

"The year has been very different from what we expected," said Mother Superior. "Yes," replied Elizabeth, "but the worst is over now. Mr. Murphy has found a better position, but for the coming year the small increase of salary will be needed to pay the doctor's bills, and for the past three months I have only paid part of the rent. That kind Mrs. Reilly said she did not need the money, and insisted that I should keep it for medicine, and," added Elizabeth, "I don't know what I should have done to procure what was needed for Mrs. Murphy, if she had exacted the rent."

"Have you any plans for the future?" asked Reverend Mother. "I cannot leave Mr. Murphy and the children for at least two years," she responded. "Agnes was fourteen in April; two years hence I may train her during the summer vacation to take charge of the house, and then I could enter in September."

Elizabeth went to the chapel where she has said her "Fiat" the previous year. She had longed for the quiet of the cloister, but our Lord had led her by the thorny path of Calvary, and her cross had been heavy. Her tastes were naturally inclined to study, and she loved the silence and atmosphere of prayer in the convent, and He had chosen for her a life of drudgery and anxiety about money; having to count it to the last cent, and make it go as far as possible, was most distasteful to her. Last year when she prayed, "Not my will but Thine be done," He had mercifully hidden the future from her. Now she knew the details of that life. Could she accept two more years of it? Could she refuse the cross He was offering? God loved her, He knew best, and stretching forth her hands she prayed:

"Lord, I place my hands in Thine, lead me as Thou wilt. Thy will, not mine be done."

"Oh, Elizabeth, I am so glad to find you alone!" cried Agnes, her face glowing with happiness. "I have a grand secret to tell you."

"What is it, dear?" she asked, as she drew the girl to her side.

"Mother St. Paul told me today that I may enter the Novitiate as soon as I am eighteen."

A great lump rose in Elizabeth's throat, but she swallowed it bravely.

"Does Mother St. Paul think you have a vocation?"

"Oh yes, she has known it for a long time. Since the day of my First Communion; she and mother alone knew. I shall be seventeen next April," said Agnes. "I have a year and nine months to wait. Oh, Elizabeth, it seems so long."

"It is hard to wait for what we strongly desire," murmured Elizabeth in a low tone. "Thank you for your confidence. I shall keep your secret till you wish to tell the girls."

Agnes was so happy she did not notice the other's emotion. A great wave of rebellion swept over the soul of Elizabeth.

"I have waited three long weary years," she moaned when alone, "waiting for Agnes to be old enough to replace me. Am I to step aside and let Agnes enter? No, it is too much. It is selfish on her part."

Then she remembered that like Agnes, she also had kept her vocation a secret, and only Mrs. Murphy and Mother St. Paul knew. She would go to the convent and talk it over with Mother Superior.

Reverend Mother was sympathetic.

"I saw clearly what was coming," she said, "but I was not free to divulge the secret Agnes confided to me; neither was I at liberty to tell her of your intentions. I could only wait and pray."

"What is to be done, Mother?" asked Elizabeth.

"That rests with you," replied Mother St. Paul. "You can tell Agnes of your vocation, how long you have waited and why. Tell her you expect her to take charge of the house and let you enter. It will be a great sorrow for her, a keen disappointment, but I think she will see the justice of it, and accept it as God's will. There is no hurry," continued Mother Superior; "you can take time and pray."

Elizabeth went to the chapel; she wrestled long in prayer but there seemed to be no answer. She would take time, she would wait. Sometimes nature rose in rebellion.

"It is my right," she thought. "Why should I be sacrificed? In two years Gertrude could replace Agnes."

Then she looked at Agnes, a slight young girl, frail and fair, with something of Heaven in her blue eyes, and she wondered how long Agnes could bear the hard work, the anxiety of making both ends meet in her small household accounts, Elizabeth was too generous to lay the heavy burden on these young shoulders.

"Oh, Mother, I cannot tell her," she exclaimed. "I am afraid it would kill her. She might lose her health or her vocation."

"I think her vocation will stand the trial," replied Mother Superior, "but I cannot answer for her health."

"I could not be happy in the convent," cried Elizabeth, "if I left her in danger outside."

As Elizabeth went to the chapel, Reverend Mother saw how it would end; happiness for Agnes, the Cross and thorny path for Elizabeth. And so it was, but her act of self-

immolation brought great peace and closer union. Henceforth conformity to God's will became very sweet.

"I think we had better go and see Agnes," said Mr. Murphy, on a fine Sunday afternoon, a few months after Agnes had entered the Novitiate.

"And take a long walk after you leave the convent," said Elizabeth, "it will do you all good."

Mary and Eva rose at once. "I shall remain at home and keep Elizabeth company," exclaimed Gertrude, a tall, graceful girl, with quiet steady gray eyes, the practical member of the family.

When they were alone, Gertrude said suddenly, "if anything happened to Father, what should we do?"

Elizabeth stood still and glared at the speaker.

"What do you mean?" she asked. "A month ago Mr. Ross became ill and he has been in bed ever since. He was a strong healthy man; he had a son who provides for the family. Last week Mr. Smith died of an illness of three days. If Father became ill or died, what could we do?"

Elizabeth sat down, surprised, shocked. The question was one she had not considered and could not answer.

"I never thought of it," she said slowly.

"If Father were ill, we should not have the price of a bottle of medicine; if he continued ill, how could we buy food?"

Elizabeth had lived in the present, accepting the daily trials, but looking forward to the time when she should be free to follow the desires of her heart. She was startled.

"I have thought about this for some time," continued Gertrude, "and talked it over with Mary."

"With what results?" asked Elizabeth.

"In September I shall go to the training college and do my best to pass as a teacher; then I shall try to get appointed to a school. Mary would like to be a nurse, but the course takes four years, and she is not old enough to begin. Eva is too young to decide her future. My salary will be very small at first, but even so, I believe it will be a relief to Father to know that he is not the only breadwinner. What do you think of our plans, Elizabeth?"

"The idea is so new to me that I have not yet had time to think about it, but I shall tell you in a few days."

Elizabeth reproached herself. She had been so occupied with her own plans that she had not thought of the future of the others, or how they were to prepare for it. Now she reasoned it all out.

"Six years," she murmured, "before Mary can pass as a trained nurse."

And these years of study on the part of the girls meant years of devotedness on her part.

"Five years I have waited. Can I endure another six?"

Her soul was being strengthened and sanctified in the school of the Cross; five years of daily efforts to conform to the Divine will had done their work in her soul. She knew that if God required further sacrifice of her, He would give the grace, and with the love and generosity she accepted His will.

Two years had passed, the wisdom of their plans became evident. Mr. Murphy returned home one evening with chills, the next morning he had a fever. The doctor said:

"His constitution is run down, and he needs rest."

His work was over, and in two weeks he was laid beside his wife. Gertrude for a time was the only breadwinner, and years of poverty followed.

"I think, Mrs. Reilly, I shall have to give up the rooms and look for a smaller place," said Elizabeth.

"Don't dear," responded the landlady, "you have three nice bedrooms; take a lodger or two."

"Where shall I find them?" asked Elizabeth.

"I know a young woman who is looking for just such a place; she is working all day and wants to study in the evening."

"The Lord always provides," cried Elizabeth.

But He required another sacrifice. Mother St. Paul was sent to a distant convent and a stranger took her place.

Gertrude seemed to thrive on hard work; the girl grew brighter and happier day by day, and Elizabeth noted it with pleasure. It was only when Mary spent an afternoon with them and twitted her sister about Professor Ranny that Elizabeth's eyes were opened. Love had come into Gertrude's life and all was rosy color.

Elizabeth found on inquiry that Mr. Ranny was a practical Catholic, Professor of History at the University, and highly esteemed by all who knew him. She thanked God for Gertrude's good fortune, and murmured:

"Now I see the harbor lights. Gertrude once married, the other girls self-supporting can live with her, and my work is done."

The wedding took place towards the end of September; Mr. Ranny took his bride to visit his relations who lived at some distance. On their return Elizabeth would go to the convent. To her great joy Mother St. Paul was again in Seafort.

All arrangements were completed; the bridal pair would come back at

6 p. m. Mary and Eva would meet them at the train; Elizabeth would have dinner prepared, and when that was over she would leave for the convent; her trunk had been sent during the day.

"I am so tired, I feel wretched," she told Mother St. Paul over the telephone.

"Never mind how you feel," replied the good Mother. "Come, and I shall keep you in the infirmary till you are well; then you will go to the Novitiate."

It was so good to be in the convent at last, but her head was throbbing with pain; every care and kindness were lavished upon her, but the doctor shook his head. The hardship that could not quench the brave spirit had done its work on the frail body, and it could offer no resistance.

"Would you like to receive the last Sacraments?" asked Mother Superior.

"Am I in danger? Is there any necessity?"

"The doctor thinks it would be wise."

"Oh, Mother, am I to die within sight of port?" she cried.

"No, dear," replied the Religious, "you will sail right into port, and our Lord is waiting on the shore to receive you."

A moment after, Elizabeth prayed:

"Not my will, but Thine be done!"

She had said her last "Fiat." Agnes was kneeling by the bed, her tears falling fast; she knew now the sacrifice that had been made for her. While they prayed, the frail bark entered port and Elizabeth found rest in love and union with the Sacred Heart.—Messenger of the Sacred Heart.

MONTAIGNE

James J. Walsh, M.D., Ph.D., in Catholic World

It is curious how designations of one kind or another, presumed to represent people aptly and completely, become so attached to their names that it becomes practically impossible ever to separate them. Montaigne will be the "Skeptic" for all time, just as Lucretia Borgia will be "the Poisoner," just as "Jesus" will mean "schemer," just as Luther will be called "the Reformer." It is so much easier for most of us, with our scanty and superficial knowledge of men and things, to talk about them after they have been properly or improperly labeled, that labels readily become popular and are likely to be enduring.

So it is with this label of "the Skeptic" applied to Montaigne. There is no doubt that Montaigne proclaimed himself extremely incredulous about many things that most of his contemporaries were inclined to believe; yet he was not at all a disbeliever in the modern sense of "skeptical," but on the contrary a very fervent, practical Christian. He believed firmly in all the essential elements of Christianity, and whenever the occasion arose, he proclaimed that belief very simply and straightforwardly.

He was skeptical, but believing to a degree that makes him just a typical, sensible Christian, demanding to know the reasons for the faith that was in him, and refusing to believe unless he could find good authority, human or divine, for his beliefs. That is never too much to ask; on the contrary, it is commended by all good religious authorities. The fact of the matter is that Montaigne was entirely too humble in his estimation of himself and his opinions, to furnish the material out of which a thoroughgoing skeptic could be made.

Montaigne's reverence for the Our Father ought of itself to show that he is no more skeptical than any sensible man, and that his faith rules his life. We must read his paragraph on this prayer if we want to appreciate Montaigne properly:

"I know not if or no I am wrong; but since, by a particular favour of the divine bounty, a certain form of prayer has been prescribed and dictated to us, word by word, from the mouth of God Himself, I have even been of opinion that we ought to have it in more frequent use than we yet have; and if I were worthy to advise, at the sitting down and rising from our tables, at our rising from and going to bed, and in every particular action wherein prayer is used, I would that Christians always make use of the Lord's Prayer, if not alone, yet at least always. The Church may long and diversify prayers, according to the necessity of our instruction, for I know very well that it is always the same in substance and the same thing; but yet such a privilege ought to be given to that prayer, that the people should have it continually in their mouths; for it is most certain that all necessary petitions are comprehended in it, and that it is infinitely proper for all occasions. 'Tis the only prayer I use in all places and conditions, and which I still repeat instead of changing; whence it also happens that I have no other so entirely by heart as that."

Montaigne's profound, philosophical mind recognized the difficulties connected with belief in religion. He would probably have said, however, with a great modern cardinal, that a thousand difficulties do not make a single doubt. If there were no mysteries in God, He would not be God. Montaigne realized that there must be mysteries in religion, and sometimes he felt with special

poignancy the difficulty of understanding them, but he bowed his head and humbly acknowledged that he could not expect to understand all, and accepted the teaching of the Church, on which he knew he could depend with absolute confidence. Far from being a skeptic, he was a believer of the highest and finest type, admirable in the use of his intellect so as to know, but still more admirable in the use of his will so as to bow his head in submission.

DAILY VISITS TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

The concession of an indulgence by the Holy Father to all who visit the Blessed Sacrament has not received the widespread publicity which it deserves. This indulgence of three hundred days is granted to all who, on entering a church and before all other acts of piety, go to the altar of the Blessed Eucharist and there adore, if only for a short time.

There are few Catholics, who have not found comfort and strength and peace in the silent church before the Sacramental God. The crowded down-town churches during the luncheon period give proof, if such be needed, of the love which Catholics have for the Most Holy Sacrament. The further merit to be gained by the granting of this indulgence should induce Catholics to embrace every opportunity of entering the church, if only for a few moments. On the other hand this indulgence, by inducing Catholics to make their way immediately to the earthly throne of God, will have a tendency to nullify the oft repeated calumny of non-Catholics that we honor the saints to the prejudice of our worship of God.—Catholic Standard and Times.

ONTARIO'S MINERALS

The Province of Ontario contains 407,292 square miles, over three times the area of the British Isles. Seventy per cent. of this vast area is underlain by pre-Cambrian rocks, which are pre-eminently the metal-bearing formation of this part of Canada. Much the larger part of the Province lies north and west of Lake Nipigon. The grounds of Porcupine, Kirkland Lake, the silver mines of Cobalt, South Lorrain and Gowanda, the nickel-copper deposits of Sudbury, which supply over 50 per cent. of the world's nickel, testify to the mineral richness of this vast region.

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