

to the wants of the mission field, and to their duty as fathers to give up a son, the best and brightest of the family, to the Lord to be trained as a minister of His Word. The boys of Christian parents are being educated with worldly pursuits in view from their earliest days. The conversation, morning, noon and night, is of worldly things, of worldly gains, of worldly honours; and the Lord's work and the Macedonian cry are unheeded, are uncared for and despised. Alas, that it should be so, but so it is, and the clergy should not fail to direct their people's attention to the glaring inconsistency of calling themselves by the name of Christ, and yet ignoring His calls and commands. How can we hope to please God, how can we hope for His favor and blessing, if we care not for His Church and care not for those whom He died to redeem and save, and who yet, perhaps, have not heard the sound of the Gospel message of salvation through the Blood of Jesus. Surely it is most necessary for our own spiritual life that we should have these things pointed out and our duty made plain, and that we should be moved to give to God's work.

If ever we needed to be reminded of our duty to give of our substance it is at the present time when we spend so much upon self, and gratify every whim and pleasure, and forget the Lord that bought us in the persons of His needy and destitute people. Let us assemble in our churches either on Ascension Day or on Sunday, if we have not done so on the Tuesday appointed, and let us pray God most earnestly that He would bless the work of His Church in heathen lands, that He would incline us to give liberally of our money, and that He would put it into the hearts of men to offer themselves for missionary work. Thus engaged, our own hearts will lose their coldness and hardness and indifference, and we shall feel disposed to say very humbly, "Lord, here am I;" "Lord, what would'st Thou have me to do?"

Family Department.

ASCENSION-TIDE.

O Saviour, who for man has trod
The winepress of the wrath of God,
Ascend, and claim again on high
Thy glory, left for us to die.

A radiant cloud is now Thy seat,
And earth lies stretched beneath Thy feet,
Ten thousand thousands round Thee sing
And share the triumph of their King.

The angel-host enraptured waits;
"Lift up your heads eternal gates!"
O God and man! the Father's Throne
Is now for ever more Thine own.

Our great High Priest and Shepherd Thou
Within the veil art entered now,
To offer there Thy precious Blood,
Once poured on earth a cleansing flood.

And thence the Church, Thy chosen Bride,
With countless gifts of grace supplied,
Through all her members draws from Thee,
Her hidden life of sanctity.

O Christ, our Lord, of Thy dear care,
Thy lowly members heavenward bear;
Be our's with Thee to suffer pain,
With Thee for evermore to reign!

CLAIRE.

A TALE.

(Written for the Church Guardian.)

BY T. M. B.

(Continued.)

So Felix had gone, and the two girls had missed him and longed for him, each after her own fashion, and had comforted each other and been drawn, if possible, even closer together than before; and summer and winter had succeeded one another until that silent, peace-breathing afternoon when we found Marthe and Claire in one of their favorite haunts for still, as in their childhood, their happiest

hours were spent in the shade of the pine woods. There had been another silence between them, and then Claire, as she sat up and gathered her loose tresses together, said, without looking at her companion:

"I have had a letter from my father, Marthe; he is coming soon. I was beginning to wonder whether he had forgotten altogether that he was encumbered by a daughter, though I must not flatter myself now that he is coming on my account. I suppose he has some business with Monsieur Duval. It must be nearly a year since he was last here with that dreadful old man, the Marquis de Saumar. Do you remember how you took it into your wise little head that he had been brought specially to see me, and how you worked yourself up into a fever of indignation at the bar thought, though I told you Monsieur le Comte Du Plessis, though not a model father, yet was too much of a man to commit the action of a coward; for would it not be the basest cowardice to sacrifice a woman, not to say his only child, to anything so contemptible as the Marquis de Saumar? What a travesty of old age!" the girl went on, disdainfully—"old age that should be honourable and loved."

"Yes, thank God," said Marthe, earnestly, "my fears seem to have had no foundation; but it was not wonderful that I should have had them; the world does not regard things as we do, and Monsieur le Comte lives in the world—that world that you spoke of just now as being like a great heaving sea around our enchanted island. Ah, Claire, it was you to-day who spoke of change."

"Yes, but I was not thinking of that kind of change, least of all of any that could be connected with the Marquis de Saumar. No, Marthe, I have no dreams about the future in that sense; but"—and here a strange, wistful look came into the noble face—"I have had of late a curious consciousness of something mysterious going on around us. I can hardly say why I have never spoken to you of it before. Once or twice lately, when I have gone down into the village, I have noticed, or fancied, that the people looked strangely at me as I passed. So late as yesterday, when I went to take some fruit to old Jacqueline, her grandsons, Prospere and Valentin, passed me at the door and scarcely greeted me. Prospere, I thought, muttered something to himself and hurried his brother away. Is it not strange? You know how these two lads always seemed as if they could not do enough for me—how they have always brought me little offerings of early flowers, and nuts, and trained squirrels for me, and in a thousand ways tried to give me pleasure; and, only think, Gaudin, your father's shepherd, whose little girl I nursed when she broke her arm, and who seemed so grateful—when he saw me coming fairly ran into his cottage and shut the door, and as Margot was running out to greet me, he pulled her back, and I heard her crying loudly. I felt as if I was dreaming. Can you understand it, Marthe? You living amongst them surely must know whether this is something more than fancy."

Marthe listened to her friend with averted face, and when Claire ceased speaking still seemed preoccupied by the unfolding fern-fronds at her side.

"What could it but fancy?" she said at length, but in a voice different from her ordinary clear, sweet tone. "Have you not always been as an angel to these rude, ignorant people? What have they ever known but tender kindness from your hands? From the time you were a little child you have only thought of doing them good! Oh, heaven!" she exclaimed, as, in a sudden passion of feeling, she pressed Claire's hands to her lips, "how could they dare to treat you with disrespect!"

Claire looked at her intently for a moment. "Marthe, you know something about this; you have been keeping it from me. I thought you loved me too well for that."

"Loved you!" reproachfully. "Ah, Claire, you do not know how I love you."

"Then tell me what you know; it is right that I should hear what concerns me." She spoke almost imperiously, and Marthe, with a half despairing gesture, exclaimed: "Oh, if Felix were but here!"

"Felix has nothing to do with it. Marthe, you must tell me everything. What is going on? What grievance have these peasants? Why do they

treat me so strangely?" She was standing in the shade; the fair face looked cold and stern against the green background, while Marthe, excited and agitated, looked up at her imploringly. "If you do not tell me all you know, Marthe, I shall go down to the village before an hour is past and find out for myself."

"No, no, Claire! anything but that. Promise me that you will keep away from the village and I will tell you everything." Clasp her arms about her friend she drew her down beside her, and, after glancing anxiously around, as if the green solitude might contain a listener, she told all that she had gathered from observations of her surroundings for months past—all that she suspected or feared; she kept nothing back. But, after all, Marthe could give but a dim and confused account of the condition of things. Until very lately all had been so vague and mysterious that, though the sense of something impending had constantly overshadowed her, she could not have put her forebodings into words. There had been that strange restlessness among the villagers—those evening gatherings about the inn and in the open place, the excited talk and gestures among the heretofore quiet and somewhat stolid peasants, that coming and going of occasional strangers, whose presence always seemed to increase the stir. Marthe had noted and wondered at it all, and would doubtless have discussed it with Claire had she not gathered—how, she could not recall—that this new state of things was somehow connected with a feeling of disloyalty to the nobles. Little dreaming of the actual extent to which this feeling had gone, Marthe had on one occasion questioned her father, and it was his rough and violent reply which had first awakened more serious apprehension. "Va-t-en, little fool," Duval had said, "mind your own concerns and don't pry into those of other people; and mark me, no chatter to your white-faced demoiselle about your silly fancies, or you will have paid her your last visit, and I shall turn the key upon you whenever I leave the house." Brave Marthe had looked her father in the face, silent with surprise and indignation, and he had flung out of the room with an oath.

After this she had watched keenly and anxiously, and was not slow in discovering that her father was the moving spirit in the mysterious commotion which seemed to possess the place. One night—it was quite recently—she had been awakened in the 'small hours' by muffled noises in the house; her own little room looked out upon a courtyard at the back, in which stood a huge old chesnut-tree, whose branches almost touched her window. On that hot summer night the window was wide open, and Marthe, after lying uneasily awake for a while listening to the subdued sounds, rose and looked out. As she did so, she saw quite a number of men issue from the back door of the house, and after whispering together for a few moments, cross the moonlit courtyard into the garden, through which they passed out into the fields beyond. Duval himself was among them, and Marthe shrank back hastily, screened as she was by the spreading foliage of the chesnut, as she saw him turn and look up suspiciously. He went with them to the garden gate, which he closed upon them, and returned to the house. This time he did not look up to his daughter's window, and Marthe had a full view of his face in the white light of the moon. It was an evil face, as the girl saw it then, and there was a look of mocking triumph in it as he laughed silently to himself. No more rest came to Marthe that night. Evil forebodings of she knew not what—a sense of pain and bitter shame as she recalled the dark face of her father, vain efforts to fathom the mystery around her, fond anxiety about Claire, who, she instinctively felt, was threatened with some evil, an intense yearning for the presence of Felix—all these emotions banished sleep. The return of her brother was the one bright thought to turn to; for Felix was coming, a man now and able to take a man's part in the world. He would clear up these mysteries; he would, perhaps, exert an influence upon his father; he would, if needs be, protect Claire—from what? Marthe asked herself with a return of the vague fear which oppressed her.

(To be Continued.)