

MARY LEE

or The Yankee in Ireland

BY PAUL PEPPERGRASS, ESQ.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE PRIEST AND DR. HENSHAW.—THE INFLUENCE OF CATHOLICITY.—ITS ATTRACTIVE AND REPULSIVE FEATURES.—THE PRIEST'S GARDEN AND THE OLD TOMBSTONE.

Father John, having waited to see Mr. Quirkie completely restored to his usual equanimity, and Captain Petersham in the saddle ready to set off for the court house, took the near cut over the hill, and soon reached his humble home. On his arrival, the servant handed him a letter, and informed him that several persons had called, and among the rest Elise Curley of the Cairn, who expressed great anxiety to see him before the court opened. Mr. Hardwick also had sent his man in haste to say that a riot was apprehended in the event of Barry's committal, and requesting Father Brennan's presence to maintain order and assist the magistrates in the discharge of their duty.

"A very modest request, upon my word," said the priest, opening the letter, and reading it quietly in his easy chair to read it. "Very modest, indeed; but I have a duty of my own to discharge at present."

The letter ran as follows:—

"MY REVEREND FRIEND: The blow I have so long been evading has fallen at last. My creditors have discovered my retreat, and placed a writ for my immediate arrest in the hands of the sheriff. I leave here to-morrow, by daybreak, and cross over to Malin Head; but where, after that, fate only must determine. What is to become of poor Mary, God alone can tell. For the present, at least, you must be her protector, for I know of no other to whom care I could intrust so precious a charge. I should much rather, for my own part, go to jail and weather out the storm as best I might; but the thought of my incarceration would take the dear child's life. I must quit this place to-morrow, too, without seeing her; for I never could summon courage enough to bid her farewell. The furniture here will, of course, be sold for debt. Save the old Bible and harmonium if you can. They are of little value, to be sure, to any body; but still they are links—alas! the only links left us now—to connect us with the past. If you speak a kind word to the captain about old Roger, I'm sure he won't let him want. Be kind to Mary, and comfort the poor child in my absence.

"God bless you.

"Yours faithfully,

E. LEE."

"John!" cried the priest, as he read the letter—"John!"

"Sir."

"Take the horse and gig immediately, and drive as fast as possible to the light-house. Give my compliments to Mr. Lee, say I received his note, and tell him to come up without a moment's delay, and bring Miss Lee with him. You understand?"

"Yes, sir."

"And see here—don't wait to feed the horse, but go at once."

"No, sir."

"Let Mr. Lee have the gig, since he has no conveyance of his own, and you can return on foot at your leisure."

"Certainly, sir."

When the servant closed the door the priest leaned back in his chair and composed himself to read Vespers. And a snug, pleasant little room it was, that parlor of Father John's, to read or pray in, with its latticed windows looking down on the placid face of the beautiful Mulroy, and sleeping calmly in the bosom of the hills. Close by the side of the humble edifice grew a long line of gooseberry and currant bushes, and up from between them, here and there, the honeysuckle stretched its long neck into the open windows. Out before the door stood an old elm tree, majestic and lonely in the centre of the grass plot, spreading its giant branches far and wide over house and garden. Many a name was carved on that sturdy old trunk in its day, and many a time the priest and his good old reverend uncle sat on the stone bench together, and leaned back against it in the summer evenings, to say the rosary and tell the beads. And there, too, round about grew many a flower of native growth, fresh and fair, simple and modest, like the virgin whose altar they were intended to decorate—the mountain daisy, white as snow; the primrose, its faithful companion, at its side; the cowslip, with the dew always on its face; and the lily of the valley, hiding its head in the grass, as if it had no right to occupy a place in the world at all. These and such as these were the only tenants of that modest garden. O, well we remember it—that garden where none but wild flowers grew—those pretty wild flowers, Nature's spontaneous offering. And every morning would the priest pluck a bunch to scatter on the shrine of the virgin, as he ascended her altar to say the holy Mass, knowing well she loved them best; for it was such as these Joseph used to gather for her, long ago, by the wayside, when his work of the day was done.

Down below the garden, and over the copse which lay between, appeared the whitewashed walls of Massmott Chapel, rising from the water's edge, and on either side facing the sea, the white gravestones peeped out from the long grass and tangled fern. But in that solitary spot there was one particular grave, on which the priest's eye often loved to rest, as he sat by the window gazing down on the old churchyard. It was the grave of an old and long-cherished friend—of one who found him in his early days a little and a wanderer, and took him into his house and heart; one who paused not to ask the poor wayfarer from what nation he came or whether he went—for his big heart knew no distinction of birth or race; who lavished on him all the loving fondness of a father, and at last took him by the hand and led him within the sanctuary. On that humble

slab, covering the old man's grave, the priest's eyes often rested, as he sat by the window of his little parlor; and often he sighed and longed for the day to come when he might see that stone replaced by a monument worthy the great and holy heart that slept beneath it. But, alas! he sighed in vain; for he was poor, and his love alone could never raise it.

Dear reader, many a noble heart lies mouldering in a forgotten grave; and many a grave on which gratitude should have erected a monument to virtue, lies deserted and abandoned to the nettles and the dockweed. We have seen such in our own day. Alas, alas! that the world should be so ungrateful.

Once upon a time we stood beside an open grave on a green hill-side in N.E.—It was a grave in which the mortal remains of a great and good man were soon to be deposited, a man whose virtues were the theme of every tongue. And well they might, for never breathed a purer soul, nor throbbled a nobler heart than his. At once unaffectedly simple and unconsciously sublime, his nature was a compound of the finest qualities of the Christian and the gentleman, without a single jarring element to mar its modest grandeur.

The funeral procession at length reached the spot, and with coffin laid beside the grave with the lid thrown open, that the mourners might look on the face of the dead for the last time. Never was seen such a crowd as that morning gathered there. Fathers and mothers leading their little children by the hand, and young men with bearded lips, and old men with hoary heads, were there, and strangers from distant cities were there, and Bishops in purple cassocks, and priests in black stole and surplice. Kneeling on the greensward, the incense rose, and the psalm was sung, and the people of high and low degree mingled together, and prayed for the repose of his soul; and whilst they prayed their tears fell thick and fast. It was a sad but glorious sight to see that multitude weeping and prostrate that morning before the open coffin; and, gazing on the face of the dead, which looked that look of love which ever marked it through life; nay, he seemed at that moment as if making them his last appeal for an affectionate remembrance. And each one answered the appeal by a silent vow—a vow to honor, to gratitude, and to God—made while they gazed on his face through their tears—made with their hands upon his coffin—a vow never to forget him.

Ten years passed away, and again, after many wanderings, we returned to that green hill-side, and looked around for the monument which that crowd of loving hearts had erected to the memory of their benefactor and friend. "What seek you, stranger?" said an old man, seated on the grass by a little mound of clay. "The monument erected to the memory of the illustrious—"

"Here it is," he replied, laying his hand on the sod beside him. "That?"

"Yes, this is the monument; I have just been sowing a few flower seeds at its feet."

"But his friends!" we inquired.

"Friends!" repeated the old man, smiling bitterly. "Yes, that mighty multitude which ten years ago we saw weeping and waiting here before his unburied corpse—what has become of them?"

"Dead." "What, all dead?"

"Ay, they all died on the day of his burial—all save one and myself. That one came often here to say a prayer and drop a tear on the grave, for living and dying he loved him best of all the world. But alas! he is poor, and those whom he trusted to help have proved ungrateful."

"Nay, say not so, old man," we replied; "mayhap he has not solicited their aid. It were sad indeed to think—"

"Sollicit!" he repeated, again interrupting me; "no, he could never do that—the peculiarity of his relations with the dead forbade it. But, friend," he headed, "true gratitude never waits for time, nor place, nor man to call forth its expression."

Pardon us, dear reader, for this digression. Perhaps it is out of place, but for the life of us we couldn't help making it.

Father Brennan had but little more than commenced to read his office, when a parlor door opened, and a servant announced a visitor. Presently our old acquaintance, Dr. Henshaw, entered, and the priest instantly laid his breviary on the table, and rose to receive him.

"Dr. Henshaw, this is very kind. I'm very much pleased to see you—pray be seated."

"Sir, you'll excuse me; I merely called to return this volume of Baily's Theology, and to thank you for your hospitality before I leave."

"Ah! then I see you're still angry with me, Doctor; and, indeed, not without some show of reason, for I may, in a moment of irritation, have said more than was becoming in the presence of strangers. Still we must not indulge resentment, you know."

"More than was becoming. Why, sir, you said what was both offensive and unjust," replied the doctor, gruffly.

"Perhaps so. If I did, I sincerely regret it."

"But, sir, your regret is not enough. In justice to me, you are bound to retract the charges you made against me in presence of the parties before whom you made them."

"That I shall, sir, most willingly. Whatever those parties may think unjustifiable in the language I used that night, I am ready to retract and apologize for. What I said, Dr. Henshaw, merely regarded your inveterate habit of intruding your faith into everything. Why, you had hardly been five minutes conversing with Miss Petersham, when you told her she would certainly be damned if she didn't renounce Protestantism and join the Catholic Church forthwith."

"And why not tell her so at once, sir? where's the use of dilly-dallying about it? Humph! it's charity, sir, to let them see the whole truth at a glance—I say it's charity, sir."

"And as a consequence of that charity," subjoined the priest, "they're both shocked and disgusted."

"Be it so—the sooner shocked, the better. Protestantism is a chronic dis-

ease, sir, and its by no syllabubs and strups you can cure it; no, sir, but by the most searching medicine, administered very frequently and in large doses."

"Such treatment, I fear, would more likely kill than cure," said the priest.

"I maintain the contrary, sir. Error should be taken by the horns, and not by the tail. I have seen how you converse with that girl—Miss Petersham; why, you talk to her, sir, as if you were making an apology for the severity of Catholic discipline, and the conservatism of Catholic doctrine. Hoot, sir, you can never make a Catholic of her by such a course of training as that."

"You think so?"

"Most assuredly, sir."

"And yet she is preparing to join the Church in a few days."

"I can hardly believe it, Mr. Brennan."

"Why not?"

"Why, she hasn't the look of a convert."

"What, because she doesn't appear grave and solemn?"

"No. But her deportment is not like that of a girl desirous of saving her soul. She's cracked, sir, or, as we say in Scotland, she's clean daff."

"By no manner of means, doctor; you mistake her character altogether. Under all that apparent thoughtlessness concealed a fund of natural piety and love of truth, which, if you only knew her as I do, would surprise you. Kate Petersham is not a Scotch girl, you know, to look glum, and shake her head like a 'canny' Presbyterian; nor English either, to wait for the slow conviction of her intellect before she surrenders the heart; but a genuine, true-blooded Irish girl, inheriting the enthusiasm and impulsiveness of her race, whose soul feels the divine attractions of religion drawing her to its bosom, long before her mind recognizes its presence. Like all Irish girls, Kate is playful, witty, light-hearted, and tries ever to hide her piety under an affected recklessness. She will steer the Water-lion in the teeth of a gale, or ride Mall Fether at a steeple chase, over breakneck walls, when the hum takes her; but see her in her closet, when she shuts the door against human eyes, and you'll find her a very different being. Yes, sir, Kate is an Irish girl in every sense of the term—generous, impulsive, wayward, if you will—but with a heart full of true piety, and a disposition as humble and gentle as a child's."

"Humph!" ejaculated the doctor; "and may I ask, sir, after this extraordinary eulogium, how you set about her conversion?"

"Not by dosing her with dogmas, anathemas, and philosophy. I assure you," replied the priest, smiling.

"No, that's not your method, I perceive. You began, I suppose, like all others of the old school, by pushing her down gently from Protestantism into infidelity, and when she could go no farther, led her up again by the old negative process, step by step, through all the isms into the true Church."

"No, sir, that course would only have confused without converting her."

"And what then?"

"I merely pointed out to her the beauties of our holy religion, and sent her down to Mary Lee to see them illustrated."

"Ah! Mary Lee—the light-keeper's daughter?"

"Yes. She converted Miss Petersham without a word of controversy—converted her by the mere example of her every-day life. It's precisely to the force of similar example we owe so many conversions, by the Sisters of Charity, for instance, and the various other religious societies."

"I admit, sir, they are useful in their way—nay, of great advantage to the world, especially as regards the weaker sex; but men of intellect must be treated otherwise, sir. Intellectual men need intellectual treatment; and whilst your Sisters of Charity, and so forth, have done much, and are still doing much, in their own way, there is still need of men who, like myself, endeavor, according to our poor abilities, to defend truth and combat error, by means of that very philosophy, logic, and theology you seem to think so lightly of. Each in his own sphere, sir, is an old adage."

"Certainly, and a good one, too. But you misapprehend me, doctor, if you think I disparage one or the other as means of conversion. Not at all. I merely say you overrate them, and give too little credit, in your account, to the grace of God and the influence of example. In fact, sir, like the majority of converts, you make a mistake in your very beginning. You think—cr—seem to think, at least—that nothing has been done in the Church for the conversion of heretics till you joined her, and that in the ardor and freshness of your zeal you are expected to make up for the neglect. This is a grievous error, Doctor, and if allowed to go unchecked, might lead to lamentable consequences. Take yourself, for instance. Instead of studying, like a child, the primer of the Church, and learning therein the thousand helps to salvation, and the thousand beauties to be found in her ceremonies and pious observances, you leave all such little things to the ignorant, and jump at once into the higher region of dogma, without the slightest preparatory training. The result is that you often introduce subjects in your writings and lectures which are not only ill timed and uncalculated for, but really dangerous in hands so inexperienced as yours. I willingly admit, Dr. Henshaw, you're a very able writer. Indeed, in that department of letters you have chosen as the field of your operations, you have, so far as I know, very few equals. But the greater your abilities, the greater the danger both to yourself and the Church. To yourself, because of the inordinate pride such talents are apt to generate, and to the Church, lest your non-Catholic readers might mistake your productions for fair specimens of the true tone and spirit of Catholicity. In that case the Church would certainly suffer; for I cannot help telling you, Doctor, that so far, at least, you have only presented the Church in a repulsive attitude."

"That is," replied the doctor, smiling serenely. "I have not tried my hand at nambly pamblyism yet."

"No. You certainly have not, sir. But by taking the very opposite extreme you have, in my opinion, done very little good to religion. What pleasure or benefit can you find in the use of such language as you uttered that night at Castle Gregory—and not only there, but wherever you had occasion to speak of Protestantism? Then your profound reasoning and subtle logic, on the other hand, may convince intellects, but, be assured of it, will rarely convert hearts. In such an age as this, you must exhibit the Church under her most alluring and attractive form, or you will make no true converts. Men will read your elaborate articles, admire your vigorous thoughts and your cogent arguments, but their hearts will remain untouched. If ever, indeed, by such a course, you succeed in bringing a Protestant within the orbit of the Church, he will stand there like a converted philosopher, scanning the books of the new school and examining the principles of the new philosophy, but he will hardly fall before the altar, and with heart bowed down before his God, acknowledge himself a humble and penitent child. No, sir; it's not enough to convince the intellect; you must convert the heart, also, or you will make no converts. Father F. has done more for the conversion of souls, in the smallest and least valuable of his works, than you have ever done, or ever will do, with all your great talents. And the reason is plain. He is not ambitious—except, indeed, for the ambition of God's glory, and the happiness of his fellow-beings. His thoughts, as he writes, are never of himself. He aims not at the admiration of men, but at their salvation. It is the writings of such converts as he is we want to see, not elaborate essays on subjects neither practical nor necessary. If you want to make your talents useful to the Church, don't strain them to reach where your readers can't follow you, but write for the people—write for the millions, sir, not for theologians and philosophers. If you do that, you will save your own soul, and convert thousands of others; but, if not, I fear you will lose both."

"Humph!" ejaculated Henshaw, after the priest had concluded his somewhat long speech, and buttoning his coat, as if preparing to leave—"I was not aware that I solicited your advice in the matter; if I had, no doubt I should be prepared to defer to it; but as it is—"

"Doctor," interrupted his friend, "I speak my sentiments on this subject openly and candidly, and at the risk of giving you offence; but I do so both for your own sake and that of religion. The course you're pursuing will undoubtedly prove, in the end, to be an injudicious one—and you will only have the mortification of knowing, in your old days, if you persist in it, that the Church of God has gained nothing by your advocacy."

Here the conversation was interrupted by the entrance of a servant, with Captain Petersham's compliments, and his request to see Father Brennan at the court house.

"Ah, I expected as much," said the latter. "This trial of young Barry has just commenced, I suppose. Will you accompany me, doctor?"

"No, I should rather not, just now," replied Henshaw. "I have some preparation to make before leaving to-morrow."

"What! going so soon?"

"Yes; I must return by to-morrow's packet."

"Why, we shan't have time to make up our quarrel, then. O, you mustn't think of it, doctor."

"To-morrow I shall positively start for Derry."

"Well, well, we must talk of that again. Come with me now, for an hour or so, to the court house, to hear this trial. If you refuse, I shall say you parted from me in anger. Come, we are old friends, doctor, and must not get estranged for trifles—come!"

And the priest, after several unsuccessful attempts, at length prevailed on his discomfited friend to accompany him to the court house.

TO BE CONTINUED.

KERRY.

They called her "Kerry," this small, dark-haired girl with the great mournful eyes, underlined by such deep black circles. She came from County Kerry—that was all her companions knew of her. Like them she toiled from early till late at night in one of those tall mills which are so frequent in our New England States. Like them, she received in return a mere pittance, of which the largest share went to the dear ones in old Ireland. But what was there strange in that? Nothing, surely. One out of every three was doing likewise.

"Kerry" worked her long hours with the rest, in that resignation which is often found so strongly in the Irish character. The only difference between her and her companions was, perhaps, in the reserve with which she hedged herself about. And her companions, with their true hearts, respected it.

During the short respite for lunch each day, no one was more eager than "Kerry" to hear news from the land across the sea, more eager to share in all joys and sorrows. As for herself, she seldom received a letter. In fact, she seemed alone in the world, save that her little earnings found their way back to some one at home. At rare intervals a letter came, having her address in queer, foreign writing, and when the girls next saw her there was a suspicious redness about her eyes that forbade questioning.

Was there any little kindness done? It could be traced to "Kerry." Any opportunity to lighten the lot of some poor soul? "Kerry" seized it. After hours she could be seen trudging along with the rest to the cramped compartment of one of those establishments called Corporation Boarding Houses, and very often when the meagre supper had been finished, she disappeared, not to be seen again till retiring time. Where was she after her hard day's weary work? Perhaps if you ask a

poor invalid in the next block who came of an evening to cheer her lonely life, sometimes to bring a morsel saved from a scanty meal, she would answer you. Perhaps the dear Master, so lonely in the church around the corner, could tell. Even the little sanctuary lamp seemed to know when she entered, and to struggle harder to pierce the shadows with its feeble rays. Surely, could you peep over the shoulders of the great white angel with the golden pen you would be satisfied.

There was one difference between her cot and the rest. At its head was a tiny picture of St. Joseph. And many of her companions observed that she had a special devotion to the saint. When she was saying her short night prayers, her look was turned lovingly toward the little picture. When any of the others came to her with their trials, she would invariably send them to the foster-father of the Christ-Child. Specially, was it whispered that Mary's or Bridget's mother was dying, the poor lonely girl would feel a little hand steal into hers and hear the simple words: "I am sure St. Joseph will give her a happy death. I am praying hard for her."

This reminds me of the one peculiarity which many of the keen Irish minds were surprised to observe in "Kerry"—a great dread of death. Whenever a weird tale of a deathbed was being told, "Kerry" would slip away unseen, and without the least rites of the Church, try to keep myself pure, God knows, but He also knows my frailty and how often I fall. Each of those at home has been taken by a sudden death, and there is a feeling in my mind that I shall soon follow likewise. My only hope is St. Joseph, to whom I constantly pray that I may not go unprepared. I think he will work a miracle if he needs.

"As for myself, I am a poor Irish girl, whose history is probably no sadder than the rest. One by one, my dear ones have been snatched away, until now I have but one little crippled brother. I commend him to God's care. "I have had a lover, too, though his love for me has changed. I am not surprised nor hurt, because I am far away and there are many lovely girls here, but I have the asking. Do not blame him. This letter is for him. Read it if you wish."

"All I ask from you, charitable soul, is to pray for me, I fear I have said too much in this letter, but the shadow of death is upon me and I must confide my sorrows to some one."

"The good Father," she reflected, "is safely tucked in bed with a severe cold. But were this a sick call!"

She trembled and mentally resolved that she should know nothing about it. As if in defiance to the thought, a third knock sounded, and a voice spoke low but audible, to the last syllable.

"For the love of God, open the door."

Fearfully she obeyed, and as the door swung wide a sudden gust of wind extinguished the flickering candle. A man stood there, shrouded in a huge storn coat, his hat pulled over his brow.

"Is the priest in?"

"Too ill to see any one."

"No matter. Tell him as he values his soul's salvation to come with me."

"Wouldn't the morning do, sir?"

But, as she spoke, the housekeeper felt the uselessness of arguing with this persistent stranger, in whose presence she felt a certain awe.

By this time the Father was partially ready, for those distinct words had reached his ear, and in another moment he faced the stranger.

"Bring the Holy Visticum and the sacred oils, and follow me."

With a supernatural strength born of his vocation, the priest completed his preparations and started forth behind his guide.

Wishing to ask further details, time and time again he quickened his pace, but to no avail, for his companion still left him in the rear. At last, yielding to the strange whim, he gave himself up to thoughts of the poor soul, who ever it might be, to whom he was bringing for the last time the Lord of Creation.

After a rapid walk of some two miles through the falling snow, the stranger suddenly halted before a tall structure in the very poorest part of the city. As they went up the steps a flurry of snow brushed them against the building. Whether or not the door opened, it was impossible to decide. At all events, his companion had disappeared, and the priest was left there alone. Again and again he knocked at the door. At length a sleepy landlady opened an upstairs window and roughly demanded what was wanted at such an hour. The priest replied that he had come to minister to the dying.

"No one dyin' here as I knows of."

But after some further conversation, yielding at last to an unexplained impulse of charity, the woman descended to open the door and let the half-frozen priest inside.

"Are you sure there is no one sick in this house? A man brought me here, but I lost sight of him when we reached the door."

"There's not a man in the house, sir, nor has there been. However, seein' as you've come so far, I'll go up and see if any of the girls might be sick."

The Father sank wearily down, asking as best he could from the God he carried with him. In a few moments the woman reappeared. She was trembling with excitement. "Oh, sir, there's a girl up there in the attic who's dying, I believe. I give you my word that I didn't know till this minute that she was even aillin'. Now I'm afraid she's near gone. I'll send for a doctor right off."

The priest followed up, right after the light of heaven, her foot on the serpent's head; this was woman's ideal, how sublime it is! how beautiful! how sweetly practical! The true woman's heart understands the picture at once. What sweetness! What strength! What imperviousness to the powers of evil, through all-controlling love of the Divine! What might to make the wiles of evil powerless! Christianity gives the ideal: let woman appreciate it, shape their lives by it, and the world is safe.—Archbishop Keane.

of God understood how the prayer had been heard, and bowing his head, he adored the all-merciful designs of Providence.

"Kerry" (let us know her now as Kathleen) was prepared for death and received the last sacraments of the Church. Before she breathed her last, however, the dying girl asked for a little packet that had been under her pillow. Opening it, she gave the two letters which it contained to the priest.

"This one is for you, Father, and please send the other to Ireland. The address is on it. I was afraid I should die without any one with me. Thank you, Father, and—thank—St. Joseph—for me. Say—good-bye—to the girls."

Then there was a long pause, during which she seemed half-unconscious, though ever and anon the names of Jesus and Mary could be faintly heard. By the time the doctor arrived there were only the mortal remains of a poor factory girl. He hastily made out a death certificate and departed, secretly not sorry to be spared several troublesome visits.

Perhaps the reader would like to peep at the letters which were Kathleen's only last will and testament. The first ran thus:

"To the One Who May Open This:

I who am now writing shall be cold in death ere you read it. It is a fear that haunts me night and day, that I may die without the last rites of the Church, I try to keep myself pure, God knows, but He also knows my frailty and how often I fall. Each of those at home has been taken by a sudden death, and there is a feeling in my mind that I shall soon follow likewise. My only hope is St. Joseph, to whom I constantly pray that I may not go unprepared. I think he will work a miracle if he needs.

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