

"There, Mary, Lady Crawford forced her visitor into a chair, "You must not cry so, Mary! Oh, there is no need for tears. None, Mary! Look at me."

Lady Crawford seated herself beside Mrs. Norman, and the latter stilled her sobs after a few minutes, and mentioned that she had been a visitor at a country house thirty miles away.

"I felt I must come to you, Rose. Oh, why does God send such overwhelming trials!" she said.

"Not overwhelming, Mary—oh, no. It is a trial,"—the low voice shook slightly—"but it is tempered with mercy. By and by I shall thank God for it. Just now—"

Again the voice broke, and the speaker paused for a moment.

"I can speak to you, Mary, as to no one else," Lady Crawford continued. "You remember how happy I was in the early days of my married life. Yet soon that happiness was clouded. Let me tell you all. No, no. It shall not grieve me to speak."

"I was young and romantic when I first met my husband, and I was gratified by the attention paid me by a man who, young as he was, was already of much account among his fellow-citizens. I suppose his appearance and his strong will influenced me as well as his impetuous wooing. I had no very near relatives to warn me against marrying one not of our faith. My confessor, a gentle old man, did indeed impress on me the risks I ran in wedding a Protestant; but Father Burke, I said to my conscience, was old-fashioned and rather narrow-minded. I had no doubt, no doubt whatever, but that one day Walter would become a Catholic. So do people deceive themselves."

"Was he, Sir Walter, bigoted?" Mrs. Norman asked, as Lady Crawford stopped speaking.

The shadow of a smile touched Rose Crawford's pale face ere she answered.

"Bigoted! No; my husband had no religious beliefs. He gave the required pledges at our marriage and kept them to the letter only. At first, as I have said, we were happy, beyond anything I had dreamt of, and during our honeymoon Walter was ready to accompany me to Mass and Benediction. He was fond of music and very much in love. Then Henry was born."

"And baptized by a priest, surely?"

"Yes. Oh, Walter kept to the letter of the contract. He never hindered my boy or me from going to Mass or the Sacraments. But—the speaker's voice grew more intense—"he did worse. He laughed and mocked good-humoredly at religion in the child's hearing. And Henry idolized his father. He saw him honored and respected by all, fair and just in his business dealings, and kind and charitable to the poor and sad. Then Walter was a clever and learned man, and long before Henry was out of his teens the two were good comrades. I—I—you know I was never bright at school, Mary, and I think I grew duller as years went on. At any rate, both my husband and son used to smile at my inability to understand their scientific or philosophical talk. Henry ceased going to confession; then he gave up Mass. By the time he was twenty-one he was an avowed atheist. Three years later my husband died. I don't think he ever understood what I suffered. Perhaps his nature was somewhat hard. When he died, Henry inherited his possession, excepting the sum of money which yielded me a modest income."

"You lived with your son?"

"For two years. He became engaged to Sylvia Greenwood, the only daughter of an eminent surgeon. She was a beautiful girl, highly educated, and only contemptuous of religion. Poor girl! she had been brought up in a bad atmosphere. The date of the marriage was fixed, and I left my house and settled here. It seemed wisest to me that the young couple should start life by themselves, and I settled here. Just before the day appointed for the marriage, Sylvia's father died, and the marriage was postponed. There was a second postponement owing to Sylvia's illness. A third date was fixed, and Henry came to spend a day and night with me prior to his wedding day. After dinner he went out for a walk and fell."

Mrs. Norman shuddered.

"Thank God he was not killed outright! Oh, thank God! He lived for twenty-four hours, and he asked for a priest, and was reconciled to God. They—people—wonder why I do not weep. Oh, it isn't that I do not feel Henry's loss! I do! But the gain is so much more! He died happily, with the crucifix in his hand, and his voice joining in the prayers for the dying. Once he tried to say something about his former life. I could not catch the words. On his dead face there is a smile of perfect peace. You must come and see."

The two women passed to the death chamber. As they knelt by the bed on which Henry Crawford lay, a girl, tall and slender, and beautiful even in her grief, hastily left the room. Later Lady Crawford spoke of her.

"Sylvia came in time for the end. Poor child! She is distracted with grief, and she is bitter and rebellious. But the mood will pass. Perhaps—some day—she will pray for him."

It was quite five years later that Mrs. Norman observed among the

names of half a dozen ladies, who had received the black veil in a Carmelite Convent, that of Sylvia Greenwood—Magdalen Rock in the Irish Rosary.

MY ROSARY

By Carmelus Avila

The month of the Holy Rosary is upon us, accentuating a devotion dear to every devout Catholic. As the hand of the Great Artist paints the foliage with golden tints, with here and there touches of crimson and russet brown, making the month the most beautiful of the year, we see the appropriateness of naming October the month of the Queen of the Holy Rosary. It would seem as if all nature were expressing the fulfillment of the prophecy made to the humble Lily of Israel: "He that is mighty hath magnified me."

In a conversation I once had with a distinguished clergyman of the Presbyterian Church, he said:

"One of the secrets of the tremendous power the Catholic Church exerts in the world, is in the exalted place she has given the Virgin Mother. This one thing, I believe, has done more to exalt true womanhood through the centuries than any other living institution." The utterance was made in a tone of deep seriousness. The daughter of that clergyman is now a Catholic and a religious.

It is a fact well-known that many non-Catholics envy the Catholic because of the comfort and strength he receives in his devotion to Our Blessed Lady. I remember with what feeling and impressiveness Archbishop Spalding, one day in the long ago, called my attention to this celebrated passage in the writings of John Ruskin:

"After careful examination, neither as adversary nor as friend of the influences of Catholicism, I am persuaded that reverence for the Madonna has been one of its noblest and most vital graces, and has never been otherwise than productive of holiness of life and purity of character. There has, probably, not been an innocent home throughout Europe during the period of Christianity in which the imagined presence of the Madonna has not given sanctity in the duties and comfort to the trials of men and women. Every brightest and loftiest achievement of the art and strength of manhood and womanhood can be attributed to it."

Such an utterance, coming from a non-Catholic, is good matter for meditation during the month of the Holy Rosary. There are in it reflections that will revive our sense of what devotion to Our Blessed Lady has done for humanity. Through all the centuries she has been its unfading light.

Catholics in Buffalo should rejoice that they have in their city a community of cloistered nuns who, day and night, send to Heaven the pleading prayer of the Rosary. Though the demands of our duties in the world do not permit us to follow the perpetual offering of the Rosary to our Heavenly Queen, yet we can unite in sympathy with the voices of piety and fervor that sweetly sound in the recital of the Rosary in the Dominican cloister of Buffalo. Who can measure the untold blessing these good nuns hidden away from the world, are bringing down upon the city by their ceaseless pleadings for the intercession of Heaven's Queen? If we could know what the perpetual offering of the Rosary, by these daughters at St. Dominic, has done for the Church in Buffalo, we would have some understanding of how, sensibly, the Queen of the Holy Rosary has intervened for the maintenance of faith and the increase of piety in every parish. I have sometimes thought that the dying out of the attacks of bigotry upon our devotion to the Blessed Virgin, is due to the prayers of the Dominican Sisters of the Perpetual Rosary. They have crushed the serpent of heresy and have caused praises in Mary's honor to pour forth from the lips of those outside the fold. If one were to gather all the poetry and prose that have been written by non-Catholics, in recent times, they would make a good sized volume. And not the least in the collection would be Edgar Allen Poe's beautiful sonnet to Our Lady. This softening of prejudice we like to think is due to the prayers of these devoted clients of Mary in the cloister who make the perpetual offering of the Rosary the distinguishing feature of their religious life.

Some days ago, while browsing among the books in the fascinating library of Niagara University, I came upon a little book, tucked away in the corner of one of the shelves which, on opening, I found to be a compilation of many poems on the Blessed Virgin, made with discrimination and good judgment. In the introduction I read that the compiler was a Protestant lady who had gathered from many gardens the flowers that she arranged, with good taste, into a beautiful wreath and placed them at the shrine of Our Lady of the Rosary. I spent over an hour poring over the pages of the precious little volume. It filled my soul with peculiar pleasure to read the praises of our Blessed Mother, bespoken by one who, though not of our faith, yet cherished a high appreciation of the devotion.

When we consider the ingrained prejudice which Protestantism planted and developed in the human breast toward the Blessed Virgin, how can we doubt that the over-

coming of this prejudice is a direct answer to prayer?

I can never forget how deeply moved I have been in my visit to Lourdes, to see non-Catholics kneeling in the Rosary chapel with a Rosary in their hands, practicing the beautiful devotion, as they were taught how to do by some Catholic friend. Many of them were sorely afflicted in body, and many more of them were afflicted in soul. I want to believe that the sincerity of their motives made their offering of the Rosary acceptable to her whom, in the litany, we salute as Health of the Sick and Comforter of the Afflicted. The scene lingers with me like some lovely painting of the Madonna—most touching and wonderful. Dear, blessed old shrine of Lourdes, as I write I seem to hear the continued echo of the Aves chanting to me from your Rosary Chapel.

The popular song, "My Rosary," will never die out nor lose its fascination. That song has caused the Rosary to become dear to many non-Catholics. While in Rome, in non-Catholics, to buy costly rosaries—and not as gifts for Catholic friends, but for their own keeping—and I have seen them hold those rosaries reverently in their hands for Christ's Vicar to bless them. It is no uncommon thing in these days to see the words of the song, "My Rosary," hang on the walls of the living rooms in Protestant homes.

Madame Modjeska, that devoted daughter of the Church, and one of the greatest Shakespearean actresses that ever appeared on the American stage, was once asked how she succeeded in converting the whole Barrymore family to the Catholic faith. She put her hand in her pocket and brought forth her Rosary beads as an answer. I don't think I exaggerate when I say that our Blessed Lady never had a more devout client among the laity than the mother of Eitel Barrymore. She died a devout and fervent Catholic. The instrument which God used to bring about this conversion was a great Catholic actress who made a daily practice of saying the Rosary. I remember her cold form, as I saw it in death, with the Rosary twined about the hands that in life had often "told them over, one by one," and "kissed the cross" in fervent devotion—the great and superb Madame Modjeska.

During a long sojourn with those devoted sons of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, the Carmelite Fathers, for whom I cherish the profoundest respect, I devoted many hours to the reading of the sermons of Cardinal Newman. What impressed me most in these sermons was his reference, time and again to the Virgin Mother—pouring out to her from the depths of his soul the homage of a devoted heart. The beautiful soul of the great Cardinal shines out with surpassing radiance upon the references in his sermons to the glories of the Virgin Mother.

The story is related of him that, when traveling in Sicily, shortly before he wrote the immortal hymn, "Lead Kindly Light," he took a refuge, one day, from a blinding storm in the recesses of a large church and found himself before a shrine of the Virgin. A solitary taper glimmered before the statue and seemed to make more awful the gloom around. A tropical storm with vivid flashes of lightning and intermittent thunder raged outside. But a wilder storm raged in his soul. He was tortured by doubts and fears, those fearful wrappings of a human spirit turning upon a bed of pain, terribly in earnest about its salvation and beseeching heaven to rend the veil. He who was to shake or rather restore a nation's faith, sat silently before the Madonna and the calm, beautiful face, carved in the richest white marble, lit by the taper's glow, seemed to be gazing as from another world. He looked up at that winsome countenance, as countless mortals have done before, but not as yet with the eye of Catholic faith. It was the taper at her feet that suggested the title of his hymn—"Lead Kindly Light," that came through her favor to enlighten those who sit in the valley of the shadow of death. This is but one of the ties that linked the soul of Cardinal Newman to the Lily of Israel.

In one of his sermons he describes the death of the Blessed Virgin in language which, for beauty, cannot be surpassed:

"And, therefore, as she lived in obscurity, so she died in private. It became Him, who died for the world, to die in the world's sight; it became the Great Sacrifice to be lifted up on high, as a Light that could not be hid. But she, the Lily of Eden, who had always dwelt out of the sight of man, fittingly did she die in the garden's shade and amid the sweet flowers in which she had lived. Her departure made no noise in the world. The Church went about her common duties, preaching, converting suffering; there were persecutions, there were fleeing from place to place, there were martyrs, there were triumphs; at length the news spread that the Mother of God was no longer upon the earth. Pilgrims went to and fro; they sought for the relics, but found them not; did she die at Ephesus? or did she die at Jerusalem? Reports varied, but her tomb could not be pointed out, or if found, it was open, and instead of her pure and fragrant body, there was a growth of lilies from the earth. So enquirers went home and waited for further light."

This quotation from one of the Cardinal's sermons is eloquent in its convincing evidence of the influence which the personal holiness and stainless purity of the Blessed Virgin exercised over him.

In the liturgy of Mother Church I have never found a prayer to our Blessed Lady more tender or more appealing than this prayer of Cardinal Newman:

"O Mary! in thee is fulfilled the purpose of the Most High. Thy face and form, dear Mother, are like the morning star, which is thy emblem, bright and musical, breathing purity, telling of heaven, infusing peace. O Harbinger of Day! O hope of the pilgrim, lead us still as thou has led us in the dark night across the black desert, guide us on to the Lord Jesus—guide us to our Heavenly Home."

Like sweet chimes at eventide these praises of Mary break in upon the days of the month of our Queen of the Holy Rosary and, with a revived faith and a deepened fervor, we count them over one by one. "I making" each pearl a prayer until at last, feeling Mary's protection over life's stormy waters, we bravely "kiss the Cross," and murmur the blessed words: "My Rosary! My Rosary!"

THE CALL OF THE GRAVE

November 2 has for centuries stood close to the affections of every really Catholic heart. No member of the faith whose years are above those of childhood, but uses the hours of this blessed day for prayer in behalf of the dead. The show of love to departed relatives and friends which the day elicits does credit to the dignity of the human heart. In the midst of a world all too cold with selfishness and all too active in the pursuit of perishing wealth and pleasure, it is refreshing to witness the scene of prayer that November 2 brings to pass for millions of Catholics. Admiration must be showered upon these Christians who cast their thoughts and supplications upon those sleeping in the sleep of death.

For the living the day preaches a powerful sermon. Engrossed, as we are, in the performance of our many duties, even the best of us are apt to forget that all paths of life lead but to the grave. It is seldom that the crepe hangs before the average home, seldom that the heart takes away the remains of a departed one. But in a most dramatic and impressive way, in a way that must have been taught humanity by God Himself, the Catholic Church on All Souls' Day brings before the thoughtful the toll of the family dead. Is there any wonder that the sight moves us to prayer and to reflection on our own future? Better, perhaps, than on Ash Wednesday, better because of the human appeal, All Souls' Day sends home the fact that we are but dust and into dust shall we return.

That God allows us to live to befriend the dead by their prayers, sacrifices and mortifications, is, as Scripture states, a wholesome thought. That the Catholic Church is almost alone in proclaiming this doctrine of Heaven, is an honor that we should properly value. The spectacle is impressive of thousands of Bishops and priests with the Holy Father at their head, of millions of devout worshippers gathering on the day of universal sorrow and prayer for the dead at the foot of the modern cross, which is the Catholic altar, and there petitioning the God of mercy to loosen the shackles of Purgatory and release souls to the region of light, refreshment and peace. But it remains to every individual should, as an individual, make his own this devotion to the souls in Purgatory. It is a practise that should receive emphasis on All Souls' Day, but one that should honor every day of the year. Our friends have gone down into the grave; one day we shall join them. Meanwhile, we are in the enviable position of being able to assist them. In this assistance we act as members of Christ's Church and also as individual friends. Here above all else is our chance to do our individual "bit."—The Tablet.

All by love, nothing by constraint.—St. Francis de Sales.

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