

mournin' widows, an' all kinds. Guess you didn't know she set out that pink cabbage rose at the north end o' the front porch, did you? An' that hop-vine that you've got trained over your parlor window—set that out, too. An' that row of young adlers between here an' the barn—she set them all out with her own hands, dug the holes herself. It's funny she never told you she lived here."

"Yes, it is," said Mrs. Bridges slowly and thoughtfully.

"It's a wonder she never broke down an' cried when she was visitin' here. She can't mention the place without cryin'."

A dull red came into Mrs. Bridges' face.

"She never visited here."

"Never visited here!" Mrs. Hanna laid her crocheted and her hands in her lap, and stared. "Why, she visited everywhere. That's the way she managed to keep out o' the poor-house so long. Everybody was real considerate about invitin' her. But I expect she didn't like to come here, because she thought so much of the place. I guess she'll have to see the old place after all these years; they'll take her right past here to the poor-farm. If I didn't have six children an' my own mother to keep, I'd take her myself."

Mrs. Bridges shut her lips tightly together; all the softness and irresolution went out of her face.

"Well, I'm sorry for her," she said, with an air of dismissing a disagreeable subject; "but the world's full o' troubles, an' if you cried over all of them you'd be cryin' all the time. Isaphene, you go out and blow that dinner-horn. I see the men folks ev' got the horses about foddered."

It was 5 o'clock when Mrs. Hanna, with a sigh, began rolling the lace she had crocheted around the spool, preparatory to taking her departure.

"Well," she said, "I must go. I had no idy it was so late. How the time does go, talkin'! Just see how well I've done—crocheted full a yard since dinner-time? My! how pretty that hopvine looks! I'm a awful nice shade, too. I guess when Mrs. Lane planted it she thought she'd be settin' under it herself to-day—she took such pleasure in it."

Mrs. Bridges arose and followed her guest into the spare bedroom.

"When they goin' to take her to the poor-farm?" she asked abruptly.

"Day after to-morrow. Ain't it awful? It just makes me sick to think about it. I couldn't 'a' eat a bite o' dinner 'f I'd stayed at home, just for thinkin' about it. They say the poor old creature ain't done nothin' but cry an' moan since she know'd she'd go to go."

"Here's your bag," said Mrs. Bridges. "Do you want I should tie your veil?"

"No thanks; I guess I won't put it on. If I didn't have such a big family, an' my own mother to keep, I'd take her myself b'fore I'd see her go to the poor-house. If I had a small family an' plenty o' room, I declare my conscience wouldn't let me rest, no way."

A dull red glow spread slowly over Mrs. Bridges' face.

"Well, I guess you needn't keep hantin' for me to take her," she said, sharply.

"You!" Mrs. Hanna uttered the word in a tone that was an unintentional insult; in fact, Mrs. Bridges affirmed afterward that her look of astonishment, and, for that matter, her whole air of dazed incredulity, were insulting. "I never once thought of you," she said, with an earnestness that could not be doubted.

"Why not o' me?" demanded Mrs. Bridges, showing something of her resentment. "What you been talkin' about her all day for, 'f you wasn't hantin' for me to take her?"

"I never thought o' such a thing," repeated her visitor still looking rather helplessly dazed. "I talked about it because it was on my mind, heavy, too; an', I guess, because I wanted to talk my conscience down."

Mrs. Bridges cooled off a little, and began to drum on the bedpost with her rough fingers.

"Well, if you wasn't hantin'," she said, in a conciliatory tone, "it's all right. You kept harpin' on the same string till I thought you was; an' it riles me awful to be hinted at. I'll take anything right out to my face, so's I can answer it, but I won't be hinted at. But why didn't you think o' me?"

Mrs. Hanna cleared her throat and began to untroll her mits.

"Well, I don't know just why," she said helplessly. "She drew the mits on, smoothing them well up over her thin wrists. "I don't know why. I'd thought o' most everybody 'n town—but you never come into my head. I was 's innocent o' hantin' as a baby unborn."

Mrs. Bridges drew a long breath noiselessly.

"Well," she said absent-mindedly, "come again, Mrs. Hanna. An' be sure you always fetch your work an' stay the afternoon."

"Well, I will. But it's your turn to come now. Where's Isaphene?"

"I guess she's making a fire 'n the cook-stove to get supper."

"Well, tell her to come over an' stay all night with Julia some night."

Mrs. Bridges went into the kitchen and sat down, rather heavily, in a chair. Her face wore a puzzled expression.

"Isaphene, did you hear what we was sayin' in the bedroom?"

"Yes—most of it, I guess."

"Well, what do you s'pose was the reason she never thought o' me takin' Mrs. Lane?"

"Why, you never thought o' takin' her in yourself, did you?" said Isaphene, turning down the damper with a clatter. "I don't see how anybody else 'd think of it when you didn't yourself."

"Well, don't you think it was awful impudent in her to say that, any-how?"

"No, I don't. She told the truth."

"Why ought they to think o' everybody takin' her exceptin' me, I'd like to know?"

"Because everybody else, I s'pose, have thought of it themselves. The neighbors have all been chippin' in to help her for years. You never done nothin' for her, did you? You never invited her to visit here, did you?"

"No, I never. But that ain't no sayin' I wouldn't take her quick's the rest o' 'em. They have none o' 'em takin' her very fast, be they?"

"No, they ain't," said Isaphene, facing her mother and looking at her steadily; "they ain't one o' 'em but's got their hands full—no spare room, an' lots o' children or their own folks to take care of."

"Huh!" said Mrs. Bridges. She began chopping some cold boiled beef for hash.

"I don't believe I'll sleep to-night for thinkin' about it," she said, after a while.

"I won't neither, maw. I wish she wasn't goin' right by here."

"So do I."

After a long silence Mrs. Bridges said, "I don't s'pose your paw'd hear to our takin' her in."

"I guess he'd hear to 't if we would," said Isaphene, dryly.

"Well, we can't do it, that's all there is about it," announced Mrs. Bridges, with a great air of having made up her mind. Isaphene did not reply. She was slicing potatoes to fry, and she seemed to agree silently with her mother's decision. Presently, however, Mrs. Bridges said, in a less determined tone, "There's no place to put her exceptin' the spare room, and we can't get along without that, no ways."

"No," said Isaphene, in a non-committal tone.

Mrs. Bridges stopped chopping and looked thoughtfully out the door.

"There's this room openin' out o' the kitchen," she said, slowly. "It's nice an' big an' sunny. It'd be handy 'n winter, too, bein' right off the kitchen. But it ain't furnished."

"No," said Isaphene, "it ain't."

"And I know your paw wouldn't furnish it."

Isaphene laughed. "No, I guess not," she said.

"Well, there's no use a thinkin' about it, Isaphene; we just can't take her. Better get them potatoes on, 'f I see the men folks comin' up to the barn."

The next morning after breakfast Isaphene said suddenly, as she stood by the wash tub, "Maw, I guess you better take the organ money and furnish up that room."

Mrs. Bridges turned so sharply that she dropped the turkey wing with which she was polishing off the stove.

"You don't never mean it," she gasped.

"Yes, I do. I know we'd both feel better to take her in than to take up an organ—they both laughed rather foolishly at the poor joke. "You can furnish the room real comfortable with what it 'ud take to buy an organ; an' we can get the horse an' buggy, too."

"Oh, Isaphene, I've never meant but what you should have an organ! No, I won't never spend that money for nothin' but an organ—so you can just shut up about it."

"I want a horse and buggy worse, maw. We can get a horse that I can ride, too. An' we'll get a phaeton, so's we can take Mrs. Lane to church an' round. Then she added, with a regular masterpiece of diplomacy, "We'll show the neighbors that when we do take people in, we take 'em in all over."

"Oh, Isaphene," said her mother, weakly, "wouldn't it just astonish 'em!"

It was 10 o'clock of the following morning when Isaphene ran in and announced that she heard wheels coming up the lane. Mrs. Bridges pulled a little and breathed quickly as she got her bonnet and went out to the gate. A red spring wagon was coming slowly towards her, drawn by a single horse. The driver was half asleep on the front seat. Behind, in a low chair, sat old Mrs. Lane, she was stooping over, her elbows on her knees, her head bowed.

Mrs. Bridges held up her hand, and the driver pulled up the not reluctant horse.

"How d'you do Mrs. Lane? I want you should come in and visit me a while."

The old creature lifted her trembling head and looked at Mrs. Bridges; then she saw the old house, half hidden by vines and flowers, and her dim eyes filled with bitter tears.

"We ain't got time to stop, ma'am," said the driver politely. "I'm a takin' her to the County," he added, in a lower tone, but not so low that the old woman did not hear.

"You'll have to make time," said Mrs. Bridges, bluntly. "You don't get down and help her out. You don't have to wait. When I'm ready for her to go to the County, I'll take her my self."

Not understanding in the least, but realizing, as she said afterwards, that she had been fooled with, the man obeyed with alacrity.

"Now you lean all your left on me," said Mrs. Bridges, kindly. She put her arm around the old woman and led her up the hollyhock path, and through the house into the pleasant kitchen.

"Isaphene, you pull that big chair

over here where it's cool. Now, Mrs. Lane, you set right down an' rest."

Mrs. Lane wiped the tears from her face with the old cotton handkerchief. She tried to speak, but the sobs had to be swallowed down too fast. At last she said, in a choked voice: "It's awful good in you — to let me see the old place—once more. The Lord bless you — for it! But I'm most sorry I stopped—seems now's it I—just couldn't go on now."

"Well, you ain't goin' on," said Mrs. Bridges, while Isaphene went to the door and stood looking toward the hill with downed eyes. "This is our little joke, Isaphene's an' mine. This'll be your home 's long 's it's our'n. An' you're goin' to have this nice big room right off the kitchen, 's soon 's we can furnish it up. We'll have to put you in the spare room for a week or two, though. An' we're goin' to get a horse an' buggy—a low buggy, so's you can get in an' out easy like—an' take you to church an' all 'round."

That night after Mrs. Bridges had put Mrs. Lane to bed and told her good night, she went out on the front porch and sat down; but presently, remembering that she had not put a candle in the room, she went back, noiselessly, not to disturb her. Then she stood perfectly still. The old creature had got out of the bed and was kneeling beside it, her face buried in her hands.

"Oh, Lord God," she was saying aloud, "bless these kind people—bless 'em, oh, Lord God! Hear a poor old man's miserable soul's prayer, an' bless 'em! An' if they've ever done a sinful thing, oh, Lord God, forgive 'em for it, because they've kep' me out o' the poor-house."

Mrs. Bridges shut the door, and stood sobbing as if her heart would break.

"What's the matter, maw?" said Isaphene coming up suddenly.

"Never you mind what's the matter," said her mother, sharply, to conceal her emotion. "You go to bed, missy, and don't bother your head about what's the matter with me."

Then she went down the hall and entered her own room, and Isaphene heard the key turned in the lock.—Prize Story in McClure's Magazine.

THE VITALITY OF THE CHURCH.

Cardinal Moran on the Papacy.

His Eminence Cardinal Moran, Archbishop of Sydney, has recently had a controversy with Right Rev. Dr. Camidge, Protestant Bishop of Ballarat, as to the effects of the so-called "Reformation."

In the course of a long letter, Cardinal Moran writes: "All contemporary writers attest that never was the (English) Church in more complete servitude to the Crown than during Elizabeth's reign; and never were more disastrous results witnessed throughout the length and breadth of England. Story, Protestant Bishop of Hereford, writes to Cecil in 1561 (as set forth in the State papers), that his Cathedral had become a very nursery of blasphemy, immorality, pride, superstition, and ignorance! Bristowe, in 1575, attests that 'never was there less humility and charity, never more immorality and perjury, so that nothing is to be looked for, but universal destruction and utter desolation.' A little later, Vernon writes regarding the Anglican clergy: "Immorality, drunkenness and gluttony unto them is but sport and pastime. They backbite, they slander, they chide and strive. Among them there is no modesty, no soberness, no temperance. All deceit, all craft, all subtlety and falsehood reigneth among them. Whereas, if ye hear them dispute and reason of the Scriptures and the Word of God, ye will think that they be very angels that come down from Heaven."

As regards civil liberty, it was quite crushed and banished out of England in those days. Macaulay refers to this fact in his essay on Hampden, and adds: "If the system on which the foundation of the Church of England could have been permanent, the Reformation would have been in a political sense the greatest curse that ever fell upon our country."

Dr. Camidge seems to take offence at being styled a Protestant Bishop, and yet it is not I alone, but the whole world, that gives him this designation. The name Protestant, though bearing with it the tell tale impress of heresy, was officially assumed by the Anglican Bishops in Elizabeth's reign, and continued for a hundred years to be regarded as the privileged style and title of the English Reformation. Dean Hook in his "Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury," expressly attests that Archbishop Parker and those who promoted the Reformation in England wished to be known "by the name of Protestants;" and he further states that, till the period of the Revolution, the term Protestant continued to be used in England "to designate a Church of Englishmen."

It is as a "Protestant" that the Sovereign of England is head of the Anglican Church; and so long as the present Acts of Parliament remain, it is to her, as a Protestant, that allegiance is due.

During the past three centuries, the Catholic Church has been subjected to the severest ordeal of persecution at the hands of almost every Government of Europe. Nevertheless, it has never ceased to spread out the tents of Israel, and to gather new peoples into the fold of Christ. The Church has been despoiled of her earthly wealth and worldly power; but her divine vitality has never for a moment been impaired.

At the period of the so-called "Reformation" the number of Catholics throughout the world was reckoned at a hundred and twenty millions. The present number (as set forth in the latest report that I have seen) is at least three hundred millions; and been gathering in of nations has been achieved, not by the lavish use of wealth, or by human intrigues or by State influence, but solely through the blessing of heaven, the blood of martyrs, and the heroism of devoted missionaries. The attitude of the Church thus combated by the world, yet ever triumphant and ever diffusing more and more, through every nation the blessings of Divine Faith, won the admiration of Cardinal Newman, who, in the last work he composed as an Anglican, thus wrote of the Catholic Church, in whose communion he was to be, a few weeks later, enrolled:

"When we consider the succession of ages during which the Catholic system has endured—the severity of the trials it has undergone, the sudden and wonderful changes which have befallen it, the incessant mental activity and the intellectual gifts of the maintainers, the enthusiasm which it has kindled, the fury of the controversies which have been carried on among its professors, the impetuosity of the assaults made upon it, the ever increasing responsibilities to which it has been committed by the continuous development of its dogmas—it is quite inconceivable that it should not have been broken up and lost were it a corruption of Christianity. Yet it is still living—if there be a living religion or philosophy in the world—vigorous, energetic, persuasive, progressive and not overgrown; it spreads out, yet it is not effebled; it is germinating, yet it is ever consistent with itself."

There is one point referred to by Doctor Camidge, which is not to be passed over in silence. He has made the singular discovery that "fifty Popes in 150 years, were apostates rather than apostles." Throughout this controversy I have refrained from offering advice to Dr. Camidge, nor is it my intention in the present instance to offer any. But I would wish to say to the cautious writer from whom he has innocently copied such trash, "If you bear false witness, endeavor, at least, while doing so, not to make a complete fool of yourself." An unbroken line of 250 Popes leads back to the Catholic Church of the first Feast of Pentecost. The list of the Pontiffs is as easily accessible as is the list of English monarchs from William the Conqueror to Victoria. Now, in the nineteenth centuries of the Church's life you will not find a single period of 150 years into which fifty Pontificates have been crowded. Thus, on the very face of it manifestly absurd is the accusation which has been made.

It must be borne in mind, however, that the present character of the Pope has little to do with the matter under discussion. Even Voltaire remarked that "We must distinguish the Pontiff from the sovereign." All through the troublous times of the Middle Ages, every lawless feudal baron, and every petty tyrant, combined with heresy and crime to fling mud at the Holy See and to assail the administration of the Roman Pontiffs. History, too, during the past three centuries has been little better than a conspiracy against truth, but, in our own day, the character of the Pontiffs has gradually been placed in its true light; and foremost in vindicating them have been learned non-Catholics—men of unimpeachable integrity and profound historical research.

Looking back on the long list of Popes, it is something to be proud of that, during the centuries of persecution, there was not one of them but proved himself a devoted leader of the army of God; while it was the privilege of eighty of their number to win the martyr's palm, and to seal with their blood the testimony of their faith. This is, indeed, something to look back to with pride; and it is no less cheering to every Catholic to reflect that no fewer than seventy-five of these successors of St. Peter have, by the heroism of their piety, merited the aureola of the saints and the honor of the altar. It is, however, their authoritative teaching of the Faith that has been guaranteed by Heaven; and it is for this—no matter how subject they may otherwise have been to the frailties of human nature—that we contend. Even in the worst of times, and amid widespread corruption, the general conduct of the successors of St. Peter has been worthy of their exalted station; and they have not failed to exercise their sublime authority for the interests of religion and piety.

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Meditation.

When a long time is to be employed in prayer, as half an hour, or even more, it is advisable to form a meditation on some part of our Saviour's life or passion, and apply the reflections naturally arising from thence, to that particular virtue we are endeavoring to attain.

If you stand in need of patience contemplate the mystery of your Saviour scourged at the pillar. Think of the soldiers being ordered to bring Him to the place appointed dragged Him thither with loud cries and bitter scoffs. 2nd. How being stripped of His garments: 3rd. How His innocent hands were bound tight to the pillar. 4th. How His body flowed in streams to the ground. 5th. How the strokes being often repeated on the same part, increased and renewed His wounds.

While you dwell on these, or the like particulars, proper to inspire you with the love of patience, endeavor to feel interiorly, in the most lively manner, the inexpressible anguish your Divine Master endured all over His body. From these pass to the cruel pangs His blessed soul endured, and endeavor to conceive the patience and mildness with which He suffered, even ready to undergo even more for His Father's glory, and your good.

After this behold Him covered with blood, and, be assured, that He desires nothing more earnestly than that you bear your affliction with patience; and that He implores His Heavenly Father's assistance for enabling you to bear with resignation, not only this cross, but all others for the future. Strengthen with repeated acts, the resolution you have taken of suffering with joy; then, raising your mind to heaven, give thanks to the Father of mercies, who vouchsafed to send His only Son into the world, to suffer such horrible torments, and to intercede for you. Conclude with beseeching Him to give you the virtue of patience, through the merits and intercession of this beloved Son in whom He is well pleased.

Follow the Safe Course.

The tendency to join social organizations is not confined to any class or condition of men, but is more or less universal and in many cases, productive of excellent results.

The Catholic Church, far from discountenancing this tendency, has always encouraged it, as is plain from the history of past and present times. Her one great anxiety has been to guard her children against any and all societies membership in which was calculated to prove detrimental to their faith or morality; and for that reason secret societies have always been forbidden by her.

The edict lately issued by Rome for the guidance of American Catholics warns the faithful against joining or remaining members of certain societies that are expressly named. The salutary warning of this edict will be, however, inadequately interpreted if it be taken to mean that none but the societies named are forbidden to Catholics. The Holy See always adapts its answers to the inquiries that are addressed to it. In this matter it was questioned regarding three organizations, and it replied accordingly.

It does not follow as Bishop Watter-son pertinently said in the official letter which appeared in the *Columbian* week before last, that all other than these three societies are permitted to Catholics. Far from it. With so many excellent societies approved by the Church to choose from there is no reason why any Catholic should, by joining other associations, run the risk of becoming a member of one that may be forbidden.—Catholic Columbian.

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