficulties and objections that once exercised only the learned few and were discussed only in practically inaccessible tones, have become com monplaces of popular discourse and the stock-in trade of journalists and novel Sectarian Christianity confesses itself a failure, The preachers do not know what to preach and the people do not know what to believe. The words of Christ that man liveth not by bread atone are finding a new illustration in shese days. Owen Meredith says that man 'can live without literature, live without books ; but civilized man can not live without cooks." For "cooks religion " and his cheap jingle read " becomes a solemn truth. Men cannot get along without religion and they feel that religion does not consist of vague emotions. The tendrils of the soul, so to speak, are the soul, so to speak, are ever reaching for something to hold to And this is the reason why religious discussions are so frequent in almost every class of society, high and low. Travelled people can give abundant testimony to the fact. Human science, with all its triumphs, is impotent to solve the riddle of life. There is rennaissance of interest, respectful, per-haps, rather than cordial, in the Church, which time, the great test of truth, has shown to be the only consistent, the only enduring form of Christianity. Men want to know the secret of her vitality, the facts of her history and constitution, the meaning

bluecoats came out to pick up those of ive faith-one that has no more vitality than a potato that sprouts neglected in a cellar corner-is not what inquirers expect of us, still less what God expects of us. We need to be personally active, to make ourselves Church would have us be. A few men and women have realized what the mission of an educated Cath. olic is in these days. Our heart goes out to them in blessings. May the leaven of their example penetrate the sodden indifference of the majority. May they inspire their brethren with an interest in their Church which shall take on a more becoming and practical form than mere pharisaical criticism of the clergy .- Providence Journal.

## CONVERSIONS TO THE FAITH

One reason why conversions to the faith are not more numerous is the fact that the lives of many Catholics do not show up any better than those of their neigh bors. They profess to belong to the true Church but they do not live ac-cording to the laws of the Church and the Church is judged by their actions. This is not as it should be. Take the proper pride in your religion by living ip to it, and thus make of yourselves better men and women, more upright citizens, and truer children of eternal Father.

## NUNS BUILD THEIR OWN CON VENT.

A recent traveler in South Africa tells of Benedictine nuns who have undertaken not only to build their house, but even to manufacture the material. These devoted women have already made over 100,000 bricks with their own hands. We notice that Protestant contributions to missionary works have shrunk amazingly since it was disaverted that many of their "missionaries "and their families were living in luxurious ease on the money.

No such accusation has ever, so far as we know, been brought against Catholic missionaries, of whom these Sisters are a type. But in justice to our separated brethren, it must be said that if these heroic nuns were their missionaries they would probably be more generously supported than they now are.

## CHRISTIAN MARRIAGES.

We think that some Catholics regard marriage as something on a par with the state of the farmer, the mason and We would, however, the shoemaker. fain believe that they do not entertain this opinion, which was fathered by Calvin, but their conduct betimes justi fies us in declaring that they have an inadequate idea of the sacredness of matrimony. The holiness of Christian matrimony is, we are told by the Second Council of Baltimore, connected with our own most sacred associations and duties; and it cannot be lost sight of, in however small a degree, with out entailing the most serious quences. Such being the case the contracting parties should prepare them selves for it in the way prescribed by the Church. In reading the account of marriages in the daily prints, where elaborate trousseaus and the glare and glitter of wealth absord eve/ything, of marriages performed by civil magistrates, of the laws of marriage mocked at by every passing caprice-one is forced to believe that the dignity of matrimony has indeed fallen on evil days. But we know that the Church has stood a patient and a watchful sentinel at the Christian of the catechism imperfectly re-red and few points of pulpit and destruction. This is a fact so plainly written on the pages of history that non Catholics have ascribed to her conduct whatever good there is in our present civilization. She would also have her children receive that holy sacrament in the Church. It has been always a matter of wonder to us why some Catholics will persist in doing otherwise. Without commenting on the spurning of sacred laws, it certain okens a thoroughly un Catholic spirit. It is a pledge of future unhap-On the other hand, who, asks There never was a time since the be-Tertullian, can express the happiness of that marriage which the Church approves, which sacrifice confirms and which blessing seals—angels announce it, and the Father ratifies?

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