

Grace sat her foot to Liverpool, but paid her expenses all the way to Achill. She also presented for her two children, and gave several nice keepsakes for herself. Nor was the widow Meloney forgotten, who remembered Grace so kindly. Maruth charged her also with some little packages for friends. "But," said Katey to Maruth, the evening before she left, "you might give me a ton weight to carry back. It would not be equal by half to the load I brought with me. For oh! Maruth, it is a dreadful weight on you to have your dead mother frowning at you until you keep your promise to her."

CHAPTER XLV.

I am now going to take my readers to a great distance from Heath Cottage, even to the coast of Italy, where a small English fleet were keeping watch over French proceedings.

In one ship, the "Mercury," Katey's husband, his son, and Edward O'Donnell (alias O'Birn) were serving. In another of the six ships which composed the squadron Captain Noel commanded.

Robert's astonishment was great on receiving Grace's letter, telling him all about Katey's visit, and that her son was in the very fleet he was attached to.

He determined on the first opportunity to go on board the "Mercury," so as to be able to assure his wife that he had seen her son. He thought that it would be best not to make himself known to Edward until he had ascertained what kind of character he bore.

On ordering his boat out to go on board the "Mercury," he was informed that the Admiral had recently sent that ship as far down as Trieste, and that it had not returned. They were then, the rest of the squadron, lying at the mouth of the Po. So, giving orders that some one was to be on the look-out for the return of the "Mercury," and to acquaint him as soon as it was in sight, he had to take patience, and to occupy himself with beginning a letter to Grace, to be sent when he could add about Edward.

In a couple of days it hove in sight, and the next morning Robert determined to pay his visit.

When he came on deck to proceed on his visit, he found his men here and there talking in a very excited manner. He inquired "what was the matter?" and then was told, that one of the midshipmen of the "Mercury," they had heard, had met with an accident, in consequence of some order given by his captain, and which order was out of the regular course of things for the lad to be required to execute.

"What's his name?" inquired Captain Noel; "I mean the midshipman's?"

No one could rightly say. One fancied it was this, another that. So, Robert at once ordered his boat to be lowered, filled with anxiety, yet thinking himself a fool for his pains. "Why should it be Edward? Only it would be such a misfortune, just as Grace was enjoying the idea of seeing him, to have to write home such news!"

He was soon alongside of the "Mercury," and, after shaking hands with the first lieutenant, he inquired for Captain * * *. He was not on board; he had gone to the flagship, to make his report to the admiral. Lieutenant McKinnon said this in such a peculiar manner, and his expression was so strange, that Robert could not help saying, "Is anything wrong?"

"It is not for me to say," answered Lieutenant McKinnon, "at least, I had better not?"

"Well, well, you are right," returned Robert, "and I was wrong to ask you; however, oblige me by answering this question: have you a midshipman on board, of the name of O'Birn?"

The lieutenant started! "Yes, sir, we have, do you know him?"

"I can't just say that I do; but I know his friends, and was requested to look him up; would you mind telling me, what kind of a lad he is?"

The lieutenant looked round, and seeing that there were several officers and sailors hanging about, he asked Captain Noel, "would you come down to my cabin, and then I will answer your query; I cannot talk here." He said this in a low tone; but added aloud, "If you will please to walk down, Captain Noel, you can wait for Captain * * *'s return."

Shutting the door of his cabin, McKinnon begged Robert to be seated, and then gave him a rapid account of young O'Birn, which I shall retail by transcribing a letter which I afterwards read when I went on a visit to dear Grace; suffice it to say here, that Robert did not wait to see Captain * * *, as he was sure that he should not be sufficiently master of his feelings to meet him with ease of manner; and that the contrary might entail disagreeables on Lieutenant McKinnon after his having been so long closeted with him, as would be sure to come to the captain's ears.

CHAPTER XLV.

MY DEAREST GRACE:

"Of course your communication surprised me not a little; how very peculiarly things happen! People are fond of attributing to chance, events, which instead, are beautiful loadings of Providence. In the fact of Edward's being in the same squadron as myself, what becomes of your theory of sympathy? Ought I not to have felt drawn towards my step son by some secret and unaccountable magnetism? I must have seen him several times, and yet never felt any attraction nor inclination to follow him, even with my eyes.

"Do not think the worse of me, nor imagine that Edward's is not a congenial soul with mine! but to put aside badinage, I have seen him. He is so like you that I wonder at myself for not having remarked him before.—Above all, dear wife, he is worthy of being your son, and I am proud to be able to tell you that just now he is quite a hero, and that it is quite a feather in my cap to claim him as my step son.

"I know that you like me in all stories to begin at the beginning, so prepare for a very long yarn.

"I have quite a week before me for writing, as we will not put in anywhere to post this, so I shall add a little each day.

"It was unfortunate that Edward got into the "Mercury," for the captain, whose name I will not mention, is one of the greatest tyrants that disgrace our navy. His punishments are something atrocious. To give you an instance; He had a man rolled up and down the deck in a barrel as fast as the men could do it; and another for a week was fastened in a barrel and fed through the bung hole, the only air he got (however, don't fear that I am going to add that Edward has been subject to such horrors). You will ask how a man could be allowed to act in such a barbarous manner; remember, we are all powerful on board our own ship; there is no appeal. Well, to get on with my story.

"Such is the man Edward was placed under, and although midshipmen have not much to do with their captain, yet, of course, every one, more or less, comes under the captain's observation.

"Now, it seems that Captain * * * took a fancy to our Edward, and on several occasions, singled him out, to send on some message; the youth being quick and bright, pleased him.

"Like all tyrants, Captain * * * was very tenacious of what was said of him, and he especially disliked his first lieutenant, McKinnon; perhaps McKinnon could hardly forbear showing his disgust at some of the captain's cruelties—and perhaps he feared that he might talk at head-quarters—which, between me and you, I think McKinnon ought to have done; but subordinates are so afraid of meddling with their superiors.

"As I said, Captain * * * took a fancy to Edward, and on one or two occasions called him into the cabin and gave him a glass of wine and some fruit, knowing that to be the way to a boy's heart.

"When he thought he had insured the boy's gratitude, so to say, he one day called him into his cabin, gave him his usual 'treat,' and then opened his mind in these words—'O'Birn, I think you are an intelligent lad, and I am going to entrust you with a commission, which I would not give to any one else.' 'Thank you, sir,' said Edward. 'I shall expect you to do your best; and I shall reward you if you do. I want you to listen to what the officers and men say about me. Anything you hear them say, you must come directly and tell me. You can come at any time to my cabin. I want specially to know what they think of my punishing Dalby. You can ask one or two just to know what they say about it. Do you understand me?"

"The boy all this time was alternately getting red and pale, he was so frightened; but it was only for a moment. His spirit rose—(after all, Grace, there is something in good blood, or what made him act as he did?), and he looked at the captain and said, 'I beg your pardon, sir, but I can't do it.' 'Not do it!' cried Captain * * *, stamping his foot and getting into a towering passion; 'but I tell you you must and shall!' The lad merely shook his head; he was afraid to speak. 'What! after I have been so kind to you?' He thought to appeal to the boy's better feelings of gratitude for past favors. 'Yes, sir,' at last said Edward, 'you have been very kind to me, and I am obliged to you, sir; but I can't do it—they are all so kind to me! I'll tell you what, sir—Once, about three years ago, I was caught listening at my mother's door, when she had a stranger with her, and she caught me, and the only belaboring she ever gave me was that; and then she hissed at me, and the stranger did the same; they called me a mean sneak to listen at doors—and please, sir, if you were to pay me this full of gold' (showing his cap) 'I never could do it again. No, sir, I never can oblige you.' The captain took him by the shoulder and pushed him out of the door.

"Edward took the first opportunity to tell his foster father; who wisely cautioned him. 'For the life of him, not to tell anyone what the captain had asked him to do; nor, like a brave boy, to listen for a moment to the captain's base proposals.' Grace—that Burke, (Katey's husband)—is worth his weight in gold! After that effusion I will go on. From that time, or rather after Captain * * * had once more tried to shake the boy's resolution, and received the same firm refusal; as I have said, from that moment the youth had no peace. The wretch!—(excuse my using a strong term, I cannot help it, although it is not *esprit de corps* to call him names, but I cannot help it, nor will you spare an explosion of wrath when you know the sequel)—annoyed him in every possible way. This happened last year.

"Edward and Burke thought the captain had forgotten all about the affair; not so—he was only waiting his opportunity.

"The Admiral heard that the French fleet was coming up to Trieste, so he sent the "Mercury," off to reconnoitre, and lay in as near the shore as possible, to watch what was going on.

"They lay about three miles off Trieste. "The morning after their arrival, the captain came on deck, and said, after looking some time through his glass, 'I tell you what, Lieutenant McKinnon, do you see that barn lying there, close to the shore? I'll send a few men to take possession of it, as it will be a good position to have a lookout for the French.—They can plant our flag on it; so if the French do come, they will see that we are here, and ready for them.'

"I do not see the use of that, sir, as you ask my opinion," replied McKinnon. "I did not ask your opinion, as it happens, Lieutenant McKinnon. I was merely observing how good the manoeuvre would be. Here," he cried, looking round, "You, and you—well pick me out a dozen men, and I will send young O'Birn, he has plenty of pluck! He shall plant the flag!" "What!" said McKinnon, "So young a boy—only fifteen! One of the older officers had better go, if you wish it to be done, sir." "Excuse me, Lieutenant McKinnon, I know what I am about. I would rather send him—

he has plenty of courage. O'Birn, listen to me: As soon as you have hoisted your flag on the top of the barn you can all return to the ship—do you mind? And if you want help before that, fire off one or two guns; we shall be sure to hear; the wind lies this way. Now, mind I expect my orders obeyed."

"McKinnon, before they started, took the boy aside, and said, 'Edward, don't be fool-hardy, and stay too long on shore; and if you see any danger, save your flag at all risks. Do not attempt to hold the place against too great odds. I see no benefit that can arise from such an expedition; however, orders must be obeyed, whatever the result.'

"I shall now, dearest Grace, let the boy speak for himself, repeating what he said to me, but, perhaps, in choicer words.

(To be Continued.)

FATHER BURKE'S SERMON

ON "Mary, the Immaculate Mother of God."

(From the N. Y. Irish American.)

The following exquisite discourse, on "Mary, the Immaculate Mother of God," was delivered by the Very Rev. Father Burke, in the Church of St. Vincent Ferrers, New York:—

"Thou art all fair, O My beloved, and there is no spot or slightest stain in thee."

These words, beloved brethren, are found in the Canticles of Solomon; and the Holy Catholic Church applies them to the soul and body of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In the Scriptures the King addresses his spouse by these words. The King represents no other than the Almighty God. And surely, if among all the daughters of men, we ask ourselves, who was the spouse of Almighty God? we must immediately answer, the Virgin Mother who brought forth the eternal God made man. Wherever, therefore, the Scriptures and the inspired writings of the old law speak words of love, and denote attributes belonging to a spouse, these are directly applicable to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Now, among the many gifts and graces which the Prophet beheld in her,—and upon which he congratulates her,—are these: he tells us that he saw her "at the King's right hand, in golden garb, surrounded with variety;" that everything of beauty and loveliness was upon her; but, in addition to this, he tells us that a vision of such perfect immaculateness rose before his eyes, that, filled with the Holy Ghost and the joy of God, he exclaimed: "Thou art all fair, O My beloved, and there is no spot or slightest stain in thee." Behold, then, dearly beloved, the first great grace that the Virgin of virgins received at the first moment of her existence.

When we reflect upon the relationship which the Incarnation of our Divine Lord established between the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Almighty God,—namely, that she should be the Mother of God,—that He, taking His sacred humanity from her, should be united to her, so as to be the flesh of her flesh, and the bone of her bone;—that He was to be altogether hers, as the child belongs to the mother at birth,—and in this new relation of His humanity He was not to suffer the slightest diminution of the infinite sanctity which belonged to Him as see the awful proximity in which a creature is brought to Almighty God in this mystery of man's redemption,—the very first thought that strikes the mind is, that God must have forfeited something of His holiness, or else the creature that He selected for His mother must have been all pure, all holy, and, so, fit to be the Mother of God;—either God must have forfeited some of His holiness, coming to one personally a sinner, taking tainted blood,—the nature that belonged to us He took in her, and which was a broken, a disfigured, and a deformed nature, tainted with sin, and steeped, if you will, in sin,—for what, after all, is the record of man's history but a record of sin;—or else Mary must have been sinless.

But, if the Almighty God took that nature from one who bore in her own blood the personal taint of the universal sin, we must conclude that He thereby compromised His own infinite holiness;—nay, that He did more than this; that He contravened His own word: for the word of God is, that nothing defiled, nothing tainted shall come near to Almighty God. The soul that departs from this world with the slightest taint of sin in it must pay to the last farthing, and purge itself into perfect purity before it can catch a glimpse of God in heaven. And if this immaculateness and purity be necessary in order even to behold God, think of the purity, think of the immaculateness, that must have been necessary to Mary in order to fit her not only to behold God, but to take Him into her bosom, to give Him the very human life by which He lived, to give Him the very nature that He took, and united to Himself in the unity of His own divine person;—to give Him that humanity that He literally made Himself!

What infinite purity, what perfect innocence and immaculateness did these involve, unless, indeed, we are willing to conclude that the Almighty God came into personal contact with a sinner, and so allowed something not undefiled to come into contact with Him. But no; the mystery which brought so much suffering, so much humiliation, so much sadness and sorrow to the eternal Son of God, brought to Him no compromise with sin; brought to Him no defilement of His own infinite sanctity; did not in the least lower Him from that standard of infinite holiness which is His essence and nature as God. And, therefore, it was necessary that, coming to redeem a sinful race, the individual of that race from whom He took His most sacred humanity should be perfectly pure and immaculate.

More than this, we know that the Almighty God never yet called any creature to any dignity or to any office without bestowing upon that creature graces commensurate with the greatness, the magnitude and duties which He imposed upon him.—Hence it is that we find when He was about to create the Prophet Jeremiah,—when He was about to make him a prophet, to put His divine inspiration into his mind; when He was about to send His man to announce His vengeance to the people,—the Scriptures expressly tell us that He sanctified that man in his mother's womb, before he was born, and that the infant prophet came into this world without the slightest taint of sin. Hear the words of Scripture:—"The word of the Lord came to me, saying: Before I formed thee in thy mother's womb, I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and made thee a prophet unto the nations." So, in like manner, when the Almighty God created the man who was to arrive at the highest dignity of the prophets—not only to proclaim the coming of God, but to point out God amongst men in the person of our Saviour,—John the Baptist, created for the high and holy purpose,—created to be amongst men what Gabriel the Archangel was to Mary,—namely the revealer of the Divine counsels,—God sanctified him in his mother's womb; and John the Baptist was born without sin. If the Almighty God sanctifies a man before his birth, anticipates the sacramental regeneration of circumcision, sanctifies him before the sacrament, as in the case of Jeremiah and John the Baptist, simply because that man was called to the office of proclaiming the word of God, surely there must have been some distinctive sanctity, some especial grace in reserve for Mary, as much higher than the grace of the prophet or of the prevision of the Baptist, as Mary's office transcends theirs. Jeremiah had but to announce the word of God revealed to him.—

Mary it was who was to bring forth the Word of God incarnate in her immaculate womb. John the Baptist was to point him out and say, "Behold the Lamb of God," Mary was to hold Him in her arms and say to the world, "This Lamb of God, who is to save all mankind, is my Son." And, therefore, it is that,—as her office exceeded that of prophet, preacher and precursor; as her dignity so far transcended anything that heaven and earth could ever know or imagine in a creature,—so the Almighty God reserved her alone amongst all that He created upon this earth, that she should be conceived, as well as born, without sin;—that the stream of sin which touched us all, and in its touch defiled us, should never come near nor soil the immaculate Mary;—that the sin, which mixed itself up in our blood in Adam, and upon the stream of that blood, found its way into the heart, into the veins, of every child of this earth, should never flow in the immaculate veins which furnished to Jesus Christ the blood in which He washed away the world's sin.—Therefore, the Almighty God for this took thought and forethought for all eternity. "The Lord possessed me," says the Scripture, "in the beginning of His ways, before He made anything from the beginning." That is to say, in the divine and eternal counsels of Almighty God, Mary arose in all the splendor, in all the immaculate whiteness of her sanctity and purity, the first, the grandest and the greatest of all the designs of the eternal wisdom of God; because in her was to be accomplished the mystery of mysteries, the mystery that was hidden from ages with Christ in God,—namely the Incarnation of the eternal God.

Thus did the prophet behold her, as she shone forth in the eternal counsels of God, when he looked up in that inspired moment at Patmos, and saw the Heavens opened and the glories of God revealed, there in the midst of the choirs of God's angels, there in the full blaze and effulgence of the light descending from the Father of Light; and he exclaimed: "I beheld, and lo! a great sign appeared in Heaven; a Woman clothed with the sun, and the moon beneath her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars." Who was this woman? Mark what follows, and you will know for yourselves. "And she brought forth a man-child who was to rule all nations with an iron rod; and her son was taken up to God and to His throne." Whom can she be but the woman that brought forth the man-child, Jesus Christ, the Son of God? Thus did the prophet behold her, the sign and promise of victory and of glory. And how significant are the mysterious words that follow:—"And the Serpent cast out of his mouth, after the Woman, water, as it were a river, that he might cause her to be carried away by the river. And the earth helped the Woman; and the Earth opened her mouth and swallowed the river which the Dragon cast out of his mouth." The earth, indeed, swallowed up those fatal waters; the whole world was saturated with them; but they never touched the Woman; and we behold in this the mystery of the Immaculate Conception, for I can call it nothing else than a mystery of divine grace which is a triple triumph, namely, the triumph of God, the triumph of human nature, and Mary's own triumph and glory.

Consider these things, my friends. First of all, let us consider God's triumph in Mary. Recollect, dearly beloved, the circumstances that attended the fall and the sin of man. God made us in a perfect nature;—perfect in its organization, perfect in its origin, perfect in its eternal destiny, perfect in the freedom and the glory with which He crowned the unfallen man. "Thou has made him little less than the angels; thou hast crowned him with honour, and glory." Then came sin into this world and spoiled the beautiful work of God. All the fairest work of God was destroyed by Adam's sin. The integrity of our nature was injured. The harmony of creation was disturbed. Bad passions and evil inclinations were let loose; and the soul with its spiritual aspirations, its pure love and unshackled freedom, became their slave. But although the devil triumphed over God in thus breaking, destroying, defiling and spoiling God's work in man, yet his triumph was not perfect. God wished still to vindicate Himself. God would not give His enemy a total and entire triumph over Him, in the destruction and spoiling of His work. God set Mary aside and said: "For her let there be no soothing influence; for her no taint." He took her, in His eternal designs, in the bosom of His own infinite sanctity and omnipotent power; and, whilst all our nature was destroyed, in her it retained its original purity, integrity and beauty, in the one soul and body of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

There we see God's triumph. And here, it is worthy of remark, dearly beloved, that, although in Scripture we often read of God's designs being frustrated, and of God's work being overturned by sin or some evil agency;—yet it is never totally spoiled. God never gives a complete triumph to his enemy. Thus, for instance, in the beginning, at the time of the Deluge, all mankind were steeped in sin; and God, looking down from Heaven, said: "I am sorry that I created this race; for My spirit is no longer among them." Yet, even then did the Almighty God reserve to Himself Noah and his children; and, out of the whole race of mankind; these were saved in purity and in sanctity, that God might not be utterly conquered by the devil. Again, when the Almighty God prepared to rain down fire upon Sodom, He could not find ten holy men in the land. And yet, in the universal corruption, Lot and his family were saved. They were holy, where all else was unholy, and they preserved God in their hearts. Again, when the tribe of Benjamin was destroyed from amongst the other tribes of Israel, a few were saved, that God's work might not be utterly destroyed. And so the prophet, speaking of the Jewish people, says: "If the children of Israel were as the sands of the sea, yet a remnant shall be saved." Thus it is that we find, invariably, that the Almighty God allows, in His wisdom and in His vengeance, the devil to go to a certain point, and to revel in destruction so far; but yet, suddenly he stays him; "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther."

This ought to be a good lesson to us in our day. True, it seems to us in this our day, that this devil of pride, this devil of infidelity, this devil of revolution, this devil of self-assertion, is let loose among the nations, to play riot with the Church of God, to strike the crown from off the Pontiff's head, to pervert the ancient, faithful nation which has upheld him for centuries, and make it the bitterest enemy of the Church, and to deprive the Head of the Church, for the time, of power. To-day, this devil runs riot in the world, shutting up Catholic churches, expelling Jesuits, tainting the fountains of education, loosening the sacred bonds of marriage and of society, blaspheming Christ in the Eucharist, persecuting His priests and bishops and representatives upon earth. But we know that, at some moment or other, and when we least expect it,—perhaps right in the mid career of its apparent glory,—the terrible, invisible hand will be put forth, and a voice will be heard: "No more—back! So far in My vengeance, and so far even in My mercy, I have allowed you, Back! Let there be peace." So the Almighty God triumphed even in the fall of Adam, which brought death into the world, polluted our blood, stirred up the passions, destroyed the equilibrium and harmony of human nature, and caused the very beasts of the forest to assume the savageness that they have to this day. All nature was tainted except that of Mary. Her, the hand of the Omnipotent Lord held high above all attacks and attempts of her enemies; and in Mary God has triumphed, in that, in her, His glory has been preserved, she never having been tainted with or spoiled by sin.

It is, also, the triumph of our nature, my friends. If Mary had not been conceived without sin, we might have been redeemed, we might have saved our souls, as we hope to do now; we might have

gone up into the glory of Heaven; but a perfect human being we never could have seen: Heaven would be a congregation of penitents if Mary were not there; tears upon their faces; but no tears upon thine, O immaculate Mother! the blood of Christ upon the hands of all; but no blood of thy divine Son upon thy immaculate hands, O Mary! The unfallen man would have been; a thing of the past. Even in Heaven, the representative of what God had made in Adam would be wanting if Mary were not there. And, therefore, our nature has triumphed in her. We may look up to her in Heaven; we may all contemplate her; and we may glorify our humanity in Mary without the slightest fear of pride or blasphemy against God, because the humanity that is in Mary, being conceived without sin, is worthy of all honor and of all glory.

I will not compare her in her Immaculate Conception with sinners; I will compare her with the Saints, and behold how she towers above them. All sanctity,—whether it be wrought out by words of penance, by fasting and mortification, by laborious efforts for the conversion of souls, by utter consecration and sacrifice to God, by martyrdom, by any form of sanctity,—attains to but one thing; and that is perfect sinlessness and perfect purity of soul.—Perfect sinlessness and perfect purity of soul mean perfect union by the highest form of divine love with Almighty God. God so loves us, dearly beloved, that He wishes to have us altogether united to Him by that intimate union of the strongest and most ardent love. How is it that that union is not effected? Because of some little imperfection, some little sinfulness, some little crookedness in our souls, which keeps us from that perfect union of love with God. Now, the aim of all the Saints is to attain to that ardent and perfect union with God, by purging from their souls, from their bodies, from their affections and from their senses every vestige or inclination or even temptation to sin. When they have attained to that, God crowns their sinlessness with a perfect union of love, and they have attained to the acme or summit of their desires. It is here—precisely where all the Saints have ended—here, precisely where all the Saints, tired and fatigued with the labors of their upward journey, knelt down in blessed rest on the summit of Christian perfection—that Mary's sanctity begins; for, in her Immaculate Conception, she was conceived without sin. No thought, or shadow of thought "to sin allied" was ever allowed to fall upon the pure sunshine of her soul. No temptation to sin was ever allowed to quicken the pulsations of her sacred heart. Nothing of sin was ever allowed to approach her. Entrained in the perfect sinlessness of her Immaculate Conception, the moment she was conceived, she surpassed in sanctity,—that is to say, in perfect sinlessness, and, consequently in perfect union of love with God,—all of the Saints and Angels in Heaven. This is the meaning of the words in Scripture, where the prophet says: "Wisdom built unto itself a house; and the foundation thereof is laid upon the summits of the holy mountain. The Lord loveth the threshold of Sion more than the palaces and tabernacles of Judah." You all know that every word of Scripture has a deep and God-like meaning. What meaning can these words imply? Apply this to Mary's sanctity; you find the first moment of her existence upon the summit of the holy mountain: that is to say her, very first step in life—is dearer to the Lord than the palaces and tabernacles of Judah; that is, than all the edifices of sanctity that were ever built up on this earth. This was the beginning—the conception—of the woman who was destined to be the Mother of God, made man.

But you may ask me, in that case, if she never sinned, even in Adam, surely she stood in no need of a Redeemer; surely she was the only one for whom it was not necessary that God should become man. God became man to redeem sinners—to save them; if this woman did not require redemption or salvation, why does she say in the "Magnificat": "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God, my Saviour?" Well, my friends, she owes as much to the blood of Christ shed on Calvary, as we do. He was more her Saviour than ours. Whence came the grace of her immaculate conception?—whence came the power that kept her out of the way when all the rest of mankind were swept away into the current of sin? It was her divine Son, foreseen in the years of His humanity,—foreseen by the eye of God's justice in the agony of His crucifixion; it was the blood that was shed upon Calvary to save us that saved Mary from ever being tainted with sin. Do you not know that the Almighty God may save in any way He likes? Do you not know, my friends, that the Almighty God is not bound to save this soul or that in this or that particular way? For instance, the Almighty God appointed circumcision as the only way by which original sin was to be removed under the Old Law. And yet we know that He saved and sanctified Jeremiah and John the Baptist without circumcision, and before; because, although circumcision was the ordinary way, Almighty God did not tie His own hands, nor oblige Himself never to apply an extraordinary way. And so, wherever there is a human spirit that is saved and made fit for heaven, that saving and that fitness are equally purchased by the blood of Christ, and by that alone. It saved Mary, as it saved us; only in a different manner. It saved us by falling upon our sinful heads in baptism,—literally washing away the stain that was already there; it saved Mary by anticipating baptism, by removing her from the necessity of the sacrament, by anticipation. In us this blood of Christ is a cleansing grace; in Mary it was a preventing grace. She is saved as much as we are. For instance, suppose a wise prophet—a man that had a knowledge of the future—were to stand on the seashore, and see a number of persons about to embark on board a ship, leaving for a distant port; and that he said to one of them: "That ship is going to be shipwrecked; do not go on board," and the person followed his advice and was saved; the others went on the ship, and it is wrecked, as was foretold; the prophet is there, by some mysterious means, and saves them all;—he is as much the saviour of the person who stayed on shore as of those he saved on the vessel after it was wrecked. And so it is with God. He set Mary aside, and His spirit overshadowed her and saved her. O, how gloriously did God save her!—how magnificently He vindicated Himself in her!—how kindly and mercifully He preserved one specimen of our pure and unbroken nature in her! Well might He hold her forth, as it were, in His omnipotent hand, to fight the devil, even in the day of his triumph, when He said, "The woman, O spirit of evil, whom thou knowest well, shall crush thy head." Because hell was afraid from the beginning, of the pure, unfallen nature of man; and that was saved only in her. Let us, therefore, meditate upon these things; and, giving thanks to God for all He did, for the greatest boon of mercy to our race—in that God so sanctified a creature that she might be worthy to approach Him;—and endeavor, in our own humble way,—by purifying our souls, putting away from us our sins, and weeping over the follies and errors that we have allowed to come upon our souls,—thus to fit ourselves, that, at some measurable distance we, too, may be able to approach Him, and Mary, the Holy Mother of God.

An Iowa John lately courted and engaged to marry a young girl, who, in a miff at some neglect on John's part, revenged herself by marrying Isaac, John's father. John counteracted by marrying the mother of his recent betrothed—John becoming the step-father of his own step-mother, while Isaac's wife was compelled to become the daughter-in-law of her step-son. And thus John became his own grandfather by brevet.