

A NIGHT IN THE YEW.

No one could have expected the existence of a church in that particular spot. You went down a leafy avenue entered by a field gate from the road, across a grass-field, skirted two sides of a corn-field, opened another gate, and went down, down through a tunnel of green foliage. At the very bottom, in a cup of the valley, you found the church.

There was a crowded churchyard pressing up to the gray gables of the church. The newer portion of the churchyard lay beyond, nearer the ascent to the fields. There was red earth there where a new grave had been filled yesterday.

People approached the church by different ways. The ways were covered in, dark with foliage. There was something very weird about the place. The flutter of a bird in the sky was enough to startle a nervous person. There was such an isolation of the dead from the living. The church was closed all the week. Only on Sunday did the footsteps of the living sound there, unless it might be a funeral, or a wedding, or a christening, or perhaps a curious, sight-seeing stranger.

Such a one was Hugh Dampier, doing a solitary tramp through Surrey and Sussex, with a knapsack on his back for all luggage, spending his nights, taking his meals at inns or cottages, enjoying himself hugely in his isolation. He was a lonely-natured person. The girl he loved had been taken from him on the eve of their wedding. It had not embittered his nature, this immense loss. But it had made him fond of his own company, of solitude in which Muriel's eyes and voice could be with him, undisturbed by the interruption of other people. He was not unhappy any longer. He was placid, and in a manner of speaking content, now that life as it appeared to other men was over for him—at thirty-three.

A pink-faced child had pointed him the way to the church, having been won out of her first shy speechlessness. He had sent her running to her mother with a great treasure of a silver sixpence. He loved children. It was a thousand pities that a man like him held himself bound to those chill nuptials of the dead.

He had no great curiosity about the church. His guide-book indicated nothing of interest excepting one of the ancient yew trees in England, whose risen trunk was great enough to contain a little house, where the sexton's spades and rakes and brooms were locked away. The architecture was uninteresting, and he was an architect by profession. After the child had left him he hesitated as to whether he should climb down into that cup of the valley to visit the parish church of Okehurst after all.

The evening was May's. Beyond the valley the hill was purple as a sapphire against a benignant sky. The earth's censor swung in a soft wind, breathing odors of lilac and May honeysuckle. The cool sweetness was delightful. He had found the inn close at hand where he should sleep that night, or waken to hear the songs of the nightingale.

In the shadow of the hill the fields were golden, the deep gold of buttercups, the pale gold of the charlock. Such an exquisite line the hill had against the peaceful sky. There was not a sound but the singing of the birds. When he had seen the church he would go back to the inn for his supper of cold meat and bread and cheese and beer, and to sleep in a quaint attic, heavily beamed, with honeysuckle to the eaves—if nightingales would let him sleep.

He whistled softly to himself as he went down the field path. His remembrance of the mortal joys of life had brought him a cheerful quietness. He walked round the church pressed down by the weight of its roof, still whistling.

Down here the shadows had it all their own way. The hill blotted out the clear, shining of the citron-colored sky.

Ah, there was the tree! He stepped over graves to reach it. He had no fear of death since the grave held all his hopes. Yet he was startled when a voice came from the tree, a woman's voice. For a second he thought it was Muriel's. It had tones in it like Muriel's.

"Who are you?" the voice cried imploringly. "Can you get me out? I am locked in the tree."

Locked in the tree! For a moment he had whimsical thoughts of hanged druids, but they were the joyous creatures of the twilight of the world in which there was no death.

He approached the tree and passed his hand over the door.

"How did you get locked in the tree?" he asked. He had the oddest sense that Muriel was there, at the other side of the door.

"I was sketching it, and I stepped inside. Then the wind slammed the door, and when I tried to get out it was locked. I have been here four hours, and no one has come. I have shouted myself hoarse. I was terrified at the thought of being here all night with the graves all about me."

"Poor child!" he said compassionately. "It is horrible to be frightened. Are you sure you cannot unlock the door on your side? There is nothing on this side but a keyhole, no sign of a key."

"I have tried over and over again. It must be a spring lock. There is no way of opening it unless we had the key."

"Why, that is easily got," he said. "I will go as quickly as I can to the village, find out who has the key, and release you."

He had turned to go on his errand. He remembered how in his college days he had been a famous runner. He wondered how long it would take him to do a bit of sprinting to the village and back again to release the tree's captive. He had something of eagerness to see the face of the girl whose voice was like Muriel's. For a long time he and eagerness had been strangers.

He had taken a few steps from the tree when a dolorous cry recalled him.

"You are not going to leave me here in the dark among the dead?" the voice said.

"It is not dark," he answered gently. "There is still the afterglow in the western sky, but the hill shuts it out. I shall be back as soon as I possibly can."

"Don't leave me."

"My child, how am I to get you out if I don't leave you?"

"I was nearly mad with fear when you came. Did you see the new grave over there? The man who lies in it hanged himself on Tuesday. Don't leave me."

The obscurity was greater in the churchyard. Soon it would be quite dark, the short darkness of the summer night. He felt no impatience at the girl's unreasonable-ness. Muriel had been a nervous creature, easily terrified. There was no hardship in being in the open this night of May. Still, a thought came to him that it was not usual for girls to spend the night out of doors. He had to be careful for her.

"What will they think if you are not returning?" he asked. "Your people, I mean. Isn't there somebody who will be wild with fear? You had better let me look for the key."

"I have no one. I am staying at an old woman's cottage in the village. I have been sketching about the country, bicycling hither and thither. Sometimes when I have gone too far I have slept at an inn and not returned till next day. At ten o'clock Mrs. Pitt will blow out her candle and go to bed. She will have made up her mind that I am not coming back."

"If you won't let me go for the key I must see if I can't burst the door and its lock. I am only afraid of hurting you. Will you stand back as far as you can?"

"There is only room to stand upright."

Dampier whistled.

"Ah; and the door opens inward. We must give up the idea of violence."

"Do not leave me."

The voice, muffled by the wood of the door, was more than ever like Muriel's. There was a rush of tenderness to his heart. He felt as though Muriel was there beyond the door, in mortal terror.

"Do not be afraid," he said, and there was passionate pity in his tones. "I am not going to leave you. Not till the sun rises. Do not be afraid."

"I wish I could see you," said the voice, tremulously.

He struck a match and it flared up. "I can see the light," the voice said joyously, "over the top of the door. Fortunately it fits badly."

"You poor little thing! Must you stand bolt upright all night?"

"It is not so bad. I can lean against the wall. The discomfort is nothing. One grows quite used to it. After the terror of the night among the dead it is like Heaven to know that you are there. You won't steal away and leave me?"

"I won't steal away and leave you."

Shake fingers on it. I believe I can get my fingers in over the top of the door."

He climbed into the fork of the yew tree, and, leaning down, felt for the interstice and slipped his fingers through. They were touched by other fingers, soft as a rose-leaf; the touch thrilled him oddly.

"You won't be afraid to stay in the churchyard all night?" said the voice close to his ear.

"Not in the least. I am so glad, so grateful I came this way. Presently I am going to sit down on the old flat tombstone just facing this. I have spent the night in more uncomfortable circumstances."

"You won't fall asleep?"

He laughed at the misgivings in her voice.

"I have years and years in which to sleep," he said. "I promise you I shall keep awake."

"Will anyone miss you?"

"No one will miss me. Like yourself, I am in the country for my pleasure."

"I have a holiday." The voice had a little pride in it. "I work very hard all the year."

"What do you do?"

The fork of the tree was capacious. He settled himself in an easy attitude to listen. Her voice came up to his ear, soft, with sad tones in it, like Muriel's voice.

"I write stories. Perhaps you know my name, Muriel Gascoigne. I have a serial running in the Daily Pratter. It has been running for three years. It rather broke me down, but they wouldn't let me leave off. It is trying, having to keep the excitement up for so long. But I have closed down now. I said I couldn't keep the villain alive any longer."

So she was also Muriel. He was so amazed at the coincidence that he hardly took in what she was telling him about her feats of authorship.

"And you?" she asked.

"I am a man without history. I am an architect, but I don't do much at my profession. I have enough money to do without it, and to gratify my tastes, which are simple enough except that I collect bric-a-brac, furniture, silver and prints, in a small way."

"Oh," she said, and there was a little austere reproach in her voice that delighted him. "But you ought to take delight in your work. You are young, aren't you? Your voice sounds young. You oughtn't to be contented to live on your money."

"I wasn't once."

"Why are you now?"

He had not talked about Muriel to his dearest friend. His love for her had been all reticence. Now he could not tell what impelled him to answer as he did.

"Because—I lost the woman I was to have married. She was another Muriel. She took my foothold in the world with her. Since she left I have had no abiding place. One-half of me is dead, you see, only half of my body and my soul."

As he said it he had a feeling as though the youth in himself cried out against the bitter sentence he had passed on it.

"I am sorry," said the voice at his ear; and then there was silence between them for a while.

After that pause the talk recommenced. A big white moon hung above the churchyard now, and presently nightingales began in all the coppices. They were singing at their wildest, while he listened to Muriel Gascoigne's simple story. Nothing could have been simpler, lonelier. She had had only her father, and he was dead. While he lived she had striven to supplant her slender income by doing typewriting. In typewriting the manuscript of authors, she had discovered a faculty for weaving tales of wonder herself, and she had been successful in a way.

"It isn't literature," she said;

Burdock BLOOD BITTERS

Turns Bad Blood into Rich Red Blood.

No other remedy possesses such perfect cleansing, healing and purifying properties.

Externally, heals Sores, Ulcers, Abscesses, and all Eruptions.

Internally, restores the Stomach, Liver, Bowels and Blood to healthy action. If your appetite is poor, your energy gone, your ambition lost, B.B.B. will restore you to the full enjoyment of happy vigorous life.

"and yet I've heard two girls talk about 'The Beautiful Friend'—that's my Pratter's story—in a 'bus, and they said it was lovely. It has brought me in a hundred and fifty pounds."

"That is success," he said, keeping the smile that was on his lips out of his voice.

After midnight the talk dropped, finally ceased. He had an idea she was asleep, even in her standing position; and once or twice he nearly dozed himself, and started awake, hearing her soft voice call him in a sudden terror.

"Sleep if you can," he said to her at last. "I give you my word that I shall not leave you. Very soon now it will be daybreak. I can see already a pale line in the east."

A few moments later, leaning to the open space at the top of the door, he heard her regular breathing and was filled with a great joy. It was as though Muriel had been given back to him, was close at hand, a warm, living woman, and not the gentle ghost who had smiled at him from the other side of the grave. For the time he yielded to his joy, reminding himself at the same time that the morning would bring his waking. He would discover that this Muriel was not the least bit in the world like the Muriel he had lost. The enchantment of the night would be gone, and the day would have no illusions.

He must have slept at last, for he started up suddenly to broad daylight. The early morning sun was shining on the dew of the grave grasses. All the birds were singing in full chorus. He felt cramped and uncomfortable.

As he climbed out of the tree she called to him.

"What o'clock is it?"

Something jingled at his foot.

"Half-past four, and I have found the key. It lay at our feet all the time."

He put the key in the lock and turned it. It was like the dreams come back in which Muriel had been his again, while he had told himself all the time that it was a dream; and a cheat, holding the skirts of his joy with both hands because he knew they were slipping from him.

He opened the door and she came out blinking into the strong sunlight.

"How good you have been to me," she said.

They were Muriel's words to him as he sat fanning her in that last illness. This girl was about Muriel's height; she was slender in her white frock with its broad green sash. Her eyes and her hair were of a red-brown color. There were a few freckles on her pale skin. She had a soft, pale mouth like Muriel's. Her expression was simple and innocent.

"Do not forget me," Muriel had said as she lay dying; "but remember that where I am I shall be glad of your joy. Above all things I want you to be happy without me."

Well, he had thought that he had attained happiness in that nerveless, sapless living. Now his heart began to beat in his side as though its beating had been suspended for long.

"We shall not lose sight of each other forever, we who have become friends in one night," he said. "We are both such lonely people."

"Yes," she answered, and he saw her breast flutter. "We are both such lonely people. And we shall not lose sight of each other forever."

Katharine Tynan in M. A. P.

CONGREGATIONAL SINGING

(Continued from Page 6.)

exercise of choral singing, using the fine, old, inspired tones of Mother Church, which he appropriated and caused to be printed for future preservation and identification with his new doctrines.

Notice how this idea still governs outside evangelical work. Leave out the hymns and the prayers and exhortations accomplish comparatively little. But in choral singing, the real meat and the real woman are reached, and for even the brief time devoted to this unifying, leveling, fraternizing power, surprising results are achieved. In the zeal thus evoked for the spiritual, the material side is, too, assured.

Now, if with the help of song, the mere shadow can be so developed that the heart-hunger for the Divine is thus allayed for the time in a deluded multitude, what hopes and aspirations may we not cherish, who have indeed the glorious substance!

Collections of printed prayers are, no doubt, useful and convenient; a fine sermon is indeed an excellent thing; the recitation in concert of the rosary and the litanies is also most edifying; but for eloquent obedience to the Divine injunction: "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say,

Fruit-a-tives

OR "FRUIT LIVER TABLETS"

Positively made from fruit with tonics added. Absolute cure for constipation, biliousness, headaches, kidney and skin diseases.

"I have been troubled lately with my back and kidneys, and received great benefit from taking Fruit-a-tives."

Mrs. JOHN FOX, Cobourg, Ont.

At druggists—50c. a box.

Manufactured by FRUIT-A-TIVES LIMITED, Ottawa.

rejoice," nothing compares with congregational singing for possibilities in fervor, sincerity of thanksgiving and abandon of joy.

This mode of devotion affords little scope, of course, for the display of modern skill in the art of music, or for that attention to detail and the elaboration that distinguishes the composition written for the musical ly experienced. The cultivation of this too has its place, and can be depended upon to develop from the soil indicated. But in urging upon the attention of pastors this potent ally among the laity, it is purely from the devotional side that this appeal takes impetus. The standards of ordinary musical criticism should not be applied where the achievement of these is not the main object. We do not smile at the mother who listens with pleasure to the imperfect attempt of her little singer; and the poet finds ready appreciation and sympathy when he discourses of the joy of him who

"hears his daughter's voice Singing in the village choir."

And have we not reason to believe that Almighty God will accept in Fatherly indulgence that homage poured forth to Him from His children, in the sincerity and enthusiasm of which they approach, perhaps, most nearly that childlike attitude so pleasing to Him that He warns us: "Unless ye come as little children ye cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven."

Who shall undertake to say that the singing of His praises in the early ages of the Church bore less fruit than the more ambitious musical effort of later times? More than fifteen hundred years ago a regiment of soldiers were ordered to pillage a church in Milan and destroy its Christian worshippers. History tells us how the savage marauders "were so deeply moved by the divine hymn that went up from those fervent hearts that they became converts on the spot!"

And this mighty weapon is as ready for use to-day as in those days of old. To destroy the singers and the songs dear to a cause is an old device of the enemy; and the arch enemy of all dear to the honor and glory of God raises to-day obstacles, objections, limitations—and obtains a hearing and gains an influence even in high places. "The votaries of art, unfortunately, often withdraw their sympathies from the levels of everyday humanity, but enough of their standards reach down to discourage those whose zeal lies all in the direction of their Creator. It should be remembered that though large numbers of our people have had little musical training, many of them have, nevertheless, fine voices, good ears and enough musical instinct to sing a melody after a few repetitions. Because most of them can go no further,—this is far enough for devotional purposes—is it well to ignore or underestimate an agency so suited to universal use and need?

But, we are told, singing in unison is so primitive—and the single melody is quite out of date. Yet no one denies a certain charm in the feathered songsters of creation; and just remember how poets of all ages rhapsodize over the nightingale, with its seven or eight notes in melodic succession, endlessly repeated! Even with skillful musicians and frequent rehearsals, the performance of some splendid work will fall short because of an acoustic deficiency; or worse still, it may not be, and sometimes is not, executed con amore. Beauty of voice, of workmanship, of technique, count for little with this lack.

Now, this con amore quality our holy religion can be relied on to supply. What profoundly moves a large number with a common sentiment of religion or patriotism is an agency, not of man, but of God. Two of the other three qualities we possess in abundance, so let us then not waste time trying to secure for the gratification of the human artistic sense conditions and accessories that may still fall far short of the ideal. This same artistic human sense manages to exist all week despite frequent and flagrant violations of its code on all sides. If Sunday public devotion is to be regulated by just that standard, let us be consistent—let us refuse to tolerate all Sunday exhibitions of out-of-date

tailoring, unbecoming costume and frantic millinery. Make them follow the old-fashioned music, and with the lame, the halt, the blind, and all else that deviates from classic standards, let them be banished far out of sight and hearing till Monday.

For ceremonial designed to impress by solemnity, contribute the best that can be devised by human genius and executed by human skill; but withhold not from the people participation in every way possible. Attendance at Vespers and Benediction would surely increase with this new help to devotion and good results may be predicted where now the outlook is gloomy.

A point to be emphasized in favor of such a movement is the contagion of enthusiasm. Men and women who could not otherwise be induced to sing will join their voices in a general assemblage with comparative confidence; and experience proves the statement that groups of young people will attend more faithfully rehearsals for singing in church than for secular purposes.

And in this beautiful form of devotion there is certainly a power that lifts the creature out of the surroundings of earth into realms where faith, hope and charity truly prevail. Texts, even when inspired by the deepest fervor, lose their power after frequent repetition unless actually sought, or approached in the mood of grace. Like the perfume incense, or the spiritual magic of the stained glass window, and other details where the supernatural is only the suggestion, they impart all the dangers of routine. But voice joined to voice, poured forth in song, the light of the original inspiration reappears, and a new appeal is made to the heart with every successive entrance. The story of Divine love and human dependence on Divine mercy can never be either haphazard or half-hearted in the telling when helped by this heaven-born ally.

It is indeed surprising that a talisman so sure, so easy of access, should be so long and so generally neglected. Especially as its efficiency in other fields is a matter of common knowledge. Gregory the Great established magnificent schools of singing which flourished for over a thousand years. These can again be planted and from them in time can be drawn material to which may be entrusted the artistic rendition of the liturgical parts of the Mass, as well as that element that may be relied on to form the mainstay of congregational singing. The official approval of His Holiness now as in the days of Gregory would go far toward their successful and universal establishment.

Meantime the sodalists of Mary might make their especial care, and unite in a federation loyal to the cultivation of this divine art. Let its perfection be their constant endeavor and from their combined initiative great results may be expected. Let it be their work to form bands to print and distribute literature on this subject, to interest good leaders, secure efficient help or supervision, to plan and carry out the details for practice and study, and to devote to this splendid propaganda some of the time it really deserves.

Under the patronage and inspiration of Her who gives to womanhood the most glorious example both of initiative and co-operation, what may not the children of Mary accomplish? Every word of her inspired canticle finds echo from the heart and in the life of each of us—Catholic women of to-day. "He that is mighty hath done great things to me!" It would seem as though the force and glow of this truth shut out all else from our vision! And when in the near future, as God grant it may, the opening strains of the Magnificat are poured forth with that zeal that everywhere distinguishes the sodalists of Mary, may their united appeal gain such strength with her assistance that the blessing of God will descend on every congregation, which, fired with ardor, refuses to relegate to the voices of the few the canticle inspired for the mighty rejoicing of the many: "My soul doth magnify the Lord and my spirit hath rejoiced in God, my Saviour!"—Angela Gallagher, in The Messenger.