

sky, of which she could catch only glimpses, she wondered what was like that new country and that new inheritance, upon which that dear old woman, who had mothered her orphaned youth and those other dear ones, had entered.

The girl's father had married, again and they had come out to America. His new wife was not unkind, and very far from being irreligious, but still it was all so different, and all the surroundings were strange.

Maria never complained, and tried hard to help her stepmother with the work, and to be a dutiful daughter to her father, and to walk faithfully in the path which the good old guardian of her youth had marked out for her. But a veritable passion of zeal had taken possession of her, when she heard read in church, the Encyclicals of the Holy Father about Frequent Communion, and the First Communion of children. She had seemed to see the words falling from the lips of that holy Pontiff, whom with her grandmother she had seen, just after his accession to the throne of St Peter. They had been admitted to his presence with a lot of other peasants, whom this Pope of the people, so dearly loves, and the kind benignant face had smiled at her, and as he passed along, had laid one hand upon the head of her grandmother, and another upon her own. Perhaps, with his keen spiritual vision, he had noted something unusual in the two, and so he had specially blessed them. That blessing the old woman had taken with her, soon after into Paradise, and the young girl, to that crowded slum of the New World. But its vivifying influence seemed to go with her there and to shed an influence on that crowded haunt of men.

So, when she had listened to the Encyclical, it seemed as if it were spoken by the Holy Father, and she had made it her special mission to make it known, more intimately and familiarly, to the people of that quarter, especially such as had grown careless in the practice of their faith, and also to the little ones, whom she gathered about her, trying as best she could to explain, what it was that the Pope wished.

And she brought it more vividly home to all their minds, by talking at the same time, of beautiful Italy and of the great Pontiff who loved the poor, as if they were his own