

annuity. "Just enough for candies," her father had once laughing remarked.

Next day she called on Father O'Brien. He was very kind and arranged to give her instructions. He introduced her to a Catholic family named O'Doherty, who gladly received her—and with their help she secured some pupils.

One afternoon, some months later, in a street car, she met Signor Rosso. She nodded to him, and he at once came to the vacant seat near her. She bent towards him and whispered: "You will be glad to hear I am a Catholic."

"Thank God, thank God," he exclaimed, "but your father?"

"I have not seen him for months," she replied.

"And your home?" he questioned.

"Is mine no longer. I earn my own living now," she said.

Joy and pain and triumph, all struggled for mastery in Rosso's soul. Lelia was now within his reach. He had now a fair chance. Should he try?

He did try, and that evening Lelia told Father O'Brien of their engagement, and he heartily approved. A perfect gentleman, a grand Catholic. God is good to send you such a husband," so Father O'Brien declared.

Henceforth Lelia's life was one of comparative ease—and the crowning joy was the coming of a baby daughter, "Annunciata," she was called, but the name was shortened to Zia. Three years later, Lelia died. This was a terrible blow to Rosso. He left New York, and went West—moving from city to city. When Zia was twelve, her father became dangerously ill. Mrs. O'Doherty was sent for, and to her care he confided the child. She, too, was to keep the precious miniature till Zia had attained her twenty-first year. But only in death would he part from it—the image of Christ Crucified and the portrait of his dead wife were the last things his dying eyes rested on.

Of worthy wealth, he had little to leave his child—just enough to educate her, and to defray the expenses of training for some profession.

Mrs. O'Doherty sent her to the Sacred Heart Convent at —, and Zia made amazing progress. When she had been four years at school, Nita Forrester, a girl of her own age, a convert, came to be prepared for her First Communion. The two became great friends, and when Nita returned the following term, they were inseparable. They were marked contrasts. Nita was fair, Zia had her mother's dark blue eyes and black hair; Nita was petite, Zia tall and slender; Nita had wealth untold and Zia just a small annuity.

Nita often said that Zia was very like someone she had seen—and the resemblance puzzled her. "No," she corrected herself, "it is a painting. You are exactly like a portrait called 'Lelia,' that I saw in grand-uncle's house."

Both girls graduated the same year; and came the end of school days. Arm in arm, the friends paced the beach avenue that last evening. Nita was saying: "Suppose granduncle should find his daughter, or her children—they would inherit all, and I should no longer be his heiress. I really think that would kill me. I could not live without lots of money."

"Well, comfort yourself," laughed Zia, "it's only in novels people 'turn up,' as you say."

They parted. Nita for the Adirondacks, and Zia for the hospital, where she intended to train as a nurse.

Three years later, with full diplomas, she was staying with Mrs. O'Doherty—and had seen for the first time the beautiful miniature of her mother. She was examining it intently when a telegram was given her. It was from Nita, and ran as follows:

Bellmont, Adirondacks.
Granduncle very ill. Come on at once. He will have no nurse but you. Come by night express. I will meet you.
Nita.

There was barely time to pack her case—an Zia was off. The precious portrait which was enclosed in a locket-shaped casket, she wore as a pendant.

On reaching Bellmont, Nita at once took her to the sick room. The patient was asleep when they entered, but the slight noise awoke him. He opened his eyes, and looked at Zia in wonder. "Lelia, Lelia," he whispered, "have you come back to me?"

"No, dearest," said Nita, "this is my friend, Zia, come here to nurse you."

"Lelia Lelia, come to me. Will you stay with me?" he pleaded.

Thinking it was just a sick man's whim, Zia answered: "Just as long as you please."

He was satisfied, and closing his eyes, slept again.

That afternoon, Nita brought Zia to the library. "You must see the picture," she said. "It is so like you that you might have been the model."

Drawing aside a silken curtain, Nita disclosed Rosso's masterpiece. Zia drew a quick breath. Her heart seemed to stop beating. Here was the original of her mother's miniature. There was her father's name. As in a dream, she heard Nita say: "Lelia was her name. She became a Catholic, and granduncle drove her away from him. She married this great painter.

They had one child, a girl then Lelia died. Some people say the child died also. At any rate, Rosso died about ten years ago."

A gasp made Nita look at her friend. She was clinging to a chain for support, and she looked so white and wan that Nita thought she must faint. But Zia pulled herself together quickly. She asked for a drink of water, but this was because she wanted to be alone for a few moments. She wanted to realize that that was her mother's portrait, and that her grandfather lay ill upstairs. She must not betray herself, to make herself known, would be to deprive Nita of her inheritance. That she would never do.

Next day, as she bent over the invalid, her precious pendant caught in the counterpane, the chain snapped, and the locket flew open. The patient seized it. He started, looked fixedly at Zia, and asked:

"Who painted it?"

Somehow his eyes compelled her, and she replied: "My father."

"Benedetto del Rosso?" questioned the old man.

"Yes," she assented.

"And your mother was?" he continued.

"Lelia, but I never heard her surname," she answered.

"I knew it," he went on, "my heart told me when I first saw you. Child, child, can you forgive me? I drove your mother from her home because she wanted to become a Catholic. Later I learned that she had married Rosso. Then I read of her death. I am sure she forgave me, and prayed for me, for God has given me the great gift of faith, and now He gives me back my child in you."

"But I cannot take Nita's inheritance. Nita is my best friend. I cannot take what she has always considered as hers," pleaded Zia.

"Her inheritance!" he echoed.

"Nita never had it. Lelia's fortune has never been touched for three and twenty years. Nita will have the portion I always intended for her. You, and you only, will have your mother's inheritance. You are so like her, child. She was always loyal to her friends. Won't you try to be loyal to me?"

"I don't need to try," replied Zia, "my heart went out to you from the first."

"God bless you," said Mr. Hilton reverently. "Once more Bellmont has a 'Lily among the Lilies.'"—S. M. Gonzaga in Sentinel of the Blessed Sacrament.

SOVIET "SEMINARY"
TO TRAIN TEACHERS OF ATHEISM

Moscow, December 28.—An "anti-religious seminary" for the training of propagandists engaged in attempts to undermine the faith of the Russian people has been established here by the Moscow committee of the Russian Communist party.

A Communist, Comrade Kucherin refers to this institution in a recent number of the Izvestia as follows:

"In a short time it will fill our ranks with serious students, thoroughly well grounded in the methods of religious controversy and a credit to the old comrades, experienced in such work, who have been entrusted with the direction of the establishment. Two or four dozen comrades in this seminary—some of them new propagandists, some of them old—have worked out, under the direction of several sturdy old atheists, a plan for a joint anti-religious advance, a plan which will reduce to a minimum all the inconsistencies in the practical side of the question."

"Many agitators have in the past gone in too much for psychological-analyses or for tracing religious myths to astronomical causes. Other agitators have been historical specialists who absolutely failed to realize that an audience in this country is anything but inclined to regard religion as a fit object for scientific examination."

The new institution, the writer continues, "carefully avoids these pitfalls." Courses offered there include: Faith and Knowledge; Religion and Morals; Origin and Growth of Religions; History of Christianity; Church and State; The Reformation in the West and in Russia; Natural History, the Universe, the Solar System, the Earth; the Origin and Growth of Life, the Origin of Man, Prehistoric Man, and Religion and Marxism. A special course on the problems peculiar to Islam is offered for eastern students.

Manifestations of the anti-religious campaign in Russia recently, include the destruction of the little street chapels formerly so plentiful in Moscow and the removal of icons and religious pictures from industrial establishments. Comrade Ivan Stepanov, leader of the anti-religious forces has been active in delivering lectures before organizations of workmen. He avoids direct attacks on Christianity, seeking by playing on discrepancies between science and religion to lead his audiences to irreligious conclusions of their own.

The Soviets have succeeded in suppressing most of the details of the drive against religion and even now the general public is largely unaware that a series of trials are being conducted throughout the provinces in connection with the opposition offered by the clergy when the Bolsheviks seized church vessels and treasures

several months ago. The Moscow papers printed only sixty-five words regarding trials at Tambov where Bishop Zinovius was sentenced to six years at penal servitude and four others received other sentences.

While the enemies of Christianity are active, the Russian Church is split up into the "Living Church," headed by Bishop Antonine, the "Patriarch" set up by the Bolsheviks, and the "Church of the Regeneration" headed by Father Krasnitsky.

ONLY A SPRAY OF SHAMROCK

I look on a spray of shamrock
And, careless again, I roam
Far off in the hills of Erin,
Alone in the fields of briar.
I walk by the borean briar,
And list to the blackbird sing,
And leap by the sunlit river,
And drink of the joys of spring.

I look on a spray of shamrock
(Only a tiny spray)
And it brings in a dream before me
A home that is far away;
A grey-haired mother knitting
In the rush-light's tender glow,
Singing an old time ditty—
A song of the long ago.

I look on a spray of shamrock
And think with a joyous pride
Of its golden and gladdening message
Over the waters wide;
Of the sainted hands that touched it
On the summit of Tara's hill,
When the fire of faith was lighted—
The hope of the nation still!

I look on a spray of shamrock
And a prayer to Patrick send,
That soon in the stranger's world
My exile years may end;
That soon shall my path be winding
Where the clover dew-drops gleams,
By an emerald hill in Erin,
The land of my cherished dreams!

—MICHAEL WASHBURN

CASTLEBAR
Beyond the town of Castlebar
And up the hills hard by
There is a road I'm wearying
To see before I die;
O, wild it is and steep it is,
And drenched with sun and rain,
But I would give the world, agra,
To walk that road again.

'Tis many a way my feet have known,
I've travelled many a track
With foolish dreams before me
And with sorrow at my back;
But over all I've heard one call,
And learned to see afar,
A winding road that leads beyond
The town of Castlebar.

Beyond the town of Castlebar—
The little now to trace—
A white-washed cabin used to stand
That was my native place;
The winds go wailing round it now
As though above the dead,
O, wild it is and steep it is,
And drenched with sun and rain,
But I would give the world, agra,
To walk that road again.

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SOCIAL IMPORTANCE OF THE HOME

Though at variance on many points, religion and sociology are absolutely at one in their appreciation of the paramount importance of the home for human progress and the moral improvement of the race. While religion holds that the family owes its being to the will of God, sociology regards it as an institution, at which man laboriously arrived in his upward climb to higher forms of existence and which he finally succeeded in establishing, when he had reached a high level of civilization and morality. In either case, it is admitted that the destinies of mankind are intimately bound up with the permanence of the home and the family. The collapse of the home would entail the breakdown of society and the complete disintegration of civilization. At all stages of history, the home and the family have been threatened by the selfishness of men and by carnal lust and passion. In our age, home and family are facing a new crisis and are menaced by novel dangers. A reinforcement of the home and the family is necessary to stay the moral dissolution which already has begun and which is spreading with alarming and disquieting rapidity.

The home is the inner sanctuary of society. As long as it stands intact and unseparated, purifying influences will go forth from it and pour vitalizing energies into the whole social body. The family can rebuild a nation and reconstruct a decayed civilization. But when the family life of a nation has become vitiated and destroyed, the doom of that nation is inevitable.

As long as happy and saintly homes dot the land, no real harm can come to the country. Out of these homes will arise the saviors of their country and the rebuilders of the shattered world. Rome was an unconquerable empire as long as the home life was kept clean and wholesome. It sank into the dust when corruption entered the home and extinguished the sacred fire on the hearth. The greatest enemies of a country are not those who attack it from without, its deadliest foes are those who poison its family life and who undermine its homes. Anything that threatens the stability of the family is a menace to the moral welfare and the health of the nation. Students of social life realize this full well and they are casting about for means to strengthen our weakened family life and to prop up our tottering homes. They are thinking of new legislation by which the family ties are to be rendered stronger and by which the home is to be protected against dissolution. But with legislation we have had some sad experiences. Rome also tried to halt the destruction of its homes by laws, but all laws proved impotent. Something more than laws is required to restore the family and the homes to their erstwhile splendor and integrity. Nothing less than a spiritual regeneration of the present generation is of use. Materialism and egotism are the destroyers of the home, and if we wish to save our homes, these must be banished. It is an issue of momentous importance.

The spread of radicalism stands in direct proportion to the decline of home life. Over the threshold of a happy and religious home the radical cannot pass. The very atmosphere is antagonistic to him. It is only when the spirit of discontent has gained access to the home and when its religious spirit is waning, that radicalism finds an entrance. That is the reason why radicalism is opposed to the family, and the home, in which it sees, and rightly, the bulwarks of order and law. How ill advised are the efforts of all those who seek to loosen the sacred bonds of the family and to diminish the salutary influence of the home. They are giving the greatest comfort to the enemies of society and preparing the way for social anarchy.

The more closely knit the family and the more compact the unity of the home, the better it is for society and morality. It is strange, very many there are at present who show a perverse zeal in prying loose the cement that holds the stones together out of which the home is built. There are those who would deprive the father of his unique privilege of being the head of the family, there are others who would divert the attention of the mother from her home interests and scatter it on many unimportant issues; there are again such who would lessen parental authority and transfer parental responsibility to governmental organs. All these are contriving the ruin of the family and the destruction of the home. Whatever disguise they wear, they are in reality enemies of the happiness and the welfare of man.

The Church consistently stands for the ideal family and the ideal home. By its unremitting efforts in behalf of the integrity of the family and the sanctity of the home, it has made mankind its everlasting debtor, and secured for childhood the exquisite blessings of maternal affection and the strong protection of fatherly care. In these days, we get a glimpse of the holiest and sweetest home that ever was established on earth, the home of Nazareth. If all homes were fashioned after this pattern, the world would quickly be renewed and wear a fairer complexion.—Catholic Standard and Times.

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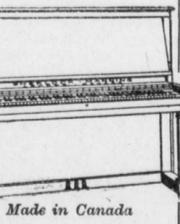
Admirers I had aplenty; even gifted musicians praised me for my clear, bell-like tone.

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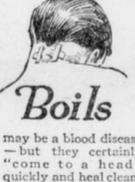
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