

"My poor little girl!" was all he said.

I wanted to leave them together, but they would not permit it. Ethel could not be persuaded to go home yet, so it was decided she should go to her aunt, who lived in P—, remain there for some time, and then return home. She was really in earnest, and her father telegraphed to his sister. After bidding me Good-bye, he took her to the train, and went with her to P—. She promised to write to me, I gave her my blessing, and assured her of my prayers.

I learned afterwards that, even as a child, she was remarkable for her beauty, her quickness of mind, and a certain self-confidence that prompted her to many daring acts. Being the only daughter, with three devoted brothers, and the youngest of the family, she was flattered and spoiled. And when the stylish, smooth-voiced woman who enticed her from her home met her, she was quite carried away by the flattering words that finally compassed her ruin. She never wrote after she left home, and the family had no idea that she was so close to them.

A year afterwards I was giving a Mission in the city of P—, and my thoughts went out to Ethel. I had heard from her only twice, and fearing that she had relapsed into her old ways, I went to her aunt's address, and found the lady grief-stricken and distressed. Ethel had behaved well for a few months, but had found her way to an evil resort, and had gone back to the life of sin. More than that, she had returned to her aunt's house more than once in a beastly state of intoxication. Her aunt that very day determined to telegraph to her father to come for her. I asked her to send me word when the father arrived; for I felt that this soul must not be lost.

The next afternoon I received a telephone from the aunt saying that Ethel's father had just arrived, and I promised to go to the house the following morning. I did so, and found both father and aunt in deep despondency. Ethel could not be found. I suggested inquiry at the police courts. This almost broke the father's heart. But the result was that Ethel was found. She was picked up from the street, in a maudlin state, and detained in one of the station houses.

Her evident traces of beauty and refinement saved her from the common jail. The heart-broken father had to give his consent when the court committed her to the House of the Good Shepherd for six months. After Ethel had sobered up and understood the sentence, she became savage with rage, so her father told me, and physical force had to be employed by a burly policeman to keep her in the carriage that brought her to her destination. The Sisters, though accustomed to such cases, were in despair over Ethel. She would not speak, she used vile language, she even struck her fist through a large pane of frosted glass in her rage, and only when she saw the blood streaming from the cuts in her hand and felt faint and sick, would she allow them to be dressed. She then showed some gratitude to the dear Sister who cared for her. In these institutions, no corporal punishments are ever inflicted, nothing but kindness and persuasion. The only punishment for even such characters as Ethel, is placing them in a room alone, or at a table by themselves in the dining room—for silent reflection often accomplishes what advice will not bring about.

Ethel, by this time, was mentally and physically exhausted, and as she lay in bed—her hand having been severely gashed, was bandaged up—she softened towards the white garbed Nun, who gently ministered to her with the most tender and motherly kindness. The Nun asked her if there was any one in whom she had confidence, or would like to see. At once she mentioned my name. As I was still in the city, the Mother Superior communicated with me and I promised I would try to find time to go to her.

When I reached the Convent, Ethel was brought into the room. Her delight at seeing me was, as I soon found out, principally because she thought I had influence with the civil authorities, and could procure her release. The Nun saw that her whole ambition and desire was to return to her life of sin. I assumed a most severe and stern manner, and told her she had proved faithless to her promises to God and to me, and deserved a severe punishment than remaining six months under a peaceful roof with the good Sisters. Her rebellious spirit broke out and she declared she would kill herself if I, her only true friend, deserted her. After a long time I brought her to a better way of thinking, and promised her that if she were satisfactory in conduct I would visit her again before the six months were over; but she must write to me, and tell me of her progress. I besought her with all the fervor I could command to put her trust in the tender, forgiving heart of our Lord, and I gave her my favorite aspiration to say unnumbered times a day—"Sacred Heart of Jesus, I place my trust in Thee."

Grace conquered at last. After nearly two hours she threw herself at my feet with a burst of tears, and promised me she would do her best to conquer the evil spirit who had come within "seven other spirits more wicked than himself" to torment her. She went to confession; and was like another being when I left her. Her beautiful face was angelic in its expression of restored hope and grace. That beauty which was her ruin,

shone now in its purified expression, and when I departed I was moved almost to tears by the marvel of God's patience and love. My last words to her were "When I come again, Ethel, you will tell me that you mean to stay another six months as a reparation for your rebellious conduct."

She said nothing, but I knew she would think a great deal.

The six months passed by. Towards the close of them I visited her, and found her much improved, but still desirous for liberty. Another long talk brought back the hope of virtue and perseverance. And ere I left she said:

"Father, your goodness and patience had conquered. You have led me to the Sacred Heart, and I find my God will help me to be good. The Court placed me here for six months. I couldn't get out. Now the time is over and I can go. But I won't go. I will stay in penance for my sin. I won't let our Lord do it all for me. I will do my share for Him. If it kills me I will stay these six months as a penance for my terrible sins!"

And then, consoled, I blessed her, and said Good-bye.

The rebellious and stubborn girl, as she was thought to be, went back to her class with a changed heart, but no one knew her mind save her self. It was not long before the experienced eye of her good Mother, Mistress saw the signs of true penitence in Ethel, and her zealous heart offered up many a prayer for the struggling girl. She encouraged her. She watched over her, and gave her a thousand little helps, constantly inspiring her with love for the Sacred Heart. She taught her how to embroider the little Scapular of the Sacred Heart, promising to allow her to send the best of those she made to me for my missions.

But still the enemy wrestled with her. Several times she stayed in the garden after the girls had gone to bed, determined to scale the walls somehow, and be free. Once her mistress found her long after midnight rushing around the walls in a loose robe, trying to find a place where she might either make herself heard on the outside, or get over the top and jump into the open. Gentle pleadings brought her to her senses, and she went back to bed. But it was pitiable to see how fearfully she was tempted, even though she was in the hands of the good Mother. At the end of the six months, she wrote me that after dreadful temptations and struggles she had kept her promise, and she had stayed the six months of her own accord. "And now," she concluded, "I am going to tell you something you do not expect to hear, dear Rev. Father. Yesterday I asked the Rev. Mother if I could consecrate myself for just one year, as a true penitent." With the letter came a box of Sacred Heart Badges, and said: "Every moment that I spent in making these, I offered it up to the Sacred Heart for my conversion."

Surely, I thought, God is giving evidence to His love for souls that the world considers lost. Ethel's petition was granted, and she took her place among the probationers. At first her fervor kept up; but in the seventh month of her consecration, the evil spirit summoned all his forces to drive her from her good intentions. Her mental sufferings showed on her pale, exhausted face. She told the Mother that the battle was terrible. Dreadful memories of her past life came back like alluring figures to tempt and lead her to sin. Prayer, Holy Communion, everything religious became distasteful and nauseous to her, and going to the Mother she declared she must give up this time—she would have to forfeit her consecration. The wise Superior recognized the black hand of the tempter, and told her it was his last attempt to carry her away. She persuaded Ethel to a little more patience and trust in the Sacred Heart of Christ, and watched her tenderly. The girl was in earnest, and fought out her battle.

Not many months later she wrote me that the Reverend Mother had consented to give her a trial among the Magdalens; that her conduct had proved she was sincere. Her whole letter was a rapturous thanksgiving for her change of heart. She was now twenty-two years old. And henceforth comes the miraculous change in this girl's whole life. A change so marked, so striking in contrast with her previous conduct, that it is almost like the Magdalen of old in the Sacred Scriptures.

Her modesty and obedience among the other Magdalens were soon remarked by the religious who watched their charges with unflagging interest and care. It was her one aim to repair the past. Her charity and gentleness; her naturally winning manner; her charming personality, enhanced by her wondrously beautiful countenance, now more lovely by the virtue of her restored soul, made her beloved by all. Her joy on receiving the Habit of the Magdalens was inexpressible, and she was constantly seen in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament—her hands clasped, her eyes fixed on the Tabernacle, immovable on her knees. Her name in religion was Sister Magdalen of Our Lady of Victory. Thus she lived, a wonder to all, daily becoming more absorbed in God, until her sanctity seemed to clothe her like a radiance, and those about her felt a sort of awe in her presence. She placed herself, as it were, beneath the feet of all. But another sacrifice was to be made.

It happened one day that the Reverend Mother, during a spell of sickness, was given the wrong medicine by mistake—a double dose of

deadly poison. In less than five minutes it took effect, and the whole house was thrown into terror. The physician was instantly summoned, but could do nothing. Paralysis of the vital organs was imminent and the grieving community rushed to the chapel to plead for their Mother Superior, and all begged little Ethel to join in the most fervent prayers. Sister Victory, as she was called, went to the foot of the altar and prayed thus:

"O Sacred Heart! My only Love! spare the precious life of our good, holy Mother, and take my worthless life instead!" And then she paused a moment while the Sisters knelt breathless.

Rising up she went to the suffering Mother's room, and with inimitable modesty and simplicity she said: "Mother you will be better soon. Our Lord wants you to do great things for Him. I will take your sickness, as our Lord wants me to suffer a little and die."

"The following morning the Mother was quite recovered—and Sister Victory had to remain in bed because of a violent hemorrhage. The astonished physician who was called from the Mother's convalescent bed to that of the Novice, confessed she was dangerously ill, and she was placed in the Infirmary. When asked if she had any wish they could gratify, she begged to see the Mother, and that she could see the Tabernacle when the door between the gallery and the Infirmary was opened. The Rev. Mother, who was now restored to perfect health, felt that she owed her life to this generous Novice, and was most solicitous about her. But she grew no better, and at last, after a week had passed, the physician said that she ought to receive the last Sacrament. When told of this, Sister Victory said she knew it, but longed to pronounce her vows first. This petition was granted, and the great Community of white-robed Sisters and brown-robed Magdalens, assembled in the Infirmary that very evening, to witness the solemn spiritual nuptials of poor Ethel, now Sister Magdalen of Our Lady of Victory, and to add their prayers to those of the Church, for the dying Bride of Christ.

"Nothing in my life was more touching than that scene," said the Chaplain to me afterwards. "The fervor and intense happiness of that humble, beautiful Magdalen pronouncing her vows on her deathbed will be a lasting memory. She is a miracle of God's grace!" But Sister Victory did not die yet. Her mysterious malady increased, and soon her body was so emaciated and so sensitive that she could scarcely be lifted. Her sufferings were intense, and she was not able to swallow anything except the Sacred Host, and a spoonful of water afterwards. The physician shook his head. He could not understand it. But Sister Victory told him, while she thanked him for his kindness in her behalf, that Our Lord had taken her case, and nothing earthly would avail her. All this strikingly so, became celestial. It did not grow emaciated like her body, but kept its contour, spiritualized and angelic. The door between the Infirmary and the Chapel was always open, and the eyes of the Magdalens were constantly fixed on the Tabernacle. She was being moulded into a Saint.

One evening a Novice was ministering to her, and seeing that quivering pain on that caused her whole body to tremble, and beads of sweat to gather on her brow, cried out, "Oh! Sister Victory, I would do anything if I could relieve you!"

Sister Victory fixed her dark eyes on the Novice, and tried to smile. Then she said: "No, Sister, I am afraid you wouldn't."

"Yes! Oh, yes I would," repeated the Novice.

"Well, then," said Sister Victory, "cut off your hair, which you have allowed to grow under your veil and give up the desire to leave and lose your vocation!"

The Novice blushed violently. How did Sister Victory know her thoughts? and how was she aware of the fact that, contrary to the rule, she had allowed her hair to grow? She threw herself on her knees beside the dying Magdalen, acknowledged the truth, and begged her help to be faithful to her vocation. When she left the room it was to seek the Chapel, thank God for the divine admonition thus given, and promise perseverance.

The marvels that gathered around this death bed were not few, nor were they ordinary. To the entire restoration of the Rev. Mother, the continued illness of the Novice, whose life was still seemingly preserved that she might suffer more, were added other unusual favors. The Mother found that a debt was coming due, and she had not the ready money to pay it. She said nothing to any one, trusting in God's providence. Much less did she speak of it to our sufferer. But one afternoon the Magdalen took her hand, and said "Mother, do not worry! You will have the money you need before five o'clock to-morrow."

A kind of awe crept over the Superior's soul. She had spoken of this to no one. God must be very close to her dying child. She dared not hope the prediction would be verified. And yet Sister Victory seemed as if she belonged no more to earth. Many cares occupied the Mother's mind, but the next afternoon shortly before five o'clock she was called to the parlor, where she found a stranger, a lady of education and refinement, who said she had called to beg the prayers of the Community

on behalf of a careless husband. The Mother promised the prayers, and after a few more words the lady rose to depart. In leaving she handed an envelope to the Mother, and told her she had long wished to make an offering to the Community. The Superior opened the envelope and found a cheque for \$1,000—just the amount needed to relieve her financial difficulty. She thought at once of the dying Sister Victory, and hastened to the Infirmary. Before she could speak, Sister Victory said, between gasps: "I told you so, Mother! Our Lady keeps her promises; and you may tell that good friend her husband will be restored to Church, and give up all his bad habits." The Superior's eyes filled with tears. She could only press the hand of her dying child, and beg her to pray for her.

"I will soon go to our Lord," she said, "and then I shall always pray for you."

Not many days afterwards I received a letter from the Superior, who told me that Ethel's death bed was one that would never be forgotten by the Sisterhood. She fixed her large lustrous eyes, smiling, on one part of the room, saying softly: "Oh! Blessed Mother! Sweet Heart of my Lord, I do not deserve this! I am most unworthy!" and then she closed her eyes and fell asleep in the strong, gentle arms of a happy death.

Thus died the wayward Ethel at the age of twenty-four. Her life was a long struggle between nature and grace. A lost sheep was found by the Good Shepherd. Reluctantly it heard His Voice, reluctantly it re-entered the Fold. The Heart of Jesus wrestled with it, so to speak. But once conquered, the lost sheep nestled closer and closer to that tender Heart, until it became absorbed in His love—until it died clasping His Feet.

And all this is true—absolutely true. And it will be true of other sheep. Only give that Divine Friend a chance. Only let Him be heard in hearts that are scarlet in sin—and they will become meek and holy, white as snow, changed from sinners to saints.

THE LATEST PILGRIM-AGE TO LOURDES

One of the marvels of Lourdes, over and above the miraculous cures which occur there every year is the regular return of pilgrims who have not obtained relief from their physical ills. To the skeptic who refuses to believe in the supernatural, that is the most inexplicable fact of all; that the paralytic, the cripple, the diseased, revisit again and again the Shrine of the Virgin of Massabielle, ever with renewed hope, unwavering in their allegiance. The sufferer knows that if his body has not been healed, his soul has been enriched tenfold, and each time his request is refused he bows his head in submission and penetrates still deeper into the mysteries of faith, repeating the words of the psalmist: "Incerta est oculis sapientie tuae manifestasti mihi." There are no disappointments at Lourdes; the human, all too human, element has been left behind in the train and as soon as the sacred place of prayer is reached, personal desires, ambitions, hopes are included in a comprehensive Fiat.

Among the 300 English pilgrims who went to Lourdes last month under the leadership of Dr. Singleton, Bishop of Shrewsbury, many among the sick and healthy were old habitués who never miss an opportunity of making the annual journey under the auspices of the Catholic Association.

"Our Lady did not think it was worth while curing me with only one arm gone," remarked a paralytic young man plidly recently, as he was being helped into the homeward-bound train.

"Cheer up, there's worse to come!" remarked his companion, who was in consumption, and both laughed merrily.

"Our Lady of Lourdes, cure me if you think fit, but don't worry if it is not convenient; I'll understand all right." This is something of the mental attitude of the devout pilgrim and thanks to an abundance of divine grace, he does "understand all right." Who shall assert that the resignation and contentment with one's lot which are invariably acquired by the pilgrims are not as miraculous as the physical cures which occur in greater or lesser numbers at each pilgrimage?

During the recent week we spent there we mixed with 3 different nationalities. There were, as usual, several French pilgrimages present; a Belgian pilgrimage from Namur; and Saturday, September 27, the

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morrow of our own arrival, brought some hundreds of religious and laity from Portugal. Our own contingent though small, was fervent as any, and the lusty strains of "Faith of Our Fathers," which we sang every morning during our 8 o'clock Mass at the Grotto, resounded on the esplanade, bearing witness to our zeal and vitality. Our services were mostly conducted in the Basilica, but one sweltering hot morning, under the direction of the valiant Father O'Reilly, we made the Way of the Cross up the hill. The Stations were completed and solemnly inaugurated and blessed a year ago. They are fine specimens of sculpture, each group consisting of life-size figures.

When we were not actually engaged in devotions which concerned our own particular pilgrimage we were praying in French with the French and the Belgians. Many an unemotional and dignified Briton who can pray well and soberly found himself unconsciously supplicating the Mother of Graces with outstretched arms. During the hours when the sick are being bathed everyone else clusters outside the enclosure, and it is then that Ave Marias by the thousand pierce the air. A priest begins the rosary, and everyone responds with conviction. Then follow the supplications, and at the top of one's voice one calls on Notre Dame de Lourdes and begs her to cure the sick. Very touching is the chanting of "Parce nobis Domine Mater Miserearis" in eternal memory of those who have died in the faith. The most touching sight of the pilgrimage is the sight of the faithful who are being plunged into the icy cold water of the piscines to hear the zealous orations that are proceeding outside for their benefit.

The solemn benediction of the sick with the Blessed Sacrament at 4 o'clock in the afternoon, always a beautiful ceremony, was rendered more striking by the many-tongued invocations which greeted the Holy of Holies in the procession through the esplanade. A Portuguese, a French, a Belgian, and an English priest pleaded in turn for the sick, and if one may be allowed to make comparisons, it was the Portuguese "implorateur" and his flock whose efforts surpassed all others in volume. But, indeed, everyone was praying, and it was the voices of a common, great, boundless faith which hailed the Christ the Son of the Living God in alternate outbursts of love, entreaty and worship. Was it a foretaste of eternity to witness this adoring multitude, rich and poor, sick and healthy, alike oblivious of all around them but the presence of their Lord and their God, gazing with rapt attention on the Sacred Monstrance as though they already beheld the beatific vision? "Domine, tantum diu verbo et sanabor!" And who shall count the number that were healed as the God of creation passed by to infuse fresh grace and faith into the soul of each?

Solemn Benediction was given from the steps of the Rosary Church, and it was curious to note the transformation of the scene when the last note of the "Adoremus" died away. The esplanade at once became a seething mass of human beings hurrying hither and thither; the spell had been broken, and although the peace of God was on their faces, these men and women were once more ordinary workaday mortals.

"Sit, laus plena, sit sonora," was the motto of the mighty torchlight processions in honor of Our Lady, English, French, Flemish and Portuguese verses of the famous hymn all dissolved in the mighty Aves which

must have crossed the Pyrenees into Spain. Then the "Credo" in Latin sung in front of the Rosary Church, and the episcopal blessing before we dispersed. Many of the English witnessed for the first time the custom of a double episcopal blessing of a congregation. Our own Bishop remained in the background while the two Portuguese pastors raised their hands simultaneously and gave the blessing. These two Bishops, frequently seen walking arm in arm, attracted considerable attention. An English Bishop has come to be so commonplace in Lourdes that the French look upon him as one of their own, and think of him as nothing out of the ordinary. But Portuguese Bishops have apparently not been such frequent visitors, and when their lordships knelt inside the grille at the Grotto on the night of their arrival there without a whispered comment among the French and Belgians, "Voilà les eveques portugais qui prient!" Involuntarily an English pilgrim's mind recurred to the story of a schoolboy's definition of moral courage. The teacher suggested that to kneel down and say his prayer in a dormitory where 11 other boys said none, was an act of moral courage, and asked for a similar illustration. Whereupon a small boy said that if 1 of 12 bishops sleeping in a room were to bed without saying his prayers, that would be an act of moral courage.

Meanwhile the Portuguese prelates prayed on, unconscious of the distraction they caused. When the pilgrimage was at an end mournful groups armed with water bottles still lingered round the spring and about the hallowed haunts before they wended their way for the last time out of the esplanade. We were followed about by vendors of vanilla sticks, who insisted on our purchasing. "De la vanille, mesieurs, mesdames—achetez de la vanille!" they cried, as though this were also an obligatory part of our devotions.

We left with regret, finding consolation, however, in the thought that Our Lady reigned gloriously in this happy valley, and that we should always find her surrounded by a host of clients whenever we have the good fortune to salute her on her chosen rock.—Tablet.

SISTER HONORED BY THE KING

Sister Catherine, of the Order of St. Joseph of the Apparition, who has been infirmarian in the Leprosy Hospital at Rangoon, India, has been presented with a silver medal as a recognition of her services by the English Government in Rangoon. It would seem that the religious has well deserved this kind compliment from King George.

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Sister Catherine works in the garden with her little charges and makes and mends their clothes. The good nun contracted leprosy herself, but her miraculous cure has been verified by several doctors. The order to which Sister Catherine belongs has educational establishments in other parts of India, and has at least one convent in England. These Sisters also nurse the sick and display much devotedness in their care.

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of the wounded in the hospitals in Tripoli and Bulgaria.

TOO PRECIOUS TO THROW AWAY

The Catholic fortnightly Review points out the following moral in connection with a story which relates that an old copy of a Catholic paper used as a wrapper led to the conversion and baptism of a whole family: "Never throw away a Catholic paper or magazine after you have finished with it; pass it on to some one else, preferably to non-Catholics. It is like scattering good seed broadcast, and if one grain sprouts, the sower will be richly rewarded."

One thorn of experience is worth a whole wilderness of warning.—Lowell.

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