

# The Catholic Register.

"Truth is Catholic; proclaim it ever, and God will efface the rest."—BALMEZ.

VOL. IV.—No. 52

TORONTO, THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1896.

PRICE FIVE CENTS.

## Two Christmas Eves.

(A STORY FOR THE REGISTERS.)

"Don't Lisbeth, don't take on so, my girl, 'twas the will of God."  
"Ay, Joe, I know that, but 'tis hard, yo don't know how hard."

"I do know, lass. I do know, and I feel for ye, it were a cruel blow to lose the little one, dost think I don't care?"

"No, no, husband, I know how fond ye were of her, but ye can't feel it as I do, goin' out as ye do most every day ye can't miss her like me, that has to stay home and think of her every minute in the day, and mind how she used to run everywhere after me; still when I remember that she is gone, and I shall never hear her little feet patter in about, and her sweet voice callin' 'mammy, mammy' again, my heart will nigh break, and the poor woman laid her head on her husband's shoulder and burst into tears."

"Ho, poor man, helpless as men always are before the tears of a woman, could only stroke her hair, and whisper words of consolation in her ear. They were humble fisher folk, but their hearts beat tender and loving beneath their coarse clothes, and they were sore hearts too, on this Christmas Eve, that should have been so joyous in spite of poverty, and scant living; for had they not buried their only child, pretty four year old Mary, just a month ago to-day. So Lisbeth wept unrestrainedly, and Joe, clumsy, tender hearted fellow, tried to comfort her, his own eyes full of tears, and his breast aching in sympathy with his wife's grief. Their little cottage stood almost on the brink of a steep cliff down which a path led to the beach, where Joe's boat was drawn up high and dry just at the foot of the rocks, which overhung the shore sufficiently to afford a safe shelter for it in bad weather. Several other cottages were scattered about at short intervals, for Bleakdone was in the estimation of the inhabitants at least a fishing village of considerable importance, the chief catch being herrings, which were also salted and cured, the latter portion of the work being done by the women and girls. Being situated upon a particularly dangerous part of the coast, where wrecks were of frequent occurrence, Bleakdone boasted a lifeboat, the crew being made up of volunteers among the hardy fishermen. The sun was just about to set in a red and angry looking haze, there had been a gale the day before, and the wind was still blowing in strong hard gusts, lashing the white crested waves hisher and thither, till they burst at last upon the beach with a dull sullen roar, and flung out far reaching arms, which grasped everything movable and sucked it back into the seething and angry sea."

Joe looked out of the little window, at the high billows of foam far out upon the water. "Twill be a terrible night again, I'm afraid, Lisbeth," he said. "The wind is gettin' up, an' the sea 'ud most swamp the lifeboat, I reckon."

"Lisbeth acquiesced wearily, she had sat down in a low chair before the fire with her chin buried in her hands, and was gazing with tear rendered eyes into the fire. Joe glanced at her anxiously, he knew she must be roused from the state of lethargy into which she seemed to be falling, but how to rouse her, or indeed, what to do at all, he scarcely knew. He debated the possibility of taking her over to her mother's, a good five miles inland, and had just decided that the scheme was impracticable in the present state of the weather, and the low spirited condition she was in, when a sound, faint and distant, but reverberating through the little cottage like a message of war, reached his ears, and made him stride to the window and strain his eyes over the fast darkening sea."

Again came the ominous sound, a low deep boom, there was no mistaking it, it was the cry of a ship in distress, that sound so terrible to hear, but doubly so on this day of all days; the eve of Christmas, when everyone on land and sea is preparing for the joyous festivities of the morrow."

Joe turned to his wife, "Dost her it lass?" he asked. "Hark! there it is again, the minute gun, 'tis a ship in the Needles for sure, I must be getting 'till be getting the lifeboat—"

"suddenly he was interrupted by a young man, bursting into the room, his clothes dripping with wet, and his face almost white with suppressed emotion."

"There's a ship going to pieces on The Needles!" he gasped.

"For heaven's sake come quick, Joe Wilmot, they're launching the lifeboat, and want all the help they can get, there is no time to lose."

"All right, lad, I'm coming," was the cheery answer. "You go on shore, I'll follow in a minute," and Joe snatched down his oilskin and sou-wester and was dragging on a pair of enormous sea boots, when Lisbeth, who had watched the proceeding almost in a dream, was suddenly to become aware of his intention, and leaving her seat, she rushed towards him and flung her arms around his neck."

"Don't go, Joe, for my sake, don't go, you will be drowned, know you will, they can't do without you, they can't get to the ship in such a sea, don't go!"

"Why, Lisbeth," said Joe staring at the half hysterical woman, "I ain't Wilmot to shirk his duty! I wouldn't do a beloved it; no, no. As his wife's oxenwain 'round him, 'I'm oxwain o' the lifeboat, an' no man shall say I ever once turned a deaf ear to a ship in distress, let me go, my girl, God will protect me; pray to the Blessed Virgin, and we will come back safe never fear, let me go, 'Lisbeth.' The tone was sterner than he intended; the clinging arms relaxed, a look of agonised reproach came into the tear dimmed eyes, and his wife fell to the floor in a dead faint."

"My God!" exclaimed Joe in alarm. He knelt down beside the motionless figure, and took one of the cold hands in his. "She'll die if I leave her," he muttered, "in an agony I despair. Just at this juncture a shout faint and muffled, but still audible, came in at the open door. "Joe Wilmot! Joe!" Joe arose, low struggling with duty, at length the latter conquered, and with a last despairing glance at the prostrate figure, he answered with a murmur, "I ain't Comin' and sprang through the door, and down the cliff path at a breakneck speed. Partly aroused by her husband's shout, Lisbeth opened her eyes and looked around in a dazed manner, presently she saw her husband, who, struggling to her feet and still faint and weak, took a large shawl from a nail behind the door, and wrapping it around her head and shoulders, staggered out into the howling gale, closing the cottage door to shut her out. The force of the wind nearly took her off her feet, but recovering herself with an effort, she reached the top of the cliff path, from whence she could see the beach below. Almost all the population of the village was collected there watching the launching of the lifeboat, which was just about to put off and was evidently only waiting the arrival of Joe, whom Lisbeth could see struggling halfway down the steep path. She herself was hidden behind a rock, but being almost directly over the heads of the people, she could hear a good deal of what they were saying, or rather shouting, and her face burned with indignation."

"Here he comes," said one. "I'm bound to stopper to finish a pipe o' haccy afore he troubles his head with the lifeboat, which was just about to put off and was evidently only waiting the arrival of Joe, whom Lisbeth could see struggling halfway down the steep path. She herself was hidden behind a rock, but being almost directly over the heads of the people, she could hear a good deal of what they were saying, or rather shouting, and her face burned with indignation."

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The captain caught this suggestion and instantly acted upon it, the boat's head was turned to the wind with considerable difficulty and the crew pulled with a will right in the teeth of the howling gale. When the captain considered that they had covered the distance necessary to enable the wind to carry the line in the direction of the ship he gave the order to fire. With a loud hiss the heavy messenger sped upward into the air carrying with it the slender line attached to a stout cable, that in its turn would carry salvation to the agonized watchers on the ship."

With breathless anxiety the crew of the life-boat watched the flight of the rocket. Would it miss? It fell short of the ship, and the order was given to tack to leeward. Another rocket went up and again missed. Calculating the distance to a nicety they fired again, and this time a shout went up, the line had fallen clear over the wreck. It was instantly seized, and the life-boat aided by strong arms from the doomed ship began to make headway against the tide. All this time the ill-fated schooner had been grinding and rasping on the terrible rocks, every wave washed clear

boat, the crew of which had almost forgotten the wreck in their anxiety about the fate of their comrad. Their attention was recalled to it almost immediately, however, by a sight which nearly froze them with horror. A woman with a child in her arms, and evidently crazy with terror, rushed upon the poop and before any of these on the ship could divine her intention or make any movement to prevent her flung herself into the raging sea."

By this time Joe had reached the boat, and willing hands dragged him over the gunwale. Sinking down utterly exhausted he closed his eyes for a moment to re-open them again as he heard the excited exclamations of his comrades: "There she is there!" "What is it?" he asked, and was hurriedly told what had occurred. He raised himself up, some difficulty for he was still weak and benumbed with cold, and, looking in the direction in which the men were excitedly pointing, he could just discern something small and white tossing on the crest of a wave and in imminent danger of being dashed against the side of the ship."

upon a wide belt of needle pointed rocks, the tops of which were so near the surface that the life boat itself was almost in danger of being dashed upon them. The only hope now in a cable along which the passengers and as if duly to bring ye up a lady."

Meanwhile, brave Joe Wilmot, seeming to gain strength with every stroke, fought his way through the water like a man, but it upon only one thing, saving the child. He reached the point about midway between the boat and the wreck, where he judged the child would be most likely to appear, and looked anxiously about for any sign of a floating object. He desired something white a few yards ahead, and striking out again, managed to grasp it. It was the body of a little girl, and had a life-boat fastened to it, which had evidently kept it afloat. Grasping the body firmly, and holding it above the water, Joe began his laborious return to the boat. A few tugs to the rope had apprised those holding it that he was coming back, and they began hauling in cautiously. About half the distance had been accomplished, when suddenly with a loud, grinding crash the ill-fated vessel parted amidships, and the sea was instantly strewn with floating wreckage and struggling forms; for they were sucked into the vortex caused by the sinking ship. Breathless and almost lifeless, Joe and his little burden were lifted into the lifeboat. The child, a pretty little golden-haired thing, about four or five years old, was not dead, but quite insensible. She was wrapped up in thick blankets and laid in the bottom of the boat; Joe revived after a few doses of brandy, and enquired anxiously for "the little one."

"When assured that she was safe and would be probably brought home, he breathed a sigh of relief, and muttering something about "Lisbeth and little Mary," he closed his eyes in utter exhaustion. The lifeboat remained in the same position for about ten minutes, while a few more of the crew were being pulled in. At length, however, the people who might be near enough for an attempt to be made to save them; but after that last sickening crash, and the cries of the unfortunate passengers no sound was to be heard save the howling of the wind and the rattling of the sea in sight but the time was wasted, and the other wreckage. At last the order was given to return to shore, and the lifeboat this time with the tide in its favor was rapidly rowed back, with its crew of one man, out of a hundred and fifty souls."

It had commenced to rain, the violence of the wind having somewhat abated, and the cold drops revived Lisbeth Wilmot, who was lying on the top of the cliff path, came back a large boulder. Struggling to get up, she looked out over the fast darkening sea. Not a vestige of the ship was to be seen, but she could just discern the lifeboat on its way back, and eagerly counting the number of men in it, she found, with a sickening thrill of fear, that there was one missing. "O Heaven!" she moaned, pressing her hands over her heart to still its wild throbbing. "He is gone, my Joe, my little dead girl, my other son, and I am left alone!"

Scarcely knowing what she did she groped her way back to the cottage, and flinging the door wide open, staggered in, and sank down on her knees beside a chair. She could not weep, she could not pray, she could do nothing but kneel there, and grasp her burning head in both hands, one thought running in her mind, and seeming to sap energy and life. "Joe is gone, Joe is gone, and I never said good-bye!"

How long she remained thus she never knew, she was roused at last by a sound at the door, even then she scarcely moved, it was one of the women come to tell her, she would rather they would leave her alone, alone with her grief. Suddenly a voice pierced her ears, it was the voice of the dead? "Joe's voice!" It said "Lisbeth." She looked up and sprang to her feet with a cry: "Joe was standing at the door, with, could it be, little Mary in his arms?" Lisbeth held out her arms with a yearning cry, and Joe rushed towards her, placed the little girl in her embrace and put his strong arms around the two. "I've brought her to ye, Lisbeth, I saved her, she is yours," he almost shouted in the exuberance of his feelings. "Nobody can take her from ye, for every soul has gone down with the ship."

That Christmas day was a happier one in Joe Wilmot's home than even the most optimistic person could possibly have foretold, who had seen them before the memorable expedition that had proved so fortunate for little Lily. "That was the name of the charming little child whom brave Joe had saved, and who took to both of them almost at once. Lisbeth comforted her with the assurance that her dear mamma would one day come and see her, and the little thing was quite contented, and ran about after her foster mother much as little Mary had done. Her clothing was of fine materials and exquisitely made, but there was evidently Lily's fitted and dead, any clue to her identity at all. Lisbeth put it carefully away, however, together with a pretty gold locket that contained the portrait of a beautiful woman, who, from the likeness that existed, was evidently Lily's fitted and mother. The years passed away uneventfully, other wrecks occurred, but none of them were attended with such fearful loss of life, as that one from which Lily was rescued. She had grown into a tall, graceful girl, and her "daddy," as she affectionately called Joe, was never tired of watching her."

He and Lisbeth would never allow her to take any part in the rough work

which the other girls and women were obliged to perform, and when she demonstrated with them, Joe would wave his pipe. "Your father an' mother was gentle-folks, lassie, an' if any o' your kin ever comes to claim ye, yo shant say as I dudu try to bring ye up a lady."

Lily would laugh and say, "Me a lady, daddy, and put her arms around his neck an' say he was the best daddy in the world and if a lake 'ard along and said she'd be married to him, and would she go and be lady Lily, she would say, "No thank you, sir, at which Joe would roar and ask Lisbeth to listen to that."

It was Christmas eve, Lily was standing at the window, looking out over the sea, much as Joe had done ten years before. They had had a very bad season, the herrings catch had not been so good as in average. Lisbeth had been ill, to the fact only just convalescent, and Merry Christmas on the morrow."

Joe had gone down to the village to get the few things they scanty means allowed. Lily gazed out over the sea in silence the wind was freshening and with a loud, grinding crash the ill-fated vessel parted amidships, and the sea was instantly strewn with floating wreckage and struggling forms; for they were sucked into the vortex caused by the sinking ship. Breathless and almost lifeless, Joe and his little burden were lifted into the lifeboat. The child, a pretty little golden-haired thing, about four or five years old, was not dead, but quite insensible. She was wrapped up in thick blankets and laid in the bottom of the boat; Joe revived after a few doses of brandy, and enquired anxiously for "the little one."

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## A Christmas Carol.

WRITTEN FOR THE REGISTER.

By THOMAS S. WHELAN.

Hark! the joyous chimes of Christmas,  
Ringing on the midnight air,  
Bring to mind those merry tidings,  
Tidings brought by angels fair.  
See, the snow in white is mantled,  
And the groundwales still descend;  
Pale and ghostly, struggling moonbeams  
With the hush'd surroundings blend.

Look, the faithful fast are flocking  
To assist at Midnight Mass;  
Coming, whisp'ring up the roadway,  
Thro' the portals wide they pass.  
View the church, adorned and brilliant,  
Sending thro' our souls a thrill;  
Hear within the choir's sweet chanting:  
"Peace on earth, to men good will."

At the altar bright with splendor,  
Stands the priest enrobed in white;  
Loud and solemn peals the organ,  
Praise to Him, the King of Might.  
Thurifiers their censers swinging,  
Acolytes their torches bear,  
Thousands kneel in adoration,  
Off'ring up their humble pray'r.

Backward look thro' bygone ages,  
Travel o'er time and space,  
When the King of Kings became the  
Man-God Savior of our race.  
Poor and lowly was the dwelling  
Of the Babe of Bethlehem,  
In a rude-wrought crib reclining,  
Sov'reign with no diadem.

While some lonely shepherds roaming,  
Tend their flocks upon a hill,  
List! they hear strange voices chanting:  
"Peace on earth, to men good will."  
Lo! the heaven's sudden brightness,  
Joyful anthems fill the air;  
Gladsome news is here narrated  
To the shepherds bent in pray'r.

Hail, then, Christmas tide with pleasure,  
And rejoice upon that morn;  
For our God, the Infant Savior,  
To redeem mankind was born.  
Beg of Him the grace, hereafter  
To dwell forever above;  
In the Mansion of His Father,  
Boundless Source of Endless Love.

Montreal, December 1896.

Forth they go, their flocks deserting,  
Seeking out the Infant King;  
Till, at last, they near the stable  
Where angelic voices sing;  
"Praise to God; all glory give Him:  
Alleluia! All rejoice!"  
Low in adoration bending,  
Hear they thus the Seraph's voice.

Meanwhile in the Eastern heavens,  
Shone a bright miracle star,  
Making known the Savior's coming  
To the East from afar.  
Thus directed by this vision,  
They responded to the call:  
And arriving at the manger,  
Worship Him as God of all.

Let us only for a moment,  
In oblivion veil the past;  
Leave behind the days now olden,  
At our times a glance to east,  
Christmas now is celebrated;  
Round about the entire earth,  
Millions join in praise and homage,  
Giving joy for Jesus' birth.

On this day we seek home's comforts,  
As we'd no cluster'd all within;  
While the Yule-tide log is crackling,  
Closing out the tempest's din,  
Mistletoe and beauteous ivy,  
Evergreens and holly vine,  
Tokens of the ancient Yule-tide,  
As about the room they twine.

Gather'd round the family heart stone,  
Hear the whole year's tales re-told:  
Count the joys, recall the sorrows  
Of the present year now old.  
Friends shall meet who've long been parted,  
Enemies will all unite;  
Every'thing is glad and cheerful,  
Scene sublime, so grand, so bright.

"It's the child!" exclaimed Harry Sewall.

At these words Joe's resolution was instantly taken. "Get a rope," he commanded. It was brought, and fastening it around his waist, he plunged once more, faint and exhausted though he was, into the sea, and struck out for the spot where the white object was last seen. Buffeted by the angry waves, blinded by spray and almost deafened by the combined roar of wind and water, Joe struggled madly on. It was a child; that was enough for him. If to Lisbeth she would forgive his harshness. Long though the time it takes to tell it, but a very few minutes had elapsed since Joe was flung into the sea, and the crew of the life-boat had not once relaxed their efforts to reach the ship. The rope dangled by the rocket had snapped, and preparations were instantly made to fire another, but very little could be done until Joe returned, as half a dozen men were holding on to the rope that was tied around his waist."

It was found impossible to approach the wreck any nearer, as she was fast

which the other girls and women were obliged to perform, and when she demonstrated with them, Joe would wave his pipe. "Your father an' mother was gentle-folks, lassie, an' if any o' your kin ever comes to claim ye, yo shant say as I dudu try to bring ye up a lady."

Lily would laugh and say, "Me a lady, daddy, and put her arms around his neck an' say he was the best daddy in the world and if a lake 'ard along and said she'd be married to him, and would she go and be lady Lily, she would say, "No thank you, sir, at which Joe would roar and ask Lisbeth to listen to that."

It was Christmas eve, Lily was standing at the window, looking out over the sea, much as Joe had done ten years before. They had had a very bad season, the herrings catch had not been so good as in average. Lisbeth had been ill, to the fact only just convalescent, and Merry Christmas on the morrow."

Joe had gone down to the village to get the few things they scanty means allowed. Lily gazed out over the sea in silence the wind was freshening and with a loud, grinding crash the ill-fated vessel parted amidships, and the sea was instantly strewn with floating wreckage and struggling forms; for they were sucked into the vortex caused by the sinking ship. Breathless and almost lifeless, Joe and his little burden were lifted into the lifeboat. The child, a pretty little golden-haired thing, about four or five years old, was not dead, but quite insensible. She was wrapped up in thick blankets and laid in the bottom of the boat; Joe revived after a few doses of brandy, and enquired anxiously for "the little one."

"When assured that she was safe and would be probably brought home, he breathed a sigh of relief, and muttering something about "Lisbeth and little Mary," he closed his eyes in utter exhaustion. The lifeboat remained in the same position for about ten minutes, while a few more of the crew were being pulled in. At length, however, the people who might be near enough for an attempt to be made to save them; but after that last sickening crash, and the cries of the unfortunate passengers no sound was to be heard save the howling of the wind and the rattling of the sea in sight but the time was wasted, and the other wreckage. At last the order was given to return to shore, and the lifeboat this time with the tide in its favor was rapidly rowed back, with its crew of one man, out of a hundred and fifty souls."

It had commenced to rain, the violence of the wind having somewhat abated, and the cold drops revived Lisbeth Wilmot, who was lying on the top of the cliff path, came back a large boulder. Struggling to get up, she looked out over the fast darkening sea. Not a vestige of the ship was to be seen, but she could just discern the lifeboat on its way back, and eagerly counting the number of men in it, she found, with a sickening thrill of fear, that there was one missing. "O Heaven!" she moaned, pressing her hands over her heart to still its wild throbbing. "He is gone, my Joe, my little dead girl, my other son, and I am left alone!"

Scarcely knowing what she did she groped her way back to the cottage, and flinging the door wide open, staggered in, and sank down on her knees beside a chair. She could not weep, she could not pray, she could do nothing but kneel there, and grasp her burning head in both hands, one thought running in her mind, and seeming to sap energy and life. "Joe is gone, Joe is gone, and I never said good-bye!"

How long she remained thus she never knew, she was roused at last by a sound at the door, even then she scarcely moved, it was one of the women come to tell her, she would rather they would leave her alone, alone with her grief. Suddenly a voice pierced her ears, it was the voice of the dead? "Joe's voice!" It said "Lisbeth." She looked up and sprang to her feet with a cry: "Joe was standing at the door, with, could it be, little Mary in his arms?" Lisbeth held out her arms with a yearning cry, and Joe rushed towards her, placed the little girl in her embrace and put his strong arms around the two. "I've brought her to ye, Lisbeth, I saved her, she is yours," he almost shouted in the exuberance of his feelings. "Nobody can take her from ye, for every soul has gone down with the ship."

That Christmas day was a happier one in Joe Wilmot's home than even the most optimistic person could possibly have foretold, who had seen them before the memorable expedition that had proved so fortunate for little Lily. "That was the name of the charming little child whom brave Joe had saved, and who took to both of them almost at once. Lisbeth comforted her with the assurance that her dear mamma would one day come and see her, and the little thing was quite contented, and ran about after her foster mother much as little Mary had done. Her clothing was of fine materials and exquisitely made, but there was evidently Lily's fitted and dead, any clue to her identity at all. Lisbeth put it carefully away, however, together with a pretty gold locket that contained the portrait of a beautiful woman, who, from the likeness that existed, was evidently Lily's fitted and mother. The years passed away uneventfully, other wrecks occurred, but none of them were attended with such fearful loss of life, as that one from which Lily was rescued. She had grown into a tall, graceful girl, and her "daddy," as she affectionately called Joe, was never tired of watching her."

He and Lisbeth would never allow her to take any part in the rough work

which the other girls and women were obliged to perform, and when she demonstrated with them, Joe would wave his pipe. "Your father an' mother was gentle-folks, lassie, an' if any o' your kin ever comes to claim ye, yo shant say as I dudu try to bring ye up a lady."