

The True Witness,

AND
CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

VOL. XXI.

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, JAN. 27, 1871.

NO. 24

THE TWO COTTAGES; SHOWING HOW MANY MORE FAMILIES MAY BE HAPPY AND COMFORTABLE THAN ARE SO.

CHAPTER IX.—(Continued.)

After this solemn rite was over, the priest knelt some time in prayer beside the lowly bed, and then spoke comfortingly to the poor soul, promising to say mass for her on the morrow, and to come again at night to see her.

Mary and the father remained there praying with, and for, the sufferer, the long hours till night. She suffered greatly, panting and struggling for breath, but she was patient and composed, her lips moving in constant prayer. At length it became evident that the end was at hand, and Mary read the prayers for the departing soul. "Jesus, my Saviour," were her last words: she looked at her father, raised her eyes to Heaven, and drew one gasping breath. Mary saw the poor penitent had departed. She continued in prayer, and then closed her eyes, those eyes that had once been so fond of vain sights.

A poor woman in the house helped Mary to arrange the corpse and promised to guard it till they sent a coffin. She then took the arm of the exhausted father and brought him out of the room. The better plan she considered would be to take him straight to her own cottage, and leave him with Brady. She herself felt much fatigued on her return home, but she took a little refreshment before undergoing another trying scene at Sheer's cottage.

CHAPTER X.

Charging her husband not to lose sight of Sheer, but to make use of this trouble to bring him, if possible, to a sense of his duty to God, Mary turned her steps to the cottage where lay the weak mother, whose foolish pride and indolence had been the cause of such sin and sorrow.

On entering the second girl who was a sharp, pert thing, came quickly forward to ask her, "What news of Bessy?"

"Come up to your mother's room, and try and be a comfort to her, when you learn what news I have of your sister," said Mary.

They went up stairs, and as soon as Mary got near her, the mother cried out, "Is she alive? Tell me quickly; tell me, tell me."

"Your daughter desired me to thank you for your forgiveness, and to say that she forgave all that injured her; she died a true penitent in her father's and my arms."

"Dead!" screamed the unfortunate mother and fell back in a swoon on the bed. While bathing her temples and using other means to restore her, Mary related to the second daughter the particulars of her sister's fall and misery, and final repentance and death.

The sister was much shocked, wept bitterly, and begged to be allowed to go and see her sister's body before it was closed up in its last resting-place.

"Your father and Brady will see about the coffin to-morrow," replied Mary; "your going there will of course depend upon your mother's state."

Mrs. Sheer went from one swoon into another, and Mary in much alarm, sent for a doctor, who, on feeling the patient's pulse, shook his head.

"She will not last the night," he said.

Poor Mary was quite overcome. She immediately sent a message to her husband to prepare Sheer for this fresh shock, and bring him home, since his wife might very likely ask for him. After very powerful stimulants, the poor woman revived, and at once asked for her husband, who, fortunately was at hand.

She spoke in a low tone, "I see it all now, but too late, too late; I have caused the ruin and death of my child, and perhaps more," and she sank back on the pillow, dead everyone in the room was petrified—dead, without confession of her sins, after neglecting her soul so many years; terrible! most terrible!

The wretched daughter scorned turned to a statue; she stood staring at her mother, ghastly pale, horror struck. Brady supported Sheer out of the room, and the strong man fainted away as they got into another apartment.—When his senses returned, nothing could exceed his anguish. He declared he had killed his wife, and nothing could calm him; for hours, Brady tried all argument and persuasion in vain. At length, tired nature gave way, and the balm of sleep came to relieve the exhausted spirit.

In a few days the earth had received both mother and child. Let us not dwell longer on this painful scene; let us only say, "God be merciful to all the departed."

Chastisements! how they draw us to God, to a sense of our sinfulness; what a blessing they are!

Sheer became a sober, religious man, and no longer neglected the call of God, nor the warning voice of His ministers. Alas! in health and prosperity they are contemned, but when God strikes us with the rod of correction, then their mission of consolation is earnestly sought and requested. Father Smith's exhortations were listened to, and ere long he who had

hitherto been a sorrow to him became a comfort. Can the priest and servant of God, who loves his God above all things and his neighbor as himself, see any of his flock despise the commandments of God and give their souls to the devil, and not sorrow? Ah, amidst all the labors, anxieties, and cares that fill up the lives of most priests, their greatest sorrow is sin, and to see, with all they can do, that the devil carries off some of their flock, and that they themselves would not let him save them.

The good help of the Bradys was now wanting, and as Sheer begged Mary to advise and assist his daughter Margaret the aspect of our second cottage, in no long time, became changed. The girl had received such a shock from the death of her mother and sister, that she became serious and gentle. Her father kept her at home, to do for him and her brother for the oldest boy had gone away in disgrace and the father refused to allow him to return, and be a bad example to the younger one. Margaret's finery was all cast aside; neat, plain attire, and scrupulous cleanliness, took place, and by the end of a few months Mary had another reward for her good example and good works in the entire change this lately-wretched abode exhibited. Sheer's earnings, now being prudently spent more than sufficed for his expenses, and he was able, after a little time to begin and save for his old age.

CHAPTER XI.

While the events related in the last chapter were passing, Mary had met with openings for placing out her second and third girl, Jane and Kate, now of the ages of fifteen and twelve.—The latter, a stout, healthy, tall girl of her age, was engaged by a Protestant tradesman's wife to look after the children, and be generally useful. Mary felt anxious at putting her child with Protestants; but as she was well instructed in her religion, and Mary could have frequent opportunities of knowing how she got on, and keeping up her parental influence, the good mother thought it best to test at once the steadiness of her child. She gave her much instruction and wise counsel suited to the circumstances in which Kate would now be placed, and the temptations that would be likely to assail the peculiar dispositions of the girl.

"I have always instructed you, my dear children, to find out, each of you, your predominant failing. Now, Kate, tell me what do you think is the fault you most easily fall into?" said the mother.

"I think, mother, I shall be inclined to get cross with the children, and easily give way to hasty temper."

"That is the passion of anger, my child; and of course, you will try the more, and struggle the more, when you find such temptations come. You are of a lively temperament, and for that reason you will make a clever servant, and I am glad you will be engaged in household work; for Mrs. Kent is a very good housewife, and has her house kept like a new pin; you can see your face in her tables, and might eat off her floors; and you will be trained with her into a good method of doing the work. But you must learn patiently. Remember what a trial it is to a mistress, not only to have an ignorant girl to teach, but to have the cross made greater by the ill-temper of a servant; show yourself, then, a Christian girl, by zeal in fulfilling the wishes of your superiors with cheerful alacrity; you have got permission to attend to your religious duties, and it will give your Protestant mistress a sorry opinion of your religion if it does not enable you to be exact in the duties of your state of life. Get up at a regular hour every morning, and never leave your bed-side without kneeling down to thank God for His protection during the night, and to beg His help for the day to come; and if you offer up all your thoughts, words, and actions to Him, begging His grace to do all in a manner pleasing in His sight, He will enable you to overcome all temptations and dangers."

But, mother, if my mistress won't let me have time to say my Rosary, what shall I do?"

"You won't require especial time to say it, my child. You can say it and leads of other prayers while you are doing your work, or nursing the baby, or doing your sewing. And now that I think of it, one thing you will I hope be particular in, and that is, when you take the children out, never to pick up acquaintances among the other girls who are nursing. When I am out I often see a lot of them sitting or playing together, and the poor little infants tumbling about, and not minded by those giddy nursemaids. There are few acquaintances you can make that will benefit you, or, indeed, not do you harm; so keep to yourself, and be on your guard against the artful persuasions of any of the people around you; let no one ever get you to touch article belonging to your employers; and if at any time the keys are left in the cupboard, or you are sent there for anything, let no temptation induce you to touch a grain of sugar, or any other nice thing you may see. Some children can never pass a jam-pot without dipping their finger into it, and tasting it. Touch it not any more than poison; for God is there present, although your mistress may not be, and He will punish the sin, though no one else know it.

Deny yourself, and offer it up to God, and He will give you strength to resist still greater temptations, and finally reward you amply. But if you begin by falling in a small sin of taking a lump of sugar, or telling a trifling untruth, you will go on to greater offences, and, perhaps, from these small beginnings, finally lose your soul; for few fall all at once into great sins. The devil gets over us first by small offences, till we get accustomed to evil. So, my child, if ever you commit a fault of any kind, go at once to your mistress, and humbly acknowledge it, begging forgiveness and promising never to offend again. Promise to remember all this, Kate."

"I do, mother."

"And let no example of others ever change your respectful manner to superiors always standing up, and answering respectfully to them, and curtsying when you meet ladies that you know. I can't bear to see the rude, pert manners of poor people's children now-a-days. Having no early teaching to make them think of any one but themselves, they grow up brutish, selfish men and women. I went into a person's house not long ago, when all the chairs in the room were occupied by the children, and not one of them stood up to offer me a seat. Ah, I thought, 'if my husband was your father, he'd make you jump.' See, my dear Kate, how displeasing rude manners are. Go now, my child, and don't neglect to pray for your father and mother very often."

"Oh, mother, I always do; and I will do as you tell me, and be as good a girl as I possibly can."

"And you, Jane," said Mary, turning to Jane, the elder one, when the little Kate had left the room. "What think you will be your weak point? what will most try you in your new way of life?"

"Ah, mother, you know it better than I do myself. I am naturally indolent, and sulky in my temper, and I am frightened by others, and often wanting in courage to do what is right."

"That makes me more anxious about you, Jane, than even Kate, although she is younger. Your timid nature at home has never been frightened into falsehood from fear, but now you are older, and you must be courageous in what is right, no matter what it cost. ONE GREAT FEAR ALONE SHOULD POSSESS YOU, THE FEAR OF GOD. Our Lord says, 'Fear not him that kills the body, but fear him, that, after he has killed the body, can cast both body and soul into hell.' Let that fear, my child, take such hold of you as it ought, and all little worldly fears will depart. Remember again that no one is respected that is not firm and determined in what is right. Always set your duty before your mind, and remembering the awful eye of God, let no one turn you from it. Ask God's help zealously to enable you to fulfil your duties; keep up to the rules laid down in the family you serve, and there will be no fear. You have a kind heart; think, then, how trying an indolent, lazy servant must be to a lady of small means, who can only keep one or two. I am glad you will have plenty to do, and the more you feel your inclinations to be slow and inactive, the more lively and quick you must force yourself to be. The lady knows you are inexperienced, for I told her that all that you knew I had taught you. I think it a most shameful deceit for a girl to go to a situation and undertake what she is not fitted for, as many do, asking as high wages as well-taught servants, when they are lamentably useless, and only introduce confusion and annoyance into families. You will, no doubt, have to meet with difficulties and annoyances from your fellow-servants. Remember you are never to see your employers robbed without putting a stop to it, nor any injury done them in any way. Keep from petty gossip, and never speak of the affairs or secrets of the family, for that is a kind of treachery; and the mischief and harm thus caused continually by servants' tattling has to be unsecured for. Continually servants grumble and are dissatisfied at what is provided for them, and at everything they are to do, never reflecting that their time is their master's and it matters not whether it be spent in one occupation or another. Then again, if you by sloth or carelessness injure or spoil anything of your master's you are bound to make satisfaction. Justice obliges you to be as careful of what is under your charge as if it were your own; you are bound to be as diligent and perform as faithfully the service you undertake when you are without a witness, as when your mistress's eye is upon you; and when you go to confession, carefully examine yourself as to how you have fulfilled your duties and be open in accusing yourself of every fault. Servant-girls sometimes have a low habit of curiosity, listening always to what is said in the parlour, never getting hold of a letter or piece of paper that is left about without reading its contents, and such like. I hope, my child, that when you see this in any one, you may show your disapproval of such ways; for I know you yourself will never fall into them."

"I hope not, mother; you have taught me different ways to those."

"Yes, Jane, I have done my best to make my children Christians. The only anxiety I

shall have will be about your natural indolence and sometimes sulky temper."

"Oh, mother dear, I will try all I can to overcome those faults."

"Thank you, Jane, that comforts me. I can never forget how uncomfortable I was once with a fellow-servant who had a sulky temper.—When her mistress spoke to her she wouldn't answer, and when chided for a fault, always would reply saucily. Our mistress used to say she felt it such a trial to have such different tempers to deal with in her servants, and, often when overwhelmed with many cares and trials, to find so little heart in her servants, whom she cared for, and gave every comfort to, was grievous."

"I don't think I will try my mistress so, if I can possibly help it," said Jane.

"If you will do as you would be done by, you will not," answered her mother. "Follow the example of your sister Mary Ann, who, by degrees, has become such an unselfish good girl."

"Oh, but," said Mary Ann, who had come in on some errand just at this moment, "I not only had a good example in you, but my fellow-servant, where I am, is such a help to me in her good example and Christian conduct.—She is never idle one moment, she is never tired serving God and man, and seems to think she can't do enough for both. You know in what order she keeps the furniture; she rubs and brushes and cleans everything as if it was her own taking as much pride in the house looking nice and neat as mistress does; and besides that, it would astonish you to hear the amount of good she does to the poor. Every day she has some little mess ready to take or send to one or another. A few roast-fowl bones collected, she boils into a cup of delicious broth for one: a nice basin of gruel she makes for another. She turns little things to account that no one else would think of. Sometimes she makes clothes for the poor infants, using up old scraps of her own. And when I say, 'I never saw such a bee as you are, Jimina,' she replies, 'Don't you see how fast time is come with me, I want you up stairs for a minute.' The lad at once obeyed, although with a startled look. When they got into another room, he looked him in, till he sent some one into the shop, and then returning to the culprit, told him he knew all, and made him hand out the marked money. The boy did not attempt to deny his robbery, and in the belief that Mr. Grend knew of all that he had taken, he told that he had sold some of the goods, and would give him the money he got for them; and the rest he had hidden in the stores to take away, where it would be found."

"My father knows nothing of it; it will kill him to hear this of me," the lad cried out.

"Hush, I do not wish to expose you; I will spare you for your father's sake, if you return me at once all you have of my money and goods."

"Oh, I will, I will; Oh, why was I ever tempted by those villains!"

"Hear me, Sheer. I consent to let you go, on condition that you enlist at once, and so get away from your evil companions; and let it be a cause of thanksgiving to God that you are spared to repentance, and to redeem your character. I will take means to obtain your father's leave for your enlisting, and you need not give him any cause to suspect the sin you have committed."

The boy fell on his knees in a passion of tears and gratitude, and promised that to his death he would never forget his master's goodness, and would never again fall into such crimes.

Mr. Grend let him out privately, and when Brady came up he told him what had occurred, and thought it best that he (Brady) should not appear to be acquainted with anything that had taken place. "All you need do," said he, "is to reconcile his father to his enlisting."

That same evening Brady called in to see the elder Sheer, in order to reconcile him to his boy's leaving.

The afflicted man said he took it as another punishment for not making their mother more strict with them, but he hoped the army discipline would help to steady him. The poor man had, happily, no suspicion of the real nature of the case, attributing his son's depression of spirits to leaving him, as he was to be marched off immediately.

After a week had elapsed, Mr. Grend sent for Brady, and told him that, as he knew he owed the recovery of so much of his money and goods to Charlie, and as the boy was so steady, active, and clever at his pen, it was his intention to promote him into the shop at a salary of twenty pounds a year, and his dinner, to be increased as he grew older and more useful.—Brady was quite overcome at the good fortune of his son, and thanked Mr. Grend most heartily, as did the boy himself, both declaring that they had only done their duty in the sight of God, in making known to Mr. Grend his losses.

"And oh, father," said Charlie, as they walked towards home, "I shall now be able to repay you and mother for all your care and good bringing up of me."

"Thanks to God, my lad," replied his father, "that you have been so far preserved from the

snares and temptations of the world, and that our care and anxiety that you should all be good Christians has not been in vain. I feel sure you never will be a selfish and unfeeling child."

"I don't understand, father, how people that are selfish can be called Christians."

"Ah, my boy, you have many sad things to hear of and wonder at yet in this bad world."

Mary blessed God for her son's prudence and success, and both parents humbled themselves the more before God for the many blessings that were heaped upon them.

CHAPTER XV.

Mary had at length persuaded their good friend Jones to think of Esther Bell as a wife in place of Mary Ann. When it was first proposed to him by Mary, he declared that unless she could answer for Esther being as good and steady a girl as Mary Ann, and would teach her good management herself, he would not seek after her. Mary was able to satisfy him on these heads, and when she saw Esther she named it to her and asked her what she thought, and if she could get to be as economical and managing as a wife in her station should be, Esther replied that she liked what she had seen and known of Jones, and would do her best to make him happy. "If, Mrs. Brady," she added, "you will only be so good as to show me, and give me some instruction, I think I should get on pretty well."

"I will do that, and welcome; and now I'll tell Jones he must speak to you himself."

So, ere long, it was settled between them and Mary helped Jones to get things prepared.

But an event occurred which delayed the wedding for a time.

Ever since his son's enlisting, Sheer had seemed unusually restless and unsettled, and it ended in a determination to leave his cottage and emigrate to Australia. He and his daughter got free passages in a government vessel, and started, with the best wishes of those kind friends who had helped them so much. "You have been a mother to me," said Margaret, as the tears fell down her face; "I shall never forget you for all I owe you. Don't fear, I shall not now fall away; at least I hope not. I know better now than I once did."

"God bless and protect you," said Mary; "it is ample recompense, for any little pains I took with you, to see you now such a good steady girl."

And with many tears the girl took her departure.

Jones at once took advantage of their cottage being vacant, and engaged it for himself. It was painted and nicely cleaned up, and Mary helped Esther and him to buy the necessary furniture.

Esther had only ten pounds saved up, but he had the same, and she said, while she had not much to do she would earn what she could at her needle, at which she was very handy.

When the time was near, Esther left her place, and came to the Bradys to stay for a few days previous to the marriage. Mr. Tins gave her some useful household articles, and each fellow-servant some little present, and so the wedding day arrived. Mary Ann was bridesmaid, and her two brothers stood with the bridegroom, and a pleasant, happy face Jones had as he stood at the altar of God, where they both that morning had received their Lord in the Holy sacrament.

Esther was dressed in a brown gown and shawl, at Jones's request, and a plain, neat straw bonnet, with white ribbon plainly put on; he said she wanted nothing but neatness to set off her sensible, sweet face, and he would have no flaunting finery on his wife. From the altar they returned to Brady's to breakfast, and after that, Jones conducted his nice little wife to her home, and kissed and wished her much happiness in it. They had a quiet morning, but spent the evening with the Bradys, whose sitting-room was highly taxed to hold all the guests. A fine hot joint and many good things were laid for supper, and many kind words were said by one friend or another, to wish the newly-married all happiness. The party did not separate without promising to Jones to keep his wedding-feast on the Sunday evening following.

On that day Jones and Esther received their most intimate friends and well-wishers in their little dwelling. The first and most esteemed of all, we may be sure, were the Bradys. But the crowning event of the evening was the entrance of Father Smith, their good pastor, who knew the meeting was to take place, and that it would gratify his people to appear at their feast. The reader has to be told that ere Jones entered his home, he requested Father Smith to come and bless his house, and pray that the blessing of God might be on it. Father Smith now chatted kindly and pleasantly with them for half-an-hour and when the supper appeared, drank their health in a tumbler of pure water, which was his usual beverage, "and the best for those that required no medicine," he said.

"But, my friends," added the good pastor, "while we wish the newly-married pair all blessings, and congratulate Jones on the great favor he has received of being called to the true Church of Christ, which will lead him in