

The explanations which followed were not long.

"I shall not try," said the stranger, smiling, "to unravel for you the tangled skein of my experiences since we met. The clue must be looked for in your picture of the Sacred Heart, and the light burning before it which saved my life. Do you remember how we talked religion during my visit; how you gave me a catechism; above all, how you made me acquainted with that wonderful devotion to the Divine Heart? Once set thinking, reading, studying, the path was clear to the Church and to the priesthood. My friend, Father——, and I, being in this neighborhood, I made it a point to come and thank you for your hospitality of long ago."

"Perhaps you can do more than that for us," said Mary, quietly. "My father is dying, and has refused to let me go for a priest, even if I could have left him and made my way to town. He will see you. My prayer to the Sacred Heart is answered."

An April evening was closing in dreamily. Sunset was fading from the landscape, a faint breeze was stirring the elm-trees, wherein were heard the songs of birds, an echo, perhaps, of the canticle of joy which the angels were singing for one that had done penance. Thomas Leonard had passed beyond earthly speech or sound. But at his bedside was the priest, the stranger of ten years before, and in his hand was a Crucifix. His last words had been an appeal for mercy to the Divine Heart. His dying eyes had rested upon the picture. The red light from the lamp fell as a benediction over the pallid and stiffening form from which the spirit was passing with the last April sun. It fell, too, upon the bowed figure of Mary Leonard, who, through all her grief and desolation, could perceive that the promise had been realized. Great blessings had come from the honor paid to that picture of the Sacred Heart.