

A HOMEY HEROINE

A Tale of Love and Sacrifice in the Cumberland Mountains.

By MARGARET E. O'BRIEN.

Mel's name was Imelda, after the storied little saint of old, but she was called "Mel" for the same reason that her brothers, Christopher Columbus and Alexander Hamilton, were known respectively as Lum and Elick.

Rosie was older than Mel, and, oh, so different. Her features were hard and unlovely, her hair a sandy mop, that she invariably screwed into a belligerent knot at the back of her head. She was awkward and hard, taking, by right of plainness, the control of the rude kitchen, being the slave of the two brothers and the bondswoman of Mel. There was only one person in the wide world who cared for Rosie—Ham Broden—and she was to marry him in three months.

I wonder if you know what marriage means in the mountains of Kentucky? To the class to which Rosie belongs it means a changing from one home to another, perhaps a ruder one. It means toil from morning till night—if one is a tidy housekeeper, or the living in poverty, most grinding and dirt most revolting if one is not. It means, too, the rearing of children that come so fast there is little hope of their great enlightenment on any subject.

Yes, Rosie was to be married in three months. There was only one bright streak across her sombre life—her love for Ham. He was a great, hulking fellow, a country gawk, perhaps, but Rosie asked nothing better than to be his wife.

Mel was as different from Rosie as night from day. Her face was flower-like in its delicacy, the blue veins showing fine and clear beneath the transparent skin, which hinted of some far-off trace of kinship to the gods. Her eyes were gray and large, jet-trimmed and white lidded, and some kindly Midas had laid his hand upon her hair, turning its strands to dead and burnished gold. She was like a bit of dainty china, frail and beautiful; a thing made of smiles to be killed by a frown. She had had two years of school life, and it had taken her completely out of the humble way that must be Rosie's. It was during her absence that Rosie met and loved Ham—better for her that Mel had never come home.

It was nearing the wedding day, and Rosie's spare moments were spent in fashioning a white dress—poor enough, God knows, but a miracle of beauty in Rosie's eyes. She had never before had a white dress, and this one was to be trimmed with lace, and she was to have a ribbon for her waist. She sewed in some busy, womanly little thoughts, and once or twice she startled herself by humming a tune she had heard Mel sing. It was the close of a droning autumn day; across the stretch of rocky field the butterflies swung lazily over a few struggling weeds in flower. The Cumberland could be heard as its waves flapped fretfully the rocky banks, and just beyond the blue mountains rose, sleepy and silent, cased in a drowsy haze and well nigh yielding to the August sultriness. Rosie was in the kitchen getting ready for the homely supper. She was tired, for it had been a hard day and the sewing had gone wrong. She gave a sigh of half fretful weariness as she moved about, clanging the few pots and pans, and a little frown came upon her face as a shadow lay on the floor and Elick lounged in.

He was a great strapping fellow, strong as most Kentuckians are, with a sort of native grace that showed itself in the way he pulled off his immense straw "hat," barring his sunburned temples.

"Supper ready?" he interrogated. "Will be in a minute; what's Mel?" Elick shifted his quid of tobacco to the other side of his not unhandsome mouth and glanced at her uneasily.

"Ain't she here?" "No, nor she ain't been here since dinner; but she's all right, for Ham's with her—they left here about half after twelve."

Elick looked at her curiously. "Do you and Ham still low to marry on the first?" "Ef nuthin' comes ter keep us—en th' ain't nuthin' lakly ter happen, fer—with a short laugh—"th' ain't nobody bidden for me but Ham. What'd ye ax fur?"

"Lowed ye might a changed yer mind; that's all. Here's Lum."

Rosie looked up at the new comer. He was strangely like his brother, but cast in a ruder mold. He lounged lazily against the door post and amused himself by squirting tobacco juice through his teeth over some sickly plox that Rosie had planted. He did not speak to either of the occupants of the room, but waited silently for his supper. By and by Rosie turned to him.

"What's Mel?" she asked. "Out cross Bond's Gap settin' up ter Ham Broden," Lum answered, with a half malicious smile. "Luk out, ol' gal or she'll cut ye out."

Elick sent his brother a half appealing look, but he could not or would not see. Rosie turned upon him and for a moment her hard features were set and white. He laughed tantalizingly and she turned to her work.

"Th' ain't no call fur foolin', Lum," she said shortly. "I ain't afraid o' Ham, en if I wuz Mel wouldn't have him—he ain't her sort."

Lum laughed again and Elick scowled at him across the room. "Here's both of 'em now," Lum said meaningly; "ye kin ax 'em what they ben."

Mel came in blighly, swinging her hat from her arm. She was dressed in a simple print, not over new, but Mel's way of wearing it made it pleasing. Ham lounged clumsily after her, the very picture of a clobberer—a clown.

"Supper ready, Rosie?" Mel asked lightly, seating herself upon the hair trunk in the corner.

"We wuz only waiting fur you all; what'd ye go?" Ham came in an' stay ter supper.

"Cross Bond's Gap; it ain't fur when ye start, but when you air comin' back Mel sighed.

"No, thanky, Rosy." Ham said as he moved off; "reckon mother'll be lookin' for me home."

"I thought we could talk over the marryin' after supper—"

"Reckon I'd better go; I'm tired anyhow, ben for a long tramp. Mel'll tell ye good-bye."

A little silence followed his exit—a silence that was broken by a low, malicious laugh from Lum. Rosie's face was a trifle pale, but she merely turned from them.

"Come ter supper," she said briefly. They fell to eating in silence, but for an occasional remark from Mel. Rosie was unusually quiet. Mel's light laugh jarred upon her strangely—the whole world was out of tune. Then her brow cleared—was not Mel her sister? The thought took away the cloud that had drifted across her heart. Mel was but Mel, light and careless, through her no harm could come—and Rosie smiled.

She cleared away the supper things in silence that was not moody, because full of thoughts of "the marryin'." After the work was done and the boys gone, she sat down to her sewing, but somehow her fingers idled. She reached up and took a little worn Bible from the "spool shelf"—she opened it at random and spelt laboriously through the first sentence her eyes rested upon:

"And a man's foes shall be they of his own household."

Her face whitened. "Ef ain't said wimmins—only a man's," she whispered, and closed the book sharply. She was restless—too restless to sit alone, so she took up the tallow candle and went into the sleeping room. Mel had gone to bed just after supper, and Rosie could hear her soft breathing, rising and falling as she slept. She stirred uneasily under the flare of the candle, murmuring in her sleep. Involuntarily, Rosie bent down.

"Go back now, Rosie'll wait supper—"

A tender smile stole over Rosie's face, illuminating the plain features, making the hard face lovely through love.

"Hit wuz right not ter say wimmins," she said contentedly, and soon she, too, slept, and the house was in quiet.

It was evening, and Rosie sat in the kitchen doorway shelling peas. It was the last day of August, and to-morrow would be her wedding day. She was calmly content, with no misgivings for the future. True, she sometimes worried over Mel, but there was a sort of blind trust in her heart; she was unlearned, so she did not question the Lord, but sat there in silence, save for the whirring of the katydids, some thought came to her of the unequal division of things, but she did not complain. It was right that Mel should have the better part, for she was frail and fair and made for tender usage.

Suddenly Rosie dropped her hands in the lap and looked intently over the field. Mel and Ham were coming slowly through the tall golden-rod; they were talking earnestly—at least Ham was—Mel seemed listening.

Presently they stopped and Mel was speaking, shaking her head decidedly, and throwing out her hand with a little passionate gesture of denial that Rosie knew so well. The wind caught the words she was saying and whirled them along to Rosie's ears, taking the color from her face and the strength from her toll-marked hands.

"No—no—no, Ham!" she was saying. "It ain't be! Temorra ye'r to marry Rosie—I keer—yes, I keer, but—no, don't! Rosie'll see ye!"

"What of she do! Ain't I right ter—kiss me ergain, Mel—en say the word en I'll break 'ith Rosie!"

"Kiss him again—again!" Rosie's eyes blazed with agony; "again! That meant—" but Mel was speaking passionately.

"Aint I tol' ye I keer? But ye mus' marry Rosie. I do keer, but I won't—no, never!"

Rosie sat like a dead thing, watching Mel as she came on alone, swinging her hat by the strings and humming a gay little tune.

"Shellin' peas, Rosie?" she asked lightly, for want of something to say. The other only nodded, and Mel went carelessly into the "other" room, still singing.

Rosie's heart seemed bursting; her eyes felt as though burning away their own light, her hands were nerveless and cold. She tried to make things plain to herself, but it seemed as if the standing corn roared and thundered in the wind, deafening her, Mel and Ham loved each other—she, Rosie, was a bar to their happiness—she was in the way!

It was pitiful to see the strained look upon her face; the only beings in the world that she loved were being made unhappy by the very fact of her existence. Mel—her idol—her fair young sister!

Curiously enough, it never occurred to her that there was any other course than one—to efface herself that Mel might be made happy. She had always done so—she must do it now. She tried to call Mel to her, but her mouth twitched oddly, her tongue was dry and hard and refused to do her bidding. Presently Mel came from the inner room and threw herself petulantly upon the stack of trunks.

"Ye'll be tired fur ye weddin', Rosie, ef ye work that crey way ter temorra."

It was characteristic of her innate selfishness that she did not offer to assist even in these last hours. Rosie gave a short, hard cough and answered:

"They ain't goin' ter be no weddin' here temorra—ef me en Ham is ter do the marryin'." Mel looked at her in open-mouthed amazement. "Why, Rosie—" she began.

"I heered what ye said ter Ham, Mel, en what he said ter you. Ef ye feel ye do, th' ain't no call fur ye ter live unhappy—ye kin have him."

"But, Rosie—"

"Never ye mind me, Mel, never ye mind me! I kin get erlong, en ye know me en Elick promised maw ter sorter look out fur ye en Lum. I ain't got no claim on Ham—ye kin have 'im."

Mel's flower like face was turned in curious wonder upon the hard visage of her sister. To her, there was nothing pathetic in the convulsive working of those unlovely features. She only shrugged her shoulders and thought how hopelessly ugly Rosie was.

"Ye needn't worry fur me, Mel," Rosie went on monotonously. "It'll come

queer at fust, havin' Ham fur a brother instead of a—a—Mel, ye must be happy!"

The last was a low cry of almost brute suffering. The pan of peas was unheeded, and Rosie clasped her hands convulsively.

"Hov ye lost yer senses, Rosie?" Mel said at last.

"I heered what ye said ter one en'ther out thair"—indicating.

A faint, ashamed gleam crept into Mel's eyes, as she answered slowly:

"Well, Rosie, hit wuzn't meant fur ye to hear, but ye must a knowed 'twas all fumin'."

"No, Mel, I don't want ye ter lie ter me. Didn't I hear ye tell Ham ye keered, but he mus' marry Rosie? Ye do keer, Mel, ye kin have him."

"But I don't want him," Mel said at last, petulantly. "Kain't I say things 'bout kickin' up er dust? What ud I want 'ith him?" She gave a low laugh of amused scorn. "He suits you, Rosie, keep him en marry him. I don't want him."

"But ye tol' him ye keered, Mel!"

The other laughed disdainfully. "En ef I did, what? Hit ain't proved that hit's so, is it? Me keer fur him!" Immeasurable scorn was in her voice.

"When I keer fur anybody hits ter be a man as has white hands and does diff'unt fum our ways! What ud I want 'ith Ham? Seech ez him ain't fitten fur nothin' but ter grub en ter plow en ter chaw terbaecer—"

Rosie gave a hoarse cry—"Ye don't mean hit, Mel!"

"Why don't I mean hit? Jes 'cause I fooled 'ith Ham er little hit aint showed nuthin', hez hit? He wanted ter run after me en I let him, jes' ter see ef I could make him a fool bigger en he wuz. Hit was all I meant."

Rosie's face was drawn and white. The muscles were working spasmodically, and she clutched the chair blindly. Mel's cool, scornful laugh maddened her.

"Ye done that, Mel?" she said hoarsely. "Ye done that? Ye didn't want him yerself, but ye tuk him fum me? Ye don't mean hit, Mel, say ye don't mean hit; ye do keer!"

"I done said I do mean hit en I don't keer! En I wont hev ye ol' country gawk of a bean. Hit wuz all fum ter me! I'm goin' off, Rosie, tel ye git ye senses back. I'm a goin' ter the crossin' en git Jim Hopkiner ter let me ride home on the ingin. He's firin' this week. Hit ain't no use raisin' er fus—hit was all fur fun."

She spoke in petulant, heartless tones, and moved away swinging her hat over her curls.

Rosie did not speak. It seemed that all the world was trembling about her ears, crushing her heart—maddening her brain. Mel had done this thing—Mel, her little sister. She did not want the stupid country lout herself, but she took him from Rosie. Oh! God! dear God! Mel had done it—Mel! She could not realize it, and so she sat through the long hours with that awful pain at her heart.

It was more like brute suffering than human pain—poor Rosie!

The darkness came stealthily and enveloped the distant hills, the nearer fields—still she sat, her eyes fixed and glassy. She saw, without noting, two men pass by, talking in low tones—one was Lum. She watched them listlessly till they gained the railroad "trussle."

There they stooped and seemed to be working at something on the track. They threw some object over the depth, a half hundred feet below. Still Rosie sat benumbed. Then—

She heard the distant whistle of the only train—it was rounding the curve a mile away. God! a flash of comprehension came to her. Lum had been a flagman and lately had been discharged for neglect of duty. Once or twice he had sworn to make the railroad sorry—what had he done there on the "trussle?"

She gave a hoarse, inarticulate cry and sprang to her feet, Mel was on that train—she had said she would ride home from the crossing.

Only one thought was in Rosie's mind—Mel was on that train and Lum had been on the "trussle."

She seized the lantern and lighted it hurriedly, then sprang into the darkness, bearing the light on her arm, and made for the hillside. She must cross the trestle, for if they turn the curve they will be upon their death before the train can be stopped. Panting like a wild thing she gains the track and begins to pick her way across, tie by tie. Midway she stops still and raises her face to Heaven in wild, agonized appeal. The engine is turning the curve and she is but half way over. She lifts her lantern, swinging it high above her head, and screaming, heartrendingly. She does not think of her own danger till the iron giant is upon her. They have seen her signal and are slowing up, but the warning has come too late to save Rosie.

It seems that the heavens are closing in on her, shutting out the air. There she falls—down—down—down—God! how far! Unconsciousness comes and overshadows her, lying a pitiful heap below the trestle, and the iron giant is panting and snorting above.

"It was a loosened rail, Cap'n," she hears some one say. "Some of these mountain devils must er done it on the gal must er seen 'em."

She opens her eyes wearily. There are lights around her and strange faces, rough, but full of sympathy. She tries to raise herself, but falls back with a cry of agony—her back is broken. She looks anxiously around.

"No harm done ter—ter—the engine," one of the men says, his voice trembling as he looks on the bruised, disfigured frame lying there. "Hit wuz owin' ter you, too, fur we hed gone agin that thair rail—"

Rosie looks at him with fast glazing eyes. "What's Mel?" she gasps.

The question is answered in Heaven.—Age-Herald.

BOOK NOTICE.

A History of the University of Notre Dame—1842-95. Royal 8vo. Price, post-paid, \$1.15. Address the University, Notre Dame, Ind.

Like an echo of the Golden Jubilee that filled, a short month ago, the public eye, comes the "Jubilee History of the University of Notre Dame." It is what it purports to be, the story of the first fifty years in the life of the great Catholic college of the West, whose growth has been so marvellous, and whose influ-

ence is felt from ocean to ocean—and beyond the sea, for students flock to her from every land. Here are written down—and by a sympathetic pen, for Chief Justice Howard of the Supreme Court of Indiana, an Alumnus and, for many years, one of Notre Dame's faculty—the lives of Father Sorin, the founder of the University, of Fathers Granger and Coiteau, who were his earliest associates in his chosen life work, of Fathers Dillon and Lemonnier and Corby and Walsh, who nursed the infant college to maturity and saw it a great University. There are pictures, too, half-tones of the buildings and of the men who created them. Doubly interesting to everyone who has worn Notre Dame's Gold and Blue, it is hardly less so to every Catholic in the country, for the University's history is the history of the Church in America, one with it and inseparable from it. From the printer's point of view, the book is beautiful, for the broad margins and clear print are delightful to the eye, and the binding—blue cloth with gold stamping—is worthy of the book.

CATHOLIC SUNDAY DEFINED.

Father McMillan Shows That It Is Not the "Continental" Day.

The Rev. Father McMillan, C.S.P., preached in the Church of the Paulist Fathers, New York, last Sunday morning, taking as his subject "The Sunday Closing of the Saloons and Sabbath Observances Generally."

He strongly condemned not only the selling of liquor on Sunday, but the patronizing of saloons on that day by citizens, and supported his position by quoting from the pastoral letter and decrees of the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore, in 1854. Father McMillan said:

"I maintain that everybody or group of Christians must take into consideration the external observance of the Sunday, in order that the priests as individuals. This has always been among Catholics a recognized usage having the force of law."

"The so-called 'Continental' Sunday is a product of infidelity, and has been forced upon Catholics in Europe by the civil power. This applies especially to Paris, where the workmen are beginning to demand the privilege of giving up work on Sunday."

"After careful deliberation at the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore, in 1854, the Bishops of the United States decided to remove all doubt concerning Catholic teaching regarding intemperance and the proper observance of the Sunday by the publication of a pastoral letter, from which these extracts are taken:

"There is one way of profaning the Lord's Day which is so prolific of evil results that we consider it our duty to utter against it a special condemnation. This is the practice of selling beer or other liquors on Sunday, or frequenting places where they are sold. This practice tends more than any other to turn the day of the Lord into a day of dissipation—to use it as an occasion for breeding intemperance. While we hope that Sunday laws on this point will not be relaxed, but even more rigidly enforced, we implore all Catholics, for the love of God and of country, never to take part in such Sunday traffic, nor to patronize or countenance it. And we not only direct the attention of all pastors to the repression of this abuse, but we also call upon them to induce all of their flocks that may be engaged in the sale of liquors to abandon as soon as they can the dangerous traffic, and to embrace a more becoming way of making a living."

"And here it behooves us to remind our workmen, the bone and sinew of the people, and the specially beloved children of the Church, that if they wish to observe Sunday as they ought they must keep away from drinking places on Saturday night. Carry your wages home to your families, where they rightfully belong. Turn a deaf ear, therefore, to every temptation, and then Sunday will be a bright day for all the family. How much better this than to make it a day of sin for yourselves and of gloom and wretchedness by a Saturday night's folly or debauch! No wonder that the prelates of the Second Plenary Council de-

clared that the most shocking scandals which we have to deplore spring from intemperance.

"A Christian should not only avoid what is positively evil, but what has even the appearance of evil, and more especially whatever commonly leads to it. Therefore Catholics should consciously renounce all recreations of kinds of business which may interfere with keeping holy the Lord's Day, or which are calculated to lead to the violation of the laws of God or of the State. The worst, without doubt, is the carrying on of business in bar rooms and saloons on Sunday, a traffic by means of which so many and such grievous injuries are done to religion and society."

Let pastors earnestly labor to root out this evil, let them admonish and entreat, let them even resort to threatenings and penalties, when it becomes necessary. They should do all that belongs to their office to efface this stain, now nearly the only blot remaining among us, obscuring the splendor of the day of the Lord.

"That is intended for the whole of the United States. For us the question is settled. This is our official teaching on the matter."

The National Society of Sculpture, No. 104 St. Lawrence street, Montreal. Drawing every Wednesday. Lots valued from \$100 to \$1500. Tickets, 10 cents.

REGENT CONVERSIONS. A Number Just Announced in a Single Week.

The Baroness Frida Ranzeau, a relative of Prince Bismarck's son-in-law, has just left Rome after embracing Catholicism in the Chapel of the German College. Her godmother was the wife of the Spanish Ambassador, who presented the Baroness Frida to the Pope.

Prince Frederick of Schoenburg-Waldenburg has, says the Lega Lombarda, become a convert to the Catholic Church. The event has caused a considerable sensation.

Two distinguished English ladies have, it is announced, been received into the Church, viz., the Countess of Cottenham, widow of the third Earl (who died in 1851), and her daughter, Lady Mary Pepps, sister of the present Earl, born in 1878. Both ladies were present at the ceremony in connection with the new Westminster Cathedral recently.

In the abbey church of the Benedictines, Ypres, Belgium, Mr. Charles E. Goppet, for many years an inhabitant of Hammersmith, was received into the Catholic Church on June 25th, by the Right Rev. Bishop of Lahore, India, assisted by Very Rev. Canon Deleyd, of the Cathedral, Bruges, and the President of the Diocesan College, Ypres. Mr. Goppet made at same time his first Communion and received the Sacrament of Confirmation. It is interesting to know that five of his children are Catholics.—Liverpool Catholic Times.

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PILGRIMS TO LANORAIE. The members of the St. Patrick's branch of the League of the Sacred Heart held their second annual pilgrimage to the shrine of the Sacred Heart at Lanoraie last Wednesday. There were over five hundred people on the steamer Three Rivers when it left its wharf at half-past nine o'clock. The pilgrimage was under the direction of the Rev. J. A. McCallen, of St. Patrick's. The pilgrims were met at the landing by the Rev. P. Kavanagh, the parish priest, and proceeded in procession to the parish church. The Rev. Father McCallen preached a sermon, taking for his text, "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you." It was four o'clock when the pilgrims left Lanoraie on their return to town.

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JOHN QUINLAN, General Contractor and Builder. 679a Wellington Street, Montreal. Estimates given for all kinds of Cut Stone and Masonry. Jobbing promptly attended to.

Author: Only one thing kept my last novel from making a sensation. Friend: What was that? Author: No one read it.

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See My New Dress! It used to be my mamma's old cashmere, which she took to pieces and dyed with Diamond Dyes and made me two new dresses, a blue and a brown. Brother's got a new suit too; it's made from Uncle Jack's old coat dyed over; mamma said