

WILL SHAKESPEARE'S LITTLE LAD.

BY IMMOGEN CLARK.
CHAPTER VIII.

Beshrew me but I love her heartily!
For she is wise, if I can judge of her;
And fair she is, if that mine eyes be true;
And true she is, as she hath proved herself;
And therefore, like herself, wise, fair and true,
Shall she be placed in my constant soul.
Merchant of Venice.

An angel is like you, Kate, and you are like an angel.

It was long past high noon when Hammet, with Silver tagging close at his heels, walked slowly through the market-place. At that hour it was almost deserted, though several belated housewives, who were reputed to be unthrifty, were 'washing of their clothes' at the Town-pump and hanging them on the Cross to dry, the whites their tongues were more nimble than their fingers. The smocks and the hempen towels flapped softly to and fro in the faint, warm breeze, and the air was noisy with the buzzing of the flies gathered close about the meat which some butchers had also hung there earlier in the day.

Goody Baker was brushing the square industriously with her broom of twigs. She was a little, spare woman bent almost double with age and the result of her occupation, and as she moved about at her work, with her dark gown bunched up at the back, she made one think of some curious bird. So that Silver, being of that mind, forgot his dignity, and bore down upon her with a sharp, yapping noise, which made her leap a foot or more in the air, letting the shovel which she carried under her arm fall to the ground with a great clatter. She turned a wrathful face upon Hammet, her small, deep-set eyes shooting forth venomous glances.

"Away w' thee," she cried, brandishing her broom in menace, though she kept ever on the other side of the boy; "mind the dawg, or I'll brain he. A-frightin' o' a body this away. I will to the Bailly about it, an' a wull gi' thee a threshin' for settin' o' great beasties on an old wumman as doeth her duty in rain or shine from sun to sun. There's na idlin' here; go to Gaffer Baven—keep he to 's' work. I warrant me a breshes na Sir Hughie's bridge as clean as I doeth this Market-place."

Hammet laughed and whistled Silver close. There was a feud of long standing between the two street-cleaners, each one accusing the other of idling, and each jealous of the other's supremacy. Of the two, Hammet preferred Old Baven, who had charge of the bridge, and who, besides, was a splendid hand at a story and ever ready for an excuse to pause from his labours. Goody Baker was like a little, clattering, chattering magpie, with a temper like a witch, and there were those who hinted that she did strange things with her broom when the day was done. Some of the rougher boys pestered her shamefully, tracking mud and brushwood over the places she had spent hours in cleaning, and then mocked her at a safe distance from her broom while she made the spot hideous with her imprecations and threats. Hammet had ever thought it a shame to tease her, but now he came in for a full share of her anger.

"La, Goody," he cried, soothingly, when she was forced to pause for lack of breath, "Silver meant no harm; he's full o' life this day, and belike he thought 'twas some kind o' game to see thee hoppin' about; but he'll not fright thee again."

"Na, I will see that a doan't," the old woman muttered. "An' hoppin' say'st thou? Marry, the Master Bailly will show thee what hoppin' be-eth. I'll tell he mass he young Master Combe set 's' dawg on my poor leeces."

"I'm not Tom Combe," the lad interrupted. "My name is Hammet Shakespeare, and I live in Henley Street at my grandfather's house."

"Oh! ay, forsooth, I know thee well. Master Wully Shaxper—a that's play-actor I! Lunnun—'s' thy father. A g'ied I a saxpence when a was here last, an' a saxpence there was na such shinin' stuns I Lunnun as here. An' that to I an' na to yon witless loun, Raven at the Bridge. An' a saxpence, besides, that onest I Lunnun town, when the Queen were passing by, the stuns there be-eth so dirty she'd a-mucked her shoon, but a young gallant from the court spread 's' cloak down i' the mud, so that she went o'er 'thout 'lin o' her feet, an' she made a lord o' her on the spot. But an I'd been the Queen, I'd ha' g'ied he a touglin' for usin' 's' cloak that away. Wilful waste maketh woful want, an' a wull come to that some day. An' thy father saith the Queen 'ud need na ploosh cloaks here whar I be wi' ma broom. Dost think she wull ever come this way?"

"I faith, I cannot tell. She was at Kenilworth when that my father was backed set in me the chimney, which was also flanked by two capacious chairs. Then his eyes came back to the girl at his side. She was just budding into womanhood, a fair slip of a maid with a roguish glance, and a sweet, oft-recurring smile, and a low voice that was ever singing. Hammet felt all a lad's love for the pretty creature, who was a few years his senior, and yet who seemed to care for his companionship. He had worshipped her after the fashion boys love, from afar, glad if her smile when she met him, and treasuring up the remembrance of whatever words of greeting she let fall, and dreaming often of the time when she would guess what was in his heart for her. Then, when he had least expected it, there had come that happy day on which she had rewarded all his faithful devotion.

And this was the way it befell: There was a gathering of young people at old John Combe's house, that which had once been the college in Old Town over against the church. She was there, and Edmund, who was near her age, and the other big boys had formed a train about her, urging her to dance, or sing, or play at stool-ball in the wide gardens. Hammet was one of the little fellows just looking on. He remembered distinctly how he and Tom Combe and Francis Collins, his two dear friends, had crowded with the other children about the

inner man; at which times he would not have exchanged his state—no, not for the Master High-Bailiff, nor for a king's for that matter!

Hammet, once away from Goody's noisy market, walked quickly past the Market Cross. At one side he could see the pillory and the whipping-post, and he knew there must be a man in the stocks, for a group of idlers hanging about jeered at the unfortunate, whose case was like to be their own at no distant date unless they mended their ways. The boy tossed his head impatiently, and a hot flush crimsoned his sensitive face, while he clinched his little brown fists. He had small toleration for those who, when a man was down were ready with their taunts and mockery; that was the time, according to his mind, when one should give nothing but sympathy.

"An I was the Master Bailiff," he said to himself, "I'd set 'em all in the stocks for baiting a poor wretch so. 'Twould be a monstrous good thing for 'em, I warrant."

He turned into High Street, forgetting on the moment his amendment of justice in the inspection he bestowed upon Master Roger's fine new house. He had watched it building with the greatest interest, following with delight the monster carver's hand as the fleur-de-lis and the interlacing designs grew on the woodwork in front under the skilled fingers. Now it was quite complete and the family had moved in, though there was still a bit of the workman's scaffolding beneath the second story windows where the finishing touches had just been put to the letters, "A. R." which stood for Alice Rogers, the second wife of Master Thomas Rogers, whose initials, with the date of the year, also decorated the front.

Hammet's feet lagged a trifle as he glanced at an open casement where a green curtain stirred softly in the breeze. He knew all about the room within. His mother had already seen the interior of the new house, and this especial room, with the window seat just back of that pretty curtain, where there were three fine cushions, also made of green.

"Good-morrow, little page o' all loves," a girl's voice above him called softly. "Whither away? An thou hast an idle minute to spend come in, thou and thy shadow, Master Silver."

Hammet's hand went up to the flat, gray covering on his auburn locks, and he o'capped in the direction of the window.

"Is't thou, sweet Mistress Kate?" he asked eagerly. "Silver and I were off to Aunt Joan's; a letter is but now come from father from London town, and I must acquaint her with it, so hath my grandam said. But there is no hurry. I faith 'twill keep; 'tis only the mad news, they say, that travels quickly, and this is the blithest, blithest news. My father will be coming hither in a scant four weeks' time, and oh! Mistress he hath writ me a letter, besides, and a verse o' poetry with his very hand. I have it here fast by my heart. I wold show it thee, an thou car'st to look."

"Indeed, la, I do care, so come up, sweetling, the door is not made fast. I am all alone in the house, save for Marian, in the buttery. My father and mother are away to Coventry."

The next moment, for scarce longer it seemed, both boy and dog were in the pretty new room, where the light coming in at the window through the curtain was like the summer sunshine flickering through the leaves in the woods. A little golden flock, where the curtain was sagged between the rings, danced persistently upon young Mistress Katharine Rogers's winsome face beneath her demure little cap. She was leaning back against the cushions, her lute held lightly in her lap; but at Hammet's approach she laid it down on a stool and rose to greet him, kissing his upturned face fondly, and pulling Silver's ears with her pretty hands.

"Thou'rt welcome," she cried. "Come sit thou here, dear heart, and tell me what's the news abroad. How doth all thy good people: sweet Mistress Mary Shakespeare and thy sweet mother, too, and how is my dear gossip, Sue? And what maketh thou from thy afternoon lessons, fair Sir?"

"Why, 'tis a half-holiday. Methinks Sir John will not live long, he hath grown so kind o' late; or belike he is fathoms deep in love with some gentle lady, for he is so monstrous dove-like."

"I pray Heaven she will not make him wear the willow," Mistress Katharine laughed, "else will you boys feel the birch. The trees grow side by side."

Hammet rubbed his shins apprehensively, and made a droll grimace. "Amen!" he answered. "I faith, I hope she'll leave him passing well, for our sakes, if not for his own."

He looked for a moment about the room with its new adornings, its bits of tapestry on the walls, and the backed settle in the chimney, which was also flanked by two capacious chairs. Then his eyes came back to the girl at his side. She was just budding into womanhood, a fair slip of a maid with a roguish glance, and a sweet, oft-recurring smile, and a low voice that was ever singing. Hammet felt all a lad's love for the pretty creature, who was a few years his senior, and yet who seemed to care for his companionship. He had worshipped her after the fashion boys love, from afar, glad if her smile when she met him, and treasuring up the remembrance of whatever words of greeting she let fall, and dreaming often of the time when she would guess what was in his heart for her. Then, when he had least expected it, there had come that happy day on which she had rewarded all his faithful devotion.

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him within doors, they had waited at the casement until the other boys, coming after the sun had risen with their cries of 'Good-morrow, Valentine,' met with no reward but only laughter, and were told they were 'sunburnt' and hidden hence in disgrace.

Still he would not have all the giving on one side, and so he had ever some little gift for her. At Christmas-time there had come a pair of sweet-scented Cheveril gloves from London town, paid for out of Master Will Shakespeare's purse, which the little lad bestowed upon young Mistress Rogers. Proud as he was of that gift, he did not feel half so happy as when he bought her a tawdry lace from the mad pedler's pack on May-day with his last pence (for gingerbread, nuts and little gauds for all one's family soon swallow up a lad's savings). In other ways, too, he could show his thought of her. He never could come empty-handed while there were flowers in the woods and meadows waiting to be gathered, or berries twinkling in the sun. He could plait a basket out of rushes, or carve some little thing with his whistle. And when these were lacking, any story that he had read was like a gift to her. Even this day, when he had not expected to stop at her new home, though outwardly he bore no present, what greater riches could he share with her than those precious words which rose and fell with his heart's beating? He thrust his hand into his jerkin, and she, noting the action, cried out:

"Prithce, sweet, show me thy letter without more ado. In truth, la, I love thy good father passing well, as who doth not? He hath ever a kind word for us all, both old and young, and what better news could'st thou bring than that he's coming hither? I faith, I shall want to see him mightily, though I hear of the sorry plays he hath writ I could find it in my mind to be afraid o' him, though my heart doth counsel otherwise."

"The heart's the best guide, so saith my sweet grandam oft; and sure methinks 'tis true in this case, for there is naught to be afraid on when father's by. See, here is the letter."

He drew the paper from his breast and read the superscription proudly: "To my most loving and dutiful servant, Hammet Shakespeare;" then he unwound the silken thread which bound the packet and laid it upon the cushion at his side.

"'Tis writ in my father's own hand," he said, as he smoothed out the folds with a caressing touch, "and 'tis not over easy reading, neither, though I have heard of the sorry plays he hath writ I could find it in my mind to be afraid o' him, though my heart doth counsel otherwise."

"'Alderlieftest'—'Twill be a short month, now, by man's count before I see thee, but a long long month—for every day is that by mine own heart's reckoning. When 'tis done I shall be at home with thee and the other dear ones for a happy space. Then will the hours fleet quickly with thee, my young rover, for thou dost ever make a July day short as December, and 'twill be sunshine everywhere, no matter how the sky may seem to other eyes."

Herewith he closed the bit of poetry such as thou hast ever begged of me. I writ it the other night, and thou and love are still my argument. My time bids me to hasten to an end. The Lord be with thee and with us all. Amen."

"From Southwark, near the Bear Garden, the 18 day of June, 1596."

"Thine in all love and kindness,"

"WILL SHAKESPEARE."

The boy raised his shining eyes to his companion's face, without speaking, as he finished the letter, and she leaned forward and touched his delicate cheek fondly.

"Marry," she said, softly, "how he doth love thee, dear wog. We all do, so thou knowest full well, but thou'rt very near his heart."

"As he to mine," the boy cried; "thou canst not guess how close. Nay, then, can't bear that others be near him and I away. I wold I were big and strong! There's Ned, now, who goeth to London shortly. I almost wish some harm would befall him to keep him still at home."

"Peace, peace! What would thy father say, an he heard such words, sirrah?"

"Verily he would be sore grieved, I wis, but the thoughts choke me by night and day, when I bethink me o' Ned's dot."

"That's not like my little page o' all loves! I would not have thee grudging another's happiness, sweet, nor would thy father, I trow. Ned's his brother and dear to him, but a thou judgest from thine own heart—and thou hast said the heart's the truest guide—thy father's love is greatest for thee. Truly la, thou'rt not greedy and want it all for thyself, when others hunger for a share."

Hammet hung his head shamefacedly. "Thou dost not understand," he murmured.

"No, faith, not I. An I was so sure o' my father's love as thou art o' thine, I'd trust him to the end."

"Why, so I will," Hammet interrupted throwing his head back, his small face working with determination. "So I do. Only there be times that I wonder and wonder about the day when I shall truly be with him, and I never can make it quite clear in my mind; oft 'tis 'tis one way, often another, but ever so distant, till that I am out o' heart with longing."

"Soul o' me! I never took thee for a pulling lad before. Out upon thee! Thy father would like thee to bear a brave heart, I wot—but there! I'll rate thee no more. Thou'lt mend thy ways? And so clap hands, and a bargain?"

"Ay, that I will," the boy cried; "I'll do Ned no ill turn. I promise thee—not even in my thoughts. But, now, I must away to Aunt Joan's, and ere I go I needs must tell thee the poetry father writ—I have already by heart. I prithce touch thy lute, sweet and low, whilst I say it off."

He stood before the girl, with his head thrown back, his eyes looking into hers, and she, to humour him, fell to picking the strings of her instrument, but, softly, too, so as not to lose a word.

"What's in the brain that ink may character
Which hath not figure'd to thee true spirit?
What's new to speak, what new to register?
That may express my love or thy dear merit?
Nothing sweet boy; but yet like prayers divine,
I must each day say o'er the very same,
Counting no old thing old, thou mine, I thine,
Even as when first I hallow'd thy fair name.
So that eternal love in love's fresh case
Weighs not the dust and injury of age,
Nor gives to necessary wrinkles place,
But makes antiquity for aye his page.
Finding the first conceit of love then bred
Where time and outward show would show it dead."

His fresh, young voice broke as he reached the end, and the next moment he came close to Mistress Katharine and humbly kissed her hand where it lay upon the lute.

"Chide me not," he whispered, tremulously. "I'll try to grudge Ned naught; when the feeling cometh upon me I'll say those words over."

For all answer the girl put her arm about the little lad and pressed his face tenderly against her own. So they rested for a short space in the gracious quiet of the pretty room, while the curtain at the window swelled softly in and out, like a small sail under the command of Sir Breeze, and irregular patches of sunlight dotted the floor with gold.

"AT LEAST YOU, MY FRIENDS!"

The "Month's Mind" was over. The priest had unvested and was making his thanksgiving before the altar in the little basement church. The widow and her two little girls in deep black still knelt in the seats at the top of the aisle. The sacristan removed the catafalque and stowed away under the organ the six tall candlesticks with the yellow candles.

I met him in the porch as I went out. "John Callaghan," he said in answer to my unspoken question. "He drove a wagon for Bellford's, the coal people. That's the widow and two girls. The boy works in Schultz's, the grocer. The haythens wouldn't have him free to come to the month's mind this mornin'! The Lord reward him—and He will, too. When his turn comes he'll know what it is to need a friend. Purgatory'll be terrible lonesome for some people—if they're lucky enough to get there."

"Mike," said I pointedly, "how long do you think anyone will remember us?"

"Well sir," said Mike, "I'm thinkin' it'll be just about as long as we remember him."

"If that's all, then the Lord be merciful to us, for we'll need it." I meant it, too, for only a couple of days previously I had heard from Thomas a Kempsis some searching truths on the point.

"Well who knows?" said Mike. "Listen low, Mornin', James, 'tis a beautiful day."

His salutation was addressed to an old man coming out of the basement. His face was abundantly familiar to me, seeing that every morning he occupied the same seat at the back of the centre aisle. It was such an old man's face as one sees often in Ireland, on which the peace of childhood seems to have softened the marks of time and struggle that the lines are all reposeful and harmonious. The sacristan presented me formally to Mr. James Nolan—"a County Cork man like yourself, sir!"—and we exchanged conventional greetings.

"Well, James," said Mike, somewhat suggestively—not to say provocatively, "John Callaghan'll rest easier to day."

"He will so," said James. "Lord be mercy on him! He was a good, steady man. I knew his father in old St. James' down town. He's dead this twenty-two year. He went after Paddy Sheehan and before Molly Joyce. Lord be good to him! There's a great plenty gone since then."

"We've more friends that side than this," said Mike, surreptitiously pulling my coat sleeve.

"Begor, we have that!" said James with a laugh. "I'll have tin more names in me envelope next Sunday for this year."

"An' how many'll that make, James?" Mike's voice dripped simulated nonchalance while his face worked with the strength of his desire that I should see the point.

"A hundred an' thirty-four last year an' tin this year—that'll be a hundred an' forty-four," answered James with perfect simplicity.

"Well now, look at that!" said Mike with a perfectly natural air of surprise. "A hundred an' forty-four! It bates me how you can remember them all, James."

"'Tis easy enough to remember them when they're yer friends," said James. "I suppose ye could call the roll at any time," said Mike endeavoring to infuse yet more indifference into his tone. "Deed I could," said James, "why not?" and then there to Mike's undisguised joy in that church porch, the old man commenced the litany of his dead. It went somewhat as follows:

"Grandfather and grandfather, uncle Pat, uncle James, father, aunt Bridget, aunt Mollie, mother; Lord ha' mercy on her! Cousin John, Mat Malone, Mary Shea, Father Daly, Owen McGuire, Father Sheridan, Owen O'Neill, Patsy Bryan, John Byrne, Mary Byrne, Doctor Ford, Willie Clancy, Nellie Murphy, Dick Cronin, little Jamesy, John Molloy, Bridget Mahony, little Mollie"—and so on. His wife's name came late in the list.

He called her his "darlin' Mollie." I could hardly repress a start when he named "Charles Stewart Parnell," and a little later "William Ewart Gladstone." For what seemed many minutes he stood there his eyes closed, the names coming rapidly and without a shadow of hesitation. It took him perhaps three minutes to recite the roll at last came—"John Callaghan an' Richard Loneragan, an' certain others an' them that has none to pray for them."

We had prayed the first time for Loneragan's soul the previous Sunday. Mike looked at me with triumph in his eye and James came to himself with a jerk.

"That's a long list," I said lamely.

"'Tis not many for sixty-two years, sir," said James, "an' there's them I've forgotten, too. Lord ha' mercy on them! An' I hope they'll forgive me when my own time comes. 'Twon't be so long now, ayther, Mike, 'Well, good mornin' to ye, sir—mornin' Mike!" and off he trudged down the street.

"Well," said Mike, "what d'ye think of that?"

"Oh! Mike—there's them he's forgotten—he said so himself. May the good Lord forgive us—me, I mean!" As I spoke Father came through the porch on his way to breakfast. He caught my last words.

"What's the matter?" he said. "Father, I'm tempted to wish I was dead and on James Nolan's list," I said. Mike left us and went back into the church, grinning widely as he went.

"You might be worse off. He'll be in with five large sheets of foolscap next Sunday. Did he call the roll for you?"

"He did," I said. "And did you stop to ask yourself how he was able to do it almost without drawing breath and without a stop?"

A great light poured in on my mind. "Every morning of his life he calls his roll at Mass. Some of the people on it are dead these sixty to seventy years. I suspect 'twould be a waste of good prayers for most of them only there's no such thing. No I don't mean what you think—I mean they're in Heaven long ago if they are James's kind, and James's prayers are undoubtedly distributed elsewhere. I hope James is in my parish when I die."

He stopped in hesitation a moment. "I'll tell you something more if you'll promise not to laugh. How did he finish his list?—I mean after the names stopped?"

I told him. "I thought so. How do you suppose he came to put in the phrase, 'certain others'? Well I'll have to tell you—it's too good to keep. When I first came to this parish and James's list came in, I made a business of getting acquainted with him and he told me about it. Just for deviltry, I said to him—'James, there's a b g list of deaths every day in the Herald—why don't you pray for them, too?' 'Tis a good notion,' says James. 'And every day he puts them in the 'certain others' part of his list and completes his intention later by going to the sexton's office and borrowing the Herald to read them over. James has many a friend in the next world I fancy, that he knows nothing about.'

No! It was not laughing that threatened me.—Andrew Prout in America.

THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH.

Written for the CATHOLIC RECORD.

IN THE RECORD of the 2nd inst. notice is taken of a newspaper, which, in a manner commendably calm, distinguishes between the Holy Catholic Church and the Roman Catholic Church. The editor of the newspaper in question is not the only one that makes or supposes a difference between the two Churches; thousands of others who have heard that the Apostles Creed "may be believed" and who have, by repeating it, become familiar with "The Holy Catholic Church," have it in their minds that there is as great a difference between the Holy Catholic Church and the Roman Catholic Church as there is between light and darkness.

When it is desirable to institute a comparison between two things, it is necessary, in order to arrive at a just conclusion, to get a thorough knowledge of them; and in the case in hand it is imperative that the origin, history, and present status of the two churches should be exactly and minutely known. From Ecclesiastical History, either Catholic or non-Catholic, anyone can get a full account of the Roman Catholic Church, throughout her whole course. Our Saviour committed this Church to the guardianship of St. Peter. The New Testament tells us this. Eusebius in his Ecclesiastical History, says that St. Peter went to Rome, and was beheaded there. Not only is this confirmed by other writers of the infant Church, but is admitted by all modern historians of any consequence. St. Peter's successors have, in an unbroken series, ruled the Church down to the present. No one but a madman would deny this. St. Peter, living in his successors, has fed the sheep for nearly two thousand years. This should impress a thinking man.

For nineteen hundred years, the Roman Catholic Church—called "Roman" because St. Peter's chair was fixed in Rome—has labored unremitting-

When an undue amount of nervous energy is used in the brain there is certain to be failure in the other functions of the body. Digestion is imperfect—the head aches—you cannot sleep—you become nervous and irritable—you are easily excited and quickly tired—your memory fails and you cannot concentrate the mind.

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