

returning to the subject, "that she were so ill-tempered that your life would be miserable, what then?"

"I will not suppose anything so dreadful, Sister Carey; I will trust Him in this as in all. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

It was, I suppose, just when this conversation was going on at Brother Carey's, that I, hearing unusual sounds of laughter from the girls' room, Sister Rhoda being absent, sent Sister Cooney to see what had happened. She found Grace Branigan there who had been sent with a message to Sister Eleanor Spencer. Her presence accounted for the laughter. I do not expect the girls of our house to be staid as their elders are; I like girlish mirthfulness, but I must discourage levity. Sister Cooney found in the girls' room a flutter of talk about the lot; each girl supposing it would be on one of the others the lot would fall, and, of course, hoping it would fall on herself. The talk was led on by Sister Maria Stafford, daughter of Captain Stafford, killed at Gibraltar. She has still hankerings after the gay life she once led, before her father's death, as reigning beauty of a garrison town. "I would not like the lot to fall on me," said she. "I think Mr. Walsingham will be fastidious and exacting to the last degree. He is a woman-hater, too, I think; there is always an erring female in his sermons. He loves to tell us how Adam was not deceived but Eve; how Ahab was stirred up to work wickedness by Jezebel the fair; and how Herodias, lying in wait for revenge, got the head of John the Baptist."

"I would not like the lot to fall on me," said Sister Isabella Craig, "if I would have to go to Greenland, which is a most uncomfortable country. I was both shivering and shocked last Monday evening when the missionary reports were read to hear of missionary sisters creeping on hands and feet through the long porches to their snow palaces over the offal of seals and white bears."

"Ah, Sister Craig," interposed Sister Cooney, "the sisters might well go through the porches; you, too, would go if duty called, for the Master was there before

Christ has gathered jewels out of snow huts."

"Pardon, Sister Cooney, I did talk too lightly; I will do so no more," returned Sister Craig.

"Well," said Sister Hazelton, "I never did believe in the lot; I want to know something of the person I would marry, and I do not think many of the young people of the congregation do believe in it."

"Speak for yourself, Sister Hazelton, not for the whole congregation," said Sister Cooney.

"I hope the lot will not fall on me," said Sister Susannah Kerr, for "Brother Walsingham is too handsome; I do not like handsome men."

"Well, Grace," said Eleanor Spencer, "do you hear what the Sisters say about Brother Walsingham? If the lot falls on you, what will you do?"

"Just what you would do; just what any of the Sisters would do," returned Grace sturdily.

"What is that, Grace?" said Maria Stafford; "what would any of us do?"

Grace had her hand on the door; she turned herself and said: "I would take him thankfully, and so would any of you."

After discharging this Parthian arrow, she came up to my room.

Sister Cooney warned the girls that she would report the conversation to me, and the subject was dropped. I was not pleased at this conversation, though much allowance is to be made for the mirthfulness of young maids. I would not write it down only for what followed. I found Grace, poor girl, in a most rebellious mood against Sister Spencer, the strict rule of whose house has been as goads to the unsubdued spirit of this wild Irish maiden.

"I never have a holiday," she said; "I work early and late; it is transgression to read, and worse to write; but I must think, I must read, and write—or die. I am not a machine, to be wound up for duty like the kitchen clock, and let run."

"But, Grace, if you neglect your duties?"

"I am speedily reminded of them."

"Well, Grace, we must be diligent in business."

"We want rest, too, sometimes, Sister