

## THE PEARL ROSARY.

(Canadian Messenger of the Sacred Heart).

It was Rosary Sunday, a mild sunny day when all nature seemed to be striving to pay homage to the Queen of Heaven, whose joyous festival was being celebrated by her faithful children throughout the world.

In the darkened chamber of a tiny cottage, sat a young girl, a rosary of rarest pearls, linked with gold, slipping through her fingers, as she ever and anon turned to glance at the sleeper on the bed near her, whose form was dimly discernable in the faint light. At length she stirred, and immediately the girl was at her side.

"Will you take a little broth, mother?" she said. "I have some on the fire for you."

"A little dear, if you please," said the mother faintly.

The broth was given with the tenderest care, and again the invalid slept.

Nellie Carson, the young girl on whose presence we have intruded, went to her vacated chair, and holding her rosary still in her hands, fell into a deep reverie. Before her mental vision rose up a Rosary Sunday of the past—the happy past—when she, a child of ten, had spent that day, which most of all resembles heaven on earth, the day of her first communion. What joy had filled her innocent heart, when for the first time her Lord and her God took up his abode there! And after the happy, holy joy of the morning, what a delightful day she had spent with her kind parents, one of whom now lay silent 'neath the green grass of the churchyard! And when the happy day was over, and the little friends who had been invited to share pleasures and the provided feast, had departed, a new treat was in store for her. Her kind mother gave her a rosary, the same that Nellie now held twined around her fingers, saying as she did so, "My child you have often admired my pearl rosary with its golden chain, and now I give you the companion of it. There is a history connected with it, which I shall tell you some day. In the meantime say it very often for one who was once innocent and pious like yourself." Thus her first Communion day had ended, but when her mother's good night kiss was imprinted upon her brow, two great tears fell down, which somehow Nellie connected with the Rosary, whose costly pearls looked like great tears themselves. Who was it that had once been innocent and pious as she? And to-day again, as so often before, she thought of the unrevealed history and prayed to the Queen of the Rosary for that unknown soul.

That the piety and innocence that had once been hers might be restored.

Her mother's voice woke Nellie from her reverie. She hastened to the bedside and found Mrs. Carson awake and feeling brighter and better than she had felt for a long time. As her eyes fell on the Rosary she said: "Now dear, open the blinds and let the beautiful afternoon sun in, and as I feel so strong I will tell you to-day the history of the Rosary you received on your first Communion day."

The blinds were raised and the glorious October sunshine flooded all the room, giving the invalid's pale face a glow of color, and resting like an aureole around the young girl's golden head.

"When I was a little girl," began Mrs. Carson. "I lived in Rio Janeiro. I had, besides several brothers, a twin sister who was as my very soul. My father was the captain of a large vessel which sailed between Brazil and Portugal, and on the day of our first Communion he presented us both with these beautiful pearl and gold Rosaries, which he brought from the latter country. The two clasps which connected the ends of the chaplet, were engraved with gold with our names, Mary on mine, and on my sister's Stella. Time went on, and every happiness was ours. I need not relate to you all that led to our separation, but the day came when my sister left me; left our dearly loved parents, our happy home, to unite herself with one who despised our Holy Faith, and to become his wife, gave up the family who loved her so

tenderly, and the religion for which each one of us would have willingly given our life. Since that day, I never heard of her. Her neglected rosary I have always treasured, and entrusted it to you on the happy day of your First Communion, hoping that your prayers would win her back to God."

"Indeed dear mother, I have prayed fervently for the unknown soul entrusted, and only to-day added another rosary to the many I had before recited for her. I noticed the name of Stella on the clasp, and often wondered who and where she was. Now I will pray more perseveringly than ever."

## II.

Nellie Carson had been brought up in comfort and even in affluence, but the failure of her father's business, and his sudden death a few weeks after, had thrown her on her own resources, being as she now was, the only support of her widowed mother.

She had secured a place as saleswoman in a large dry goods establishment in Philadelphia, and in that city accordingly she and her mother took up their abode. Great as she found the change from a life of enjoyment to one of hard work, Nellie never complained, but strove to lessen her mother's discomforts by providing for her all the little luxuries she could afford, denying herself many necessities for that purpose.

In the place of her employment she was well liked by the majority of her companions. She was quiet and reserved with them, but she was ever ready to oblige and treat them all with a gentle deference that won their hearts. One only looked on her with disfavor, and this girl, Ellen Thomas by name, lost no opportunity of insulting and annoying her. Sometimes it was very hard to bear, the more so as she was conscious of no ill-conduct on her own part towards the rude girl who so often made her suffer, but she resolved at last to try by especial kindness to make a friend of her enemy.

On the day after the opening of our story, Nellie went as usual to the store, and being anxious to bring about her aunt's conversion as speedily as possible, resolved to lose no chance of performing acts of charity, however trivial, for those around her. Ellen was even more disagreeable than usual, but Nellie suppressed her feeling of impatience and tried to show no resentment. At last closing time came and as they stood in the cloak-room preparing for departure, Nellie overheard Ellen exclaiming to a companion who was near her: "Rita! what ever shall I do? Mrs. Belmont ordered some goods here to-day, and I forgot to send them when the parcel express went out. She is so particular and makes a fuss over every trifle. She lives away out in Porter Avenue, and I am in such a hurry home to-night that I cannot possibly go there. Mamma is very ill, and the woman who is with her will leave at seven whether I am home or not. I will have to leave it until morning and take the consequences."

"You had better not do that," said her companion, "the last time that Mrs. Belmont's goods were delayed, she refused to take them at all and Annie Carter was dismissed because she sold them and should have sent them."

"What shall I do?" said Ellen in despair.

"Pardon me, Miss Thomas," said Nellie "I could not help overhearing your conversation; if you will allow me, I shall be very glad to take the parcel for you. My own mother is an invalid, and I know how she would worry if I were late during one of her bad attacks. Besides Porter Avenue is not much out of my way."

Ellen blushed scarlet. You are very kind," she said. "But it is a very large parcel, and I am afraid you will mind carrying it."

"Not at all!" replied Nellie, "I am stronger than I look, and I should really be very glad to take it for you."

Ellen gave her the package, told her the number of the house, and for the first time the girls parted with a cordial good-night, Nellie feeling that her enemy was won at last.

Although she walked quickly, the parcel was heavy, and the distance longer than she had thought, so that it was dark night when

she reached Mrs. Belmont's residence. Her ring was answered by a servant, and delivering the goods into her hands Nellie turned to go, not noticing as she did so that her pearl rosary, which she had thrust into the bosom of her dress, fell on the stone step and lay there glittering in the light of the electric lamp which shone from the gate post.

That evening when Mrs. Carson knelt as usual to say the Rosary, Nellie noticed that her precious beads were missing, and thought that she must have dropped them in the store or cloak-room, but, although she started unusually early next morning, that she might search for them before the store was opened, her efforts were fruitless. Ellen assisted her, remarking as she did so, "I hope you did not drop them near Mrs. Belmont's. They say that anything Catholic drives her into a frenzy."

Shortly after the commencement of business that morning, the manager summoned the young ladies at the silk and velvet counters to his office.

When they were assembled he enquired: "Did any of you young ladies leave a parcel of goods at Mrs. Belmont's on Porter Avenue last evening?"

"I did," said Nellie, rising from her place and standing before him. "How did that happen? Why was it not sent by the express?"

"It was forgotten until after he had gone," replied the girl, "and we were afraid Mrs. Belmont would be annoyed at the delay, so I left it there on my way home."

"Mrs. Belmont wishes to see at once the young lady who left the parcel at her house last evening," said the manager, glancing at a note which he held in his hand. You will go immediately, Miss Carson, and if any mistake has been made, you have only your own carelessness to blame for it, and must suffer the consequences. We cannot afford to lose a customer like Mrs. Belmont. You may return to your duties young ladies."

Nellie put on her hat and cloak like one in a dream. Just then Ellen Thomas entered the dressing room.

"Where are you going, Miss Carson?" she asked.

Nellie told her what had happened.

"That is too bad," said Ellen, "I shall go at once to the manager, and explain. I was over in the milliner's department matching some ribbon with this velvet, so I did not get the order."

"There is no good in your saying anything about it. It is the one one who sent it, Mrs. Belmont wants. Don't worry about me. Miss Thomas, you are not to blame; and Nellie set out, a little fearful, but hoping for the best.

## III.

The twilight shades of the October evening were settling over the city. The electric lamps burst into flame and irradiated the streets with their weird glare, as if a host of radiant moons had lost their way and hung trembling over the regions of earth land.

Neither evening shadows nor glittering lights attracted my attention in Mrs. Belmont's beautiful home. The heavy curtains were drawn, the servants glided about with noiseless feet, and a deeper shade hung over the mansion than that which the autumn twilight shed from the sky.

Mrs. Belmont's only daughter lay dying, and the frantic mother hung over the pillow, or paced up and down the room in a frenzy of grief. The doctor had promised to be here at six, and it was nearly half-past now. Suddenly there was a sound of the muffled bell, and Mrs. Belmont went to the head of the stairs and listened. The door closed again, and the servant brought up a parcel.

The poor mother could stand it no longer. She went to the door herself, ran down the stone steps, and looked up and down the street. No carriage was in sight. She went wearily up the steps again, and was about to re-enter the house, when her foot struck against something. She stooped, picked it up. The electric lamp from the great hall shone upon a rosary of pearl and gold. She gazed at it in amazement for a moment, read the name on the golden clasp: "My own name!" she exclaimed. Where did this come from? It is a grace from my happy, innocent childhood a ray of light for my sin-darkened

soul." Falling on her knees she raised her tearful eyes to heaven. "Great Queen of Heaven!" she cried. "Save my child, and I shall return to my faith so long abandoned."

She hastened back to the sick-room, placed the precious rosary about the neck of the unconscious girl, and kneeling beside the bed, prayed silently. After a time the invalid's breathing became more regular, the fever flush died away and the sufferer slept. When the doctor made his appearance, he was astonished at the change. He felt his patient's pulse, carefully, so as not to awaken her, and declared that all symptoms of fever had disappeared.

"She will sleep for some hours," he said, "and when she awakes she will have a great craving for food. Give her all the nourishment you can, and my services will be no longer necessary."

When he had retired, Mrs. Belmont threw herself again upon her Mother of Mercy, who had answered her prayer, and renewed her resolution for the future.

She looked at her watch. It was only eight o'clock. Calling a servant, she desired her to remain in the sick-room. She went to her own apartment, and taking a dark cloak from her wardrobe, put it on, enveloped her head and face in a thick, dark veil, and went noiselessly out. She walked rapidly through the dark streets until she reached a large, gloomy-looking building. She rang the bell and a lay-brother of the Order of St. Francis stood before her.

"May I see one of the Fathers?" she asked.

He opened the door of the little reception-room, and one of the Religious soon made his appearance. To him Mrs. Belmont gave a history of her whole life, and begged his help in returning to the faithful practice of her religious duties. When she left the monastery it was with a happier heart than for many years, and with a promise to come back on the morrow, she turned her face homewards.

The sick girl still slept, and the servant sat beside her.

"Annie," said Mrs. Belmont, "who brought that parcel from Carton's last evening?"

"A young lady, madam."

"What did she look like?"

"Madam, she looked so much like Miss Eveleen that I was startled, and the very tone of her voice was the same."

Mrs. Belmont was very much puzzled, and at last resolved to ask for the young lady to be sent for. The result of her request we have already seen.

When Nellie reached Porter Avenue, her courage almost failed, but one look at Mrs. Belmont dispelled her fears, and explanations followed which filled both hearts with joy. The carriage was ordered, and together they went to Mrs. Carson's, stopping on the way at Carton's to inform him that Miss Carson's absence would be permanent, as Mrs. Belmont declared that her fortune henceforth should be shared with her twin-sister.

In a short time the cottage in the dingy street was given up.

Mrs. Belmont resumed with new fervor her neglected religious duties, and Eveleen, too, was instructed in the mysteries of the Catholic faith.

For Ellen Thomas the cousins ever had a warm welcome, for had she not been, in a measure, the means of bringing them together?

The pearl rosary was restored to its original owner and together the twin-sisters recite the fragrant garland to the Queen of Heaven, as they had done in their happy childhood.

S. M. J.

## JIMMY'S DADDY.

While the mother and faithful old Ellen were away Jimmie and his father looked after themselves—Jimmie rather less than his father. As it was holidays, Jimmie got up when he chose, ate what he liked, amused himself in his own way, and went to bed when he was sleepy, sometimes in his own bed. And his father never said a word. Every morning when his father went to town he kissed Jimmie and said, "Be a good boy." This wholly reasonable command was never accompanied by any don'ts, "don't fight, don't tear your clothes, don't tease the cat," or "don't play on the railway."

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And Jimmie's joyful, "Yes, daddy!" was invariably followed by a series of handsprings down the walk to the gate and back again, by way of working off the overflow. When his father came at night he never asked Jimmie if he had been a good boy. He found a cleanish place to kiss, and ignored completely the rent in the cordaroys or the bruise under the eye. Once, when the night was wet and both were feeling a little lonely, Jimmie, sitting close, showed his appreciation and understanding of such delicacy. "I say, daddy," he whispered, "you make it awful easy to be good. I expect you were a pretty bad one, weren't you?"—Scottish-American.