How Lily Became Blind.

[The following verses, published for the first time, are a contribution from St. Rupert's Asylum; the Sisters of Charity vouch for the truth of the pathetic incident recorded. Lily's mother died of an infectious fever, in consequence of which arrangements were made for a hasty funeral, and the remains were left unwatched. The child's share in the narrative is told below; she was at the time about three years old.]

I.

In her cot, half-wake, half-sleeping,
Pretty bright-eyed Lily lay,
Wonders—"Why is mother keeping
Oh! so very long away?"
Wonders—"What they mean by fever?"
Why the house is full of gloom,
Wonders, pouting, why they never
Let her into mother's room
Every night used mother kiss her,
Tuck her in so warm and tight,
Sadly now does Lily miss her,
Longing for that kind "good-night,"

II.

Some one, weeping, bends above her,
"Lily, darling, do not cry—
Mother's gone a long, long journey—
You will meet her by and bye."
"No!" (the child's true instinct waking)
"Mother has not gone away
Without kiss and fond leave-taking!
I will find and make her stay!"

III.

Tiny white-robed maiden, gliding
Barefoot down the nursery stair;
Near the lone death-chamber hiding
All unnoticed, steals in there.
Cautious in the dim light peeping,
Sees the still form cauly lie,
Joyful thinks—"She's only sleeping,
She will waken by and bye."
Dolly on the bed she clambers,
Kisses soft the cold white cheek,
Thinking still—"She only slumbers;
By and bye she'll surely speak."
Round the neck by love made fearless,
Lily slips her dimpled arm,
Through the midnight dark and cheerless,
Trying to make mother warm.
Now, the tired eyelids c'osing—
Anglest watch ys round the bed
Where, in fond embrace reposing,
Sleeps the living with the dead:

IV.

Morn—grave men, the coffin bringing,
Come to bear the dead away,
Find the child, still closely clinging
To the cold unconscious clay;
Paying faces gather round her,
Whispering low with bated breath,
How, in wonderment, they've found her
Locked within the arms of death.

V.

Follow days and nights of anguish
To the fever-stricken child,
Now, in deadly faintness languish,
Now, with pulses throbbing wild,
In delirium calling, "Mother!
Come, nurse Lily in her pain!"
Kindly falsehood, coined to soothe her,
"By and bye she'll come again;"
Long they think with sad emotion,
Like her mother, she must die:
Yet the storm that swept the ocean
Passed the tiny seaflower by.

VI.

Lily lives. Ah! death were kindness,
Death were freedom, death were gain
Lives to darkness, lives to blindness,
Nevermore to see again!
Still the child's brave heart retaining
As the slow years glide away,
Ever patient uncomplaining,
Bears her cross from day to day,
One hope hers, she knows no other,
'Tis to meet beyond the sky
Her beloved, her loving mother;
No! not now, but by and bye!

—*Catholic Standard.*

MOY O'BRIEN.

A TALE OF IRISH LIFE.

By Miss Skeffington ("Melusine.")

CHAPTER XXXIX.—(Continued)

'She has found out about the letter,' said Mr. Gilmartin, under his breath. 'Moy, my darling, I said we shou'd not be separated.' This was his first thought.

When Miss Wentworth was announced at the O'Briens' she saw that Moy had been crying, and that sad little white face, with the eyelids slightly swollen, nerved her for her task more than anything else could have done. As for *Moy*, she hardly dared glance at her companion. She felt as if Miss Wentworth would surely read everything, if their eyes met. So she hurried away and put on her hat, and soon the two ladies were walking down the road where, on that sunny morning, long, long ago, there had been that glad meeting between Moy and Mr. Gilmartin. It was not sunny now. The sky was cloudy and the air heavy. The weather, indeed, seemed in unison with poor Moy's sad heart. Miss Wentworth seemed inclined to do most of the talking herself, rather an unusual thing for her; and, for a reserved Englishwoman, she was today wonderfully frank about her own life and pursuits at home, both in London and in the country. She told Moy of her many interests and duties. She spoke of the lectures she attended on literature, science and art; of the immense acquaintance she had in London, and all the work she did among the poor. 'This is an extra holiday I have been taking,' she added. 'I generally only leave town after August has begun, and return to it in January or February. I must make up for this holiday, and spend some of the autumn with my poor people—that is the dullest time for them, I think. They are longing to get away from the dusty streets to the green fields, but no holiday comes for them. Then, when I go down to the country, I have all my poor people to look after; and oh, our home is such a lovely, dear o'd place!'

Moy had never seen her look so tender, so womanly, as she described her grand old home, kept in such perfect repair—the magnificent trees, the rookery, the two lodges and the old people that kept them; then, beyond the park walls, the hawthorn hedges, the village green, the row of almshouses with their tidy gardens, the inn where Tennyson had once put up, the river that Wordsworth had written a poem about! Moy was carried away from her own sad thoughts, and thoroughly interested in the scenes which Miss Wentworth described so well that they rose like pictures before her.

'What a happy life you must lead,' she said at last, but without the least ghost of an envious thought.

'Yes,' said Miss Wentworth, with a sigh, 'and it is a life full of work. Of course we have plenty of amusements, too, for we constantly have the house full—but what with Dorcas meetings, and mothers' meetings, and the schools on Sundays and week days, I have not much time to worry myself over sad thoughts.'

Moy wondered to herself had Miss Wentworth any sad thoughts? Could one, who spoke so richly blessed in every way, have room for despondency in her life?

For the first time their eyes met, and Miss Wentworth seemed to read the expression in Moy's.

'Yes' she said, 'I am often sad about the evils of English life. You think the different classes are separated here, but it is nothing to what it is in England. I speak from my own experience. Here there is no one I have met, however poor and ragged, who has not had such natural courtesy of manner that I could speak to them without disgust; but the coarseness and brutality of the same class with us is simply revolting; and I blame the highest classes for a great deal of this. Now, I will give you an idea of what I mean. We are a small family, only my brother and myself. He has never married; so my mother and I still have our old homes, and there is a dower house for us when we like to go to it. We are well enough off to do what is right on the property (what ought to be done on every property) without making any sacrifices, so no thanks to us; but there are neighbors of ours, members of the nobility, who have large families—the sons all live like noblemen, belonging to expensive clubs, are never denied anything; the daughters the same; each girl has her own saddle horse, and they have a pony-carriage between every two of them. Well, the laborers on such estates live like pigs, in houses too small to hold them, and with unmended roofs and wretched surroundings. They are coarse and brutal, and who can wonder at it? Now, if the nobleman I have mentioned—and there are many like him—was to put down his four-horse drag only for a few years, he could rebuild every cottage on the estate, and I say there should be a law to make them do it. If we have a law which compels the poor children to come to school, though by staying away they can earn an honest living, there ought to be a law to make the rich house their people like human beings. Of course, there are other things I want to see altered in England,' she continued, with a sigh 'but I have told you enough to show what a busy life I lead, and I should only tire you if I were to go on.'

'Oh no, no,' said Moy, earnestly. 'You don't know how much you have interested me, but here we are at the little farm I was telling you about.'

It was one of Mr. Hackney's tenants who lived there, a poor woman whose husband was dead; but one of her sons now managed the land for her, and another in America was constantly sending her a portion of his earnings. She had one little daughter, a great artist in lace, whom Moy had helped with many old patterns and useful hints of different kinds.

'Come in, ladies,' said the mother, courtesying low, as Moy said she had brought a friend of hers—a kind English lady—to see her. Moy spoke even more distinctly than usual, for she knew the woman would have too much tact to say anything unpleasant to her visitor; but she might have applied some rather strong adjective to the Saxon' in connection with Mr. Hackney had she been ignorant of the country to which Miss Wentworth belonged. She courtesyed again as Moy spoke, with, perhaps, a trifle more of dignity in her manner, as she said, 'It's proud I am to welcome any friend of Miss O'Brien's under my roof, for it's she that's been kind to the widow and the orphan.'

Just then Miss Wentworth saw a likeness of Emmet pinned up against the wall; and glad to find immediately some pleasant subject of conversation, she said, half to Moy:

'How beautifully Washington Irving wrote about poor Emmet. I was reading it only the other day. 'So young,' he says, 'so intelligent, so generous, so brave, so everything that we are apt to like in a young man.'

'I have it all here, my lady,' said Mrs. Farren, brightly; 'my son in America sent me the book.' She took it down from a shelf and dusted it, and it opened at which was evidently a favorite passage. She handed the book to *Miss* Wentworth. 'Sure, I'd like to hear you read it, if it's pleasing to you, my lady.'

So Miss Wentworth, with her distinct intonation, read the remainder of the sentence:

'His conduct under trial, too, was so lofty and intrepid. The noble indignation with which he repelled the charge of treason against his country, the eloquent vindication of his name, and his pathetic appeal to posterity in the hopeless hour of condemnation—all these entered deeply into every generous bosom, and even his enemies lamented the stern policy that dictated his execution.'

Miss Wentworth began the next sentence:

'But there was one heart whose anguish it would be impossible to describe.'

Her voice faltered, and she closed the book, saying, as she did so: 'Your very history is poetry, down even to the other day.'

Mrs. Farren suddenly raited Miss Wentworth's hand to her lips and kissed it.

'Thank you, my lady,' she said. 'I'll always think better of the English for your sake, though I've had a son in prison for the part he took in the Fenian rising. But, thanks be to God, he's doing right well in America now.'

Moy, having taken up the book and gone on reading from where Miss Wentworth left off, was almost unconscious of this little scene being enacted before her. But blinding tears were in her eyes. She would hardly have seen her companions, for this was what she read:

'In happier days and fairer fortunes he had won the affections of a beautiful and interesting girl, the daughter of a late celebrated Irish barrister. She loved him with the disinterested fervor of a woman's first and early love. When every worldly maxim arrayed itself against him; when blasted in fortune, and disgrace and danger darkened around his name, she loved him the more ardently for his very sufferings. If, then, his fate could awaken the sympathy of his foes, what must have been the agony of her whose whole soul was occupied by his image? Let those tell who have had the portals of the tomb suddenly closed between them and the being they most loved on earth—who have sat at his threshold, as one shut out in a cold and lonely world, whence all that was most lovely and loving had departed.'

Miss Wentworth, as she looked over little Mary Farren's lace, some of which she purchased, glanced now and then rather anxiously at Moy, and the moment she saw the book laid down she rose to take leave. Both to Moy and to herself those words about Emmet had been all too trying.

From Mrs. Farren's the two ladies went on to the house where the poor girl lived whom Moy so often went to read to. They found her up and sitting in the deep window seat, with some rather hard bundles of clothes supporting her back. She suffered from spinal complaint, and Moy had herself made two soft cushions for the invalid; as she was distressed to miss them now; and the girl's mother eagerly explained that a very near neighbor had been taken ill and could not rest for a bad headache, so the pillows had been lent to her by the invalid herself.

Miss Wentworth was distressed to see the look of suffering on the girl's thin face, and she asked if different things had been done for her, and at last if the doctor attending her was considered clever.

'Oh, yes, my lady,' said the mother, 'he's a mighty clever man. Sure, it's himself that drew my husband's back tooth that had teased every boy in the village with trying to pull it, and not one inch would it come till Dr. Flinn walked up, and 'Mick,' says he, just let me put this in your mouth,' says he. 'The saints preserve us, says I, 'it his head doesn't come off. For, my lady, I sees the instruments of torture. But with that out came Mick's tooth, just neat like, and *Mick* that quiet that he never said so much as 'musha' at all, at all.'

Miss Wentworth, turning away to hide a smile, noticed suspended from a string some curious rings of stone.

'May I look at these curious things nearer?' she asked, and Moy took them down and handed them to her; while the sick girl said: 'Oh, father calls those fairy rings. We have found them now and again in a mountain stream near here.'

Miss Wentworth looked exceedingly interested. 'Why,' she said to Moy, 'they are like the whorls which Dr. Schliemann found in the ruins of Troy. Look, Miss O'Brien, at these devices upon them.'

'Yes,' said Moy, 'I have often noticed them, and wondered if ancient people wore them as charms, but I have not read Dr. Schliemann's book.'

'Some one who knows more about these things than I do must look into this,' said Miss Wentworth, thoughtfully, as she hung them up again; but I know they are most interesting, so take care of them.' Then she sat down by the sick girl and talked to her so kindly, so gently, that she quite won her heart. Never had Miss Wentworth been so tender, so sympathetic. She was surprised at herself; and Moy thought, 'Oh, I ought to rejoice more than I do that the people will have her here.'

In the next house they went to they found a busy scene. The mother was spinning, and nothing could exceed Miss Wentworth's quiet surprise and delight at the sight. She had never before seen an old-fashioned spinning-wheel at work. The eldest daughter was mixing a huge bowl of Indian-meal cakes. This supplied a text for *Miss* Wentworth. She warned them not to use the Indian-meal too constantly, as in some parts of Italy, where the poor have been living exclusively upon it, a dreadful disease has broken out.

'Well, my lady,' said the poor woman, 'I can believe that same, for I don't think the Irish are as healthy ever since they took less potatoes and more of this yellow meal; for you see it isn't much meat we get. It's different in America, where they get the meat and the meal both.'

Miss Wentworth agreed with her that this fact made all the difference. Then she asked if they all spoke Irish, and was much disappointed to hear that only the father and mother could.

'I can't understand it,' she said. 'All the great men in England, France, and Germany are talking it up, and proving what a grand and wonderful old language yours is, and here I find the Irish themselves neglecting it.'

As Moy and her companion walked back to Ballyvorna to pay their last visit, which was to the old man whom Moy had found sweeping the road, Miss Wentworth said: 'I don't know why it is, but I have been thinking so much this afternoon of one whom I have to thank that I ever took an interest—a real, practical interest—in the poor.'

'Yes?' said Moy, inquiringly.

'He has gone from this troublesome world,' said Miss Wentworth, looking up to the sky, where just over their heads, a patch of blue was showing through the broken clouds.

'He was the younger son of a nobleman, a neighbor of ours (not the one I have already mentioned), and he entered the Church. He was many years older than I was, but we sympathized with one another, and I learned to love whatever he loved. He got a living in London, and he worked among the very poor there until it killed him. We had just been engaged to one another for three months, when he died.'

Moy laid her hand on Miss Wentworth's and pressed it gently, but she did not speak. Miss Wentworth looked at her and smiled.

'Yes,' she said, 'it was a blow, wasn't it? And though I was very young then, I often think that no trouble that has come to me since has ever seemed so overwhelming as it would have done had I not experienced that first great grief.'

'It is very kind of you to talk to me as you have done to-day,' said Moy. 'You don't know the good you have done me.'

She turned her head away, and she could not trust her voice to say more, or she would have told Miss Wentworth about 'Dermot,' and what a bond of sympathy there must now always have been between them.

(To be continued.)

The Limekiln Club.

BROTHER GARDNER HAS SOMETHING TO SAY ABOUT LANGUAGE.

'If Brudder Shindig Watkins am in de hall dis evenin, he will please step dis way,' said Brother Gardner as the regular business of the meeting had been disposed of.

Brother Watkins had just got settled down, with his back within eleven inches of a red-hot stove, and it was with considerable hesitation that he vacated his place and limped up the aisle and stood before the president's desk.

'Brudder Watkins,' said the president as he looked down upon him in a fatherly way, 'war yo' present one eavenin 'bout a y'ar ago when I had sunthin to say to de members on the subjeck of language?'

'I—I dun forgot, sah.'

'Yes, it seemed so, Brudder Watkins. I was ober to de grocery de odder eavenin to git fo' dozen clothespins an a quart of kerosene ile. I saw yo' dar, but yo' was too busy to see me. Yo' had met up wid a strange nigger from Virginny, an yo' was spreadin yo'self to make him believe yo' was de grestest man in dis town. I had my pencil handy an I writ down some of yo'r words an sentences. Kin yo' tell me, Brudder Watkins, what collation means?'

'N-no, sah.'

'Um? In dat conversashun yo' used de word 'coadjustment.' What did yo' mean by it, Brudder Watkins?'

'I doan' reckolect, sah.'

'Dat's too bad? I heard yo' say to him dat 'de audacity of de distributary doorin de past summer led yo' to concoct a festination dis winter.' I'ze sorter curious to know what yo' meant. Am we gwine to hev a hard winter, a mild winter, or July weather right frew de cold months?'

'I—was jess talkin', sah,' stammered Brother Watkins.

'Jess talkin, eh? Yo' knowed dat nigger was a stranger in a strange town an' sorter skeert, an' so yo' wanted to show off! While dat pore man sot dar tremblin' an' shakin' yo' suddenly axed him if he eber 'fulminated a hostile impecuniosity 'in his travels about de kentry.' Please explain what yo' war drivin at, Brudder Watkins'

'I can't tell sah.'

'Can't, eh? Doorin dat conversashun yo' made use of de words 'eventuate,' 'incinerate,' 'logistical,' 'matriculate,' 'nutrication' an' 'orthographical.' Kin yo' explain de meanin' of any of 'em?'

'No, sah.'

'Um! Brudder Watkins, whar did yo' git all dose big words?'

'Outer de dickshunary, sah.'

'Misser Webster's dickshunary?'

'Yes, sah.'

'Has yo' got dat volume in yo'r house?'

'I has, sah. I dun bought one fur six dollars cash.'

'Hu! Yo' dun went and paid six dollars fur a dickshunary while yo' was owin' members of dis club ober twenty dollars borrowed money! Yo' am also behind on yo' dues moss' foah dollars, an' yo'r wife am borrowin' tea an' sugar all ober town.'

'I'ze sorry, sah!' murmured Brother Watkins, who was getting badly frightened by this time.

'What was yo'r objeck in buyin' dat dickshunary of *Misser* Webster?' sternly demanded the president.

'I dun forgot.'

'Hu! I know yo'r objeck, Brudder Watkins! It was to pick out a lot of big words an save 'em up till a strange nigger struck dis town an don jump him outer his butes! Look me in de eye, sah! I'ze got a few words to say to yo', and frew yo' to all odder members of dis club! To-morrer mawnin yo' take dat dickshunary on yo'r shoulder an go fo'th an sell it fur any price yo' kin git. Den yo' return home an soak yo'r head till all dem big words float out an drop down de sewer. Den rinse yo'r mouf wid some kyann pepper an vinegar an begin life all ober agin!'

'Yes, sah.'

'What our race wants at dis present time,' continued Brother Gardner, 'am taters an bacon 'stead of grammar; cash to pay house rent 'stead of big words; clothes and skulebooks fur de chill'en 'stead of spellin. We do our whitewashin in plain English. We doan' need any big words to help us black a stove. We beat a ca'pet wid a stick 'stead of usin a grammar. I has bin livin on dis airth upward of sixty y'ars, but neither as a boodman nor free has I eber yet seed de time when I couldn't make a white man understand what I was talkin 'bout. Had I so wished I could hev bought *Misser Webster's* big book an palliated a propensity toward a querulous refutation, but I did not regard such a sequential torridity of de least impetuosity. On de contrary, I felt dat de unobtrusiveness of de ambiguity was altogether malignant to de revulsion. Now, Brudder Watkins, yo' sot down. Stay down. Doan' let me see yo' bob to de surface fur de nex' two months. I doan't know whether yo' killed dat pore, strange nigger or not, but if he still libs an yo' run across him yo' want to ax his forgibness an help him to find a job. De meetin will now break in two an go home.'

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