## "HELP OF CHRISTIANS"

### THE ROUND-ABOUT WAY IN WHICH KATIE WON HER HAPPINESS

Father John O'Neill had never liked the man of Katie Cassidy's choice. In his own mind he was a little at a loss to understand how it was that a girl of Katie's refinement and intelligence could have chosen Bert Pritchard. But Katie was no longer very young. She was alone in the world. Her employment—she was a model in a fashionable draper's shop—depended on youth. Katie was threatened with an amplitude—no more than became her at present—the possibilities of which made her quail. And Bert Pritchard had nothing against him that Father John could discover. He made it a matter of private prayer, for Katie was one of those who are a consolation to a priest in the governing of his flock. She was wise, pious, kind. In circumstances of considerable risk—for Katie was a beautiful girl, else she had not been a model at Messrs. Strode & Edwards—she had kept herself unspotted from the world. More, she was a light to those among whom she dwelt, and Father John had received several young ladies from Messrs. Strode & Edwards' who owed their leading in the first instand to Katie's shining example.

Mr. Pritchard was not of Katie's religion, but that presented no difficulty, since he was quite willing to be instructed. He had, indeed, too few difficulties to please Father John, who read insincerity and indifference into this over-willingness. However, he could not act on his own secret intuitions; he could only do his best to insure that the conversion was a genuine one and leave Bert Pritchard to Him who made him.

He often asked himself if he were not unjust to the man because he had so high an opinion of Katie. It was not likely she would find a husband up to her stature, mentally or morally. She was a charming creature, with the beautiful Madonna-like softness which was a heritage of her Irish blood. Blue-eyed, dark-haired, white-skinned, with a low, sweet voice, Katie was one of those girls who are born ladies, a very common type among Irish women.

Most people would have thought Bert Pritchard good-looking. Not so Father John. He was a sleek-haired, black-eyed, highly-colored young man, with large white teeth under a big moustache and an air of being on very good terms with himself. He dressed in ultra-smart fashion. He was in the same employment as Katie, and he had an air of condescension to all whom he met in Katie's small social circle, not even excepting Father John O'Neill himself, and Father John claimed descent from the O'Neills of Tirowen and looked and acted his descent.

Mr. Bert Pritchard was about to better himself, following his marriage to Katie. He was going out to the colonies. As he said to Father John, there was no chance for a man of his attainments in London—their way of doing business was too sleepy. A friend of his had started in Melbourne a few years previously and wanted a man like him to help him. Perhaps in a little time he might set up for himself. Katie's experience would be useful to him.

He was apparently very frank, but Father John could not get rid of a most uneasy feeling of distrust. Yet there was nothing against the man. He had interview one of the heads of Strode & Edwards, and had been assured that Pritchard was one of the most steady men in their employment. Father John had seen the young man's bank book. There was a comfortable sum to his credit. Katie also had her savings. One would have said that this comely, careful pair started life together under the happiest auspices, if one did not happen to be like Father John, with a somewhat jealous fatherly interest in the bride and an unreasonable distrust of the prospective groom.

There was no doubt that Katie was very much in love with the man of her choice. Yet Father John had a secret intuition that somewhere in the back of her mind she was a sharer in his distrust. However, if that were so, she took her lover's part against herself and against the hostility she dimly divined in the priest, for her manner was tenderness itself to him, and she never lost an opportunity of praising him to Father John.

To give him his due, Mr. Pritchard seemed very much in love with Katie. On that score Father John had no fault to find with him. He seemed eager to hurry on the wedding, and since he was to leave Messrs. Strode & Edwards some time in May, and his new position in Melbourne awaited him as soon as he was ready to take it up there was really no reason for postponement. Father John and Katie in consultation agreed upon the date, the feast of Our Lady Help of Christians. Could there be a more propitious date? The 24th of May was finally set for the wedding. When it was done Father John had a feeling that he had shifted his responsibility. Let Her see to it that Katie was safe and happy; the marriage would be under Her protection. After it was settled Father John felt lighter in his mind. In his new relief indeed he felt kinder in his judgment of Bert Pritchard—in the gentleman's absence. When he was present the old distrust returned again.

Katie made the sweetest bride, Messrs. Strode & Edwards had behaved very handsomely, and had given the bride her wedding dress. It was made in their best style—something charmingly simple, of embroidered chiffon, which Katie could never have hoped to possess in any other circumstances. There was a modest breakfast in a quiet hotel, at which one of the partners and a few of the more important persons in Messrs. Strode & Edwards' employment put in an appearance. Katie had been at early Mass and Holy Communion. Mr. Pritchard had been unable to be with her, but had turned up spick and span, frock-coated, top-hatted, with a peach-colored tie and a gardenia in his buttonhole in good time for the ceremony.

A certain number of Katie's friends were in church, half a dozen of the "shop ladies"—Messrs. Strode & Edwards had been very kind about it—Father John and his curate, Father Tim Herlihy, with Miss Lavelle, Katie's landlady who had a motherly affection for her lodger and wept surreptitiously all during the ceremony because she was going to lose her.

Everything went as well as possible. The breakfast was excellent. Katie was a lovely bride in her charming dress, her veil and wreath, wearing the pearl ornaments which had been the gift of her friends at Strode & Edwards. Mr. Edwards proposed the health of the bride and bridegroom in a most felicitous speech. Mr. Bert Pritchard was on his feet responding. But even now Father John could not rid himself of a certain heavy feeling about the marriage. Now that it was done, looking round the board at the faces all beaming good-will upon Katie and her husband, he asked himself if there was not something he had left undone, something which would be chargeable to his account, in the way of investigating the character of the man who would hold in his hands poor Katie's life and happiness.

While he strove to put the misgivings away from him, while the bride-groom was in full flow of a somewhat unctuous eloquence, the blow fell. The door had opened behind the bridegroom's back. A small, pinched-looking woman, dressed in dingy black, had come in. Every one stared at her. She wore an air of grim determination, and her thin lips curved in a saturnine smile. Mr. Pritchard, in a full flow of eloquence, and Katie looking down in her lap, smiling and happy, alone were unconscious of the ominious presence. Suddenly something in the air froze the eloquence on Mr. Pritchard's lips. He became aware that the attention of the company was fixed directly behind his head. He turned and met the eyes of the woman, eyes in which a dull greenish light began to glare.

"If you've quite done with this here fooling," the little woman remarked, "perhaps you'll come home to your wife and family."

Poor Katie? Was ever such unmerited shame? Katie neither screamed nor fainted. She only went a very dead white and stood up, with one hand resting on the table, looking as though she did not quite understand, at Bert Pritchard and the woman who claimed him. He had advanced a step or two toward the other woman, as though he were used to obeying her. His eyes looked back with a sullen misery at Katie.

"Is this true?" Father O'Neill asked him.

The man did not answer. He looked from side to side as though for escape. Then his furtive glance came back to the woman.

"It's true enough," he said. "I don't know how she found me. I'd have been good to Katie—if only I'd got away with her."

Some of the women saw to Katie. Father John went home with the detected criminal. There were things to be seen to. Katie's money had been invested in the man's name. Her trunks even now were lying with his in the steamship Ibis at Tilbury Docks.

Bert Pritchard said nothing at all on the journey to North London, where he had hidden away the woman married in his boyhood and her two children. There was yet time to see the bank manager and have Katie's money handed over. That done, there was the matter of the luggage to be attended to. But in this case Katie's presence would be required to identify the various packages. For to-day she must be let alone. To morrow or next day would be time enough to call on her to do this painful thing, for both she and the man who had married her this morning would have to be present to release the luggage.

The thing could wait. And Father O'Neill trusted the pinched-looking little woman as he had not trusted the handsome rogue she was married to.

"I won't let him out of my sight," she said aside to the priest, "lest he'd do himself a harm. I'm going with him, I and the children. Maybe the time'll come when he'll be glad it was me and not her. I'm the only one Bert is afraid enough of to keep straight."

"Watch him," Father John replied, "and be very gentle with him. Fear is not everything, and this has been a bad business for him, too."

"Trust me," said Mrs. Pritchard, "to look after my own man. Oh I'll be kind enough. No other woman that knew as much about Bert as I do would be half as kind to him. I should have watched him closer, seeing how I knew his ways. It'll be better for him and me, too, to get out of it. I'll ask you to keep it all as quiet as you can, sir, till we've got out. Me and Bert and the children will sail, instead of her and Bert. That's all. And I hope the poor thing will forgive him."

"He has a good wife," said the priest, oddly touched, for he had not been prepossessed with regard to Mrs. Bert. "He has a good wife. I hope he may deserve her better in the future than he has in the past."

"He's got to," said Mrs. Bert, uncompromisingly. "I'll look after him better. I don't mind telling you, your reverence that I take blame to myself for having let him play about too much I never counted on his playing me such a trick. Not that I'll keep it up to him. Not me. I don't believe in nagging."

Father O'Neill left Bert sitting dejectedly in the midst of his regained family circle and hastened back to see how Katie was taking it.

She was taking it better than he had dared to anticipate—with a quiet dignity that enhanced his opinion of her, if that were possible. The only thing she seemed to shrink from was returning to the shop—for a while, at all events. Father John thought that she need not consider that. He suggested, a long visit to his sister in Ireland where no one would know the thing that had befallen Katie.

After arranging with her about going to the ship to reclaim her luggage, he went back to the presbytery, musing within himself over the strange ways of women. Katie's way of bearing her trouble had somewhat taken him aback. He was inclined to think—and he had abundant experience of human nature—that an immense gratitude for the thing she had escaped was sufficient in Katie's mind to shut out the other aspects of the case.

For himself he was immensely relieved that the thing was over and done with—not only that Katie had escaped such an evil fate, but that the marriage was at an end without any reference to the fact of the bride-groom's having turned out to be already married. He said to himself that Our Lady Help of Christians had protected poor Katie. He could trust her for more than that. She could not only take away the impossible lover, but she could send the right man in his place.

The day came for the expedition to Tilbury. Father John and Katie met Mr. and Mrs. Bert Pritchard at Fenchurch Street Station. The man looked miserably shamefaced as they passed one another getting into the Tilbury train. They would have to meet and speak at the docks. Father John, sitting in a corner of the carriage, saying his Office on the downward journey, sent a glance now and again at Katie's profile against the gray skies outside the other window, and marveled at her self-control.

The whole party went on board the Ibis together. The captain had to be interviewed in order that Katie's trunks might be released. Fortunately he was on board, where the men, having coaled, were swabbing down the decks, polishing the brasses and the skylights and making all as clean and shining as new paint.

He came to meet them, a young-looking man for his responsible position, with a head of curling fair hair and a frank, open sailor's face. The gray eyes, hazel in certain lights, looked at you as though there was nothing to conceal. The good, firm lips showed in the clean-shaven face. Looking at the captain of the Ibis, one felt instinctively that here was a person to be trusted. As he came along the deck he looked sharply at each member of the strangely assorted party. A frank admiration was in his eyes as they rested on Katie, whose beauty had gained something by the trouble which had fallen upon her. Then his gaze went on to the priest.

"Why, Father John!" he said, holding out his hand.

"Tom Grant!" the priest exclaimed, apparently quite delighted at the meeting.

He introduced Katie to the captain, explaining that Tom Grant had been a boy at St. Wulstan's when he was a professor there. "One of the best boys I ever had to do with," he said, and the captain blushed all over his honest face. The other two Father John ignored, not introducing them.

This recognition greatly facilitated matters in the way of arranging about the luggage, and in a very short space of time Mr. and Mrs. Bert Pritchard were free to leave the boat. But Father John and Katie must stay to have tea with the captain. Not a sign did Tom Grant show of seeing anything unusual in the position. He pushed the business through as though it were the most ordinary thing in the world to have luggage registered in the names of Mr. and Mrs. Bert Pritchard and then to have a portion of the luggage released by Miss Cassidy.

They all breathed more freely when the Pritchards were gone. Katie was taken into one of the little cabins off the saloon to tidy herself, and somewhat to her amazement, she found herself interested in the pretty cabin, with all the odd contrivances for comfort and convenience during a long ocean voyage. She had never been on board a big boat before, and she could not help being interested, although, as she said to herself she oughtn't to be interested, seeing the dreadful thing that had just happened to her; that she must be very light-natured and thick-skinned not to feel absolutely heart-broken.

When she had finished her inspection of the cabin she went out into the saloon and looked about her there. There was so much to see that she quite lost count of time. Meanwhile Father John and the captain were pacing up and down the deck. There was a great many things they might wish to talk about, but oddly enough, Captain Tom Grant seemed interested in Katie's story to the exclusion of everything else.

"What a villain!" he said, and his hands clenched. "I shall have something to do to keep my hands off him during the voyage out. I shall be glad to see the last of him."

"He'll be kept uncommonly close for the future," said the priest, and his eyes twinkled. "And after all, if Bert had chosen to marry quietly his wife would never have known anything about it. It was the accident of a letter about the wedding carriages being forwarded from his other address—he had two addresses—that gave him away. She was too late to prevent the marriage, as she had meant to do. She only tracked him down, poor woman, in time for her appearance at the wedding breakfast."

"Ah, God wouldn't let such a great wrong as that happen. But how did it come that she was left for that flashy fellow, such a beautiful creature?"

Father John took snuff with great deliberation.

"She wasn't left for him, after all, you see," he returned.

"Didn't she know her own worth not to stoop to him?"

"Tut, tut," said Father John. "If women didn't stoop, what chance would there be for the best of men?"

His old eyes twinkled as he said it, but he did not let the captain see them being engaged in putting his snuff box away carefully in his pocket.

"Why, that is true," agreed the captain. "If women hadn't something of the stooping angel in them most of us would fare ill enough. I never saw a woman before that I thought equal to this one."

"I wouldn't tell her that, Tom," said the priest quietly. "She'll take a little while to recover. She's too delicate, too sensitive, Katie is, to be on with a new love immediately after an experience like hers. Mind you, not that I believe she cares for the fellow. I think she is finding out that she was not altogether comfortable at the prospect of marrying him all the time. But she feels ashamed. What girl like her wouldn't? Perhaps when you come back from this voyage—"

Tom Grant protested that he never thought of such a thing as lifting his eyes to Katie with so much shyness in his ingenuous face that the priest said to himself that, for all his gold braid, Tom was very little changed from the old days at St. Wulstan's.

"I'm not going to do your lovemaking for you," the priest protested humorously. "But, anyhow, Katie Cassidy's as good a girl as ever made a decent man happy, and I won't say that she mightn't be coaxed by a good fellow after a time to forget what she has suffered. Mind, I say after a time. You'll hear of Katie any time through me. But she's not one to have her match made, as we used to say in Ireland. Any man who wants her will have to win her."

The tea bell rang, and the two men turned and went back toward the saloon. Katie was sitting waiting for them, the light from the porthole on her purple-black hair. She looked more refreshed and brightened than her slight toilet would have warranted. As she looked up at their entrance her eyes were toward Tom Grant. They were shy and they were approving.

"Ah," said Father John to himself. Sure, 'tis by roundabout ways. She gives her clients happiness after all."—Katharine Tynan in Benziger's Magazine.

## LIFE OF BLESSED MADELEINE SOPHIE

### FOUNDRESS OF THE SACRED HEART ORDER

CONTINUED FROM LAST WEEK

The house of the Sacred Heart at Poitiers was particularly dear to her, it was the first novitiate, and a special atmosphere of recollection and silence seemed to pervade the old monastic cloisters and the hidden nooks in the garden. Often she would be found under a walnut tree at the bottom of the garden and her burning words when she joined the novices at recreation showed that she had been drawn very near to God and had received understanding concerning many of His secrets. The value of a hidden life was one of the truths she was wont to explain; she wrote once as follows: "when the Holy Spirit finds a soul that is docile, stripped of self, content to suffer and to have no private interest, then He transforms it according to the words of the apostle; it becomes hidden in God with Christ Jesus, buried in His death so as to rise with Him again." In a letter to Mother Adrienne Michel she said: "Let us place ourselves in this divine centre, in the Sacred Heart of Jesus, let us look at ourselves only in Him. What a happy lot is that of the soul that lives hidden in God." Again commenting one day to her daughters on the lives of Martha and Mary she spoke of the necessity of uniting the activity of Martha to the contemplation of Mary "but," she added, "the latter element must predominate," and, speaking of prayer, "I beg our divine Master to give you an attraction for prayer, a taste for that prayer of the heart which is paradise on earth when it is joined with fidelity."

Blessed Madeleine Sophie Barat's intercourse with God was constant, on the busiest days she never failed to secure long hours of prayer, six or seven habitually; often when she was in the chapel, she became completely absorbed in God and her countenance glowed with a heavenly radiance. Once, when she had been ill, the Sister infirmarian came to fetch her away from the chapel, asking her whether she had finished her prayers, "You know Sister," she answered, "that I have never finished." She never lost an opportunity of prayer, her long sleepless nights were spent in this holy exercise; once when she was recovering from a long illness she had fallen asleep towards morning, someone accidentally woke her, but she checked all apologies, thanking her for having thus given an opportunity of making an act of the love of God earlier than she would otherwise have done. During the long months of helplessness that followed the time when she severely injured her ankle she was carried about in a kind of basket chair and God no doubt allowed that she should often be forgotten, sometimes she was found after a long interval perfectly serene, rejoicing in this opportunity for longer prayer. Prayer was the secret of her strength, that strength which triumphed over all the efforts made to destroy the society of the Sacred Heart from its earliest years.

When in 1811 an attempt was made to set aside the constitutions and change both the spirit and name of the institute, she went from one house of the society to another during four long years, keeping up devotion to the Sacred Heart in all hearts, praying and waiting for God's time with unalterable patience. Those whom she gathered round her felt when they left her presence as though overshadowed by the spirit of our Lord and filled with the charity, zeal and holy energy with which she had inspired them. During this time of tribulation, she sought in prayer the spirit of those constitutions which, together with Father Varin, she was drawing up for the Society. She spent some time at the Chateau of Chevroz where Father Varin was living with his sister; one of the family, then a boy of twelve, speaks thus of her stay among them. "Mother Barat spent hours and hours in the church. One evening she was not to be found and I was sent with a lantern to look for her. I saw no one in the church at first, so I went with my lantern from bench to bench and at last espied something black in one of them. It was Mother Barat, lost in prayer. I had to call her several times before I aroused her attention, 'yes, my child,' she answered gently, rising up and emerging from her corner, 'I am coming, I will follow you,' and she followed the light of my lantern. Pondering over this afterwards I came to the conclusion that these long hours spent before the Blessed Sacrament in such close union with the Sacred Heart were spent in asking for and receiving light to frame or mature the Constitution of her Institute."

Blessed Madeleine Sophie Barat's spirit of prayer and unfailing trust enabled her to tide over the crisis of 1839 when a desire to adhere more closely to the rules of St. Ignatius threatened to alter the first spirit of the Society of the Sacred Heart. She met with opposition even from those in whom she had ever placed entire confidence yet according to the testimony of her most determined opponents, "she was a true religious of the meek and humble Heart of Jesus, she did not open her mouth to excuse herself." She wrote to Mother d'Avenas at this time, "you must not say, 'so and so has done this.' It is the unfaithfulness of us all that brought these evils upon us. How can we repair them now? God alone knows, we must pray. When the night is darkest dawn is nearest. At length Rome decided that the Society be governed in accordance with the rules approved by Leo XII. In the letter announcing this Blessed Madeleine Sophie Barat said, "soon we shall be thanking our Lord for the trials we have passed through, we shall recognize that the cross is always the tree of life and that all good things come to us with it."

It was Blessed Madeleine Sophie Barat's constant union with God which enabled her to bear up even to extreme old age through trials which were humanly speaking beyond her strength. For months together, year after year, sickness did not allow her to leave her room and her physical weakness was often so great that she could hardly hold a pen. Trials of every kind crowded in thickly upon her, persecution and troubles from within and from without; every foundation was marked in an especial manner with the seal of the Cross, all her first companions died before her yet none of these trials had power to ruffle even for an instant the deep peace of her soul. She experienced the truth of the words which she had herself penned to one of her daughters, "speak little, pray much, always go onward, letting things pass by, holding only to what is eternal and seeking in all things the greater glory of the Sacred Heart of Jesus which will be to you at death what it has been to you during this fleeting life."

Mother Barat's recourse to prayer was continual; often she would wait a few minutes before giving an answer, then speak as if the message came straight from God. She said once in a letter to a religious that she wished for no congratulations on her feast day either from the nuns or from the children. "If they do write to me, let it be to say, 'we have prayed for you on such and such a day.' That is short and precious—that is all I wish for." Her own prayer made her truly "all powerful over the Heart of Jesus" and she accepted the prayers of others with the gratitude of a beggar receiving alms. To those who thought that a life of prayer was incompatible with a life of action, she once gave the following explanation. "What then is our interior life? is it a life of continuous prayer like that of contemplative Orders? no it is a mortified life, a life of abnegation, of freedom from all self-preoccupation, the life of one who seeks God everywhere and at all times. What life was busier than that of St. Francis Xavier when he was engaged in the conversion of the East. Do you think that when he was sharing the meals of the Indians and joining in their games, he was not acting in accordance with interior spirit? St. Paul in the course of his apostolic journeys supported himself by tent-making, and God raised him to the third heaven. Interior life is the bond which binds together all other religious virtues and insures the strength of the spiritual building."

Blessed Madeleine Sophie Barat was herself often raised to great heights of prayer. God gave her a wonderful knowledge of His adorable perfections and a profound understanding of the mystery of the Incarnation, yet there was nothing strained in her piety, she seemed as it were to live with the life of the Church and to study above all the love of God in all its manifestations.

In 1845 she visited the holy House of Loretto on her way to Rome. She received Holy Communion and after her thanksgiving kissed the walls of the shrine saying: "Look at the lintel over that door, how often Jesus, Mary and Joseph must have beheld it, and this small hearth, no doubt that was where our Lady warmed and caressed the dear Holy Child on cold nights before putting Him back into His cradle." Her transports of love kept breaking forth at the sight of everything that had belonged to the Holy Family.

She could not bear people to have hard thoughts about God, she wrote once: "if the world only knew how beautiful Jesus is, and how His Heart is burning with love for us, who could help loving Him! how foolish are those who seek to limit God's mercy."

The sufferings of our Lord's Passion and the mysteries of His life in the Blessed Sacrament were the subject of Blessed Madeleine Sophie Barat's constant meditation. In 1852 after a severe fall she was unable to go up and down stairs, the Archbishop of Paris knowing what privations this would entail, allowed the Blessed Sacrament to be reserved in an oratory adjoining her room. Mother Barat spoke with delight of her close neighbourhood to the tabernacle and spent all her free moments in the oratory; one day when she hoped to have a longer time than usual with our Lord the portress came to call her away. Mother Barat opened a tiny crack of the oratory door, as if fearing to yield to temptation, and making a low genuflection kissed her hand to the altar whispering "I shall not be long my Lord, as soon as my visitors are gone, I will come back to you." Mother Barat kept her crucifix beside her on her bureau and while she was writing she would stop now and then, take it up and kiss it. "When God asks a sacrifice of you," she was wont to say, "kiss your crucifix, you will then be eager to give Him all that you can." The Sacred Heart of Jesus was for her the treasure-house of sanctity, she summed up the characteristics of this devotion in three words: "Adoration, Reparation, Expiation." "Love, that is what is meant by devotion to the Sacred Heart, humility and meekness must be the virtues which distinguish those who in the face of Heaven and earth bear the name of religious of the Sacred Heart. What heart would not be fired with love beholding the Heart of our Lord and saying to itself, 'that Heart is my portion.'" Mother Barat turned to God all that was most beautiful in earthly love, the holy affections of home, and love for those entrusted to her care.

As a mark of her devotion towards our Lady, Blessed Madeleine Sophie Barat consecrated her Society to the Immaculate Heart of Mary as well as to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. She looked upon Our Lady of Sorrows as the special protectress of the Society and said that it was the duty of each of its members to make her known and loved. "I have never asked anything of her in vain," she said, "gratitude compels me to proclaim it."

Blessed Madeleine Sophie Barat's whole life was the outcome of her prayer; she distrusted any work that had not been rooted in prayer; the wisdom and heavenly-mindedness by which her soul was enlightened imparted a supernatural charm to her whole exterior, it filled her with reverence for the things of God, for His representatives, for His priests, for the person of His poor, for the souls of children.

The most trifling incidents recalled God's presence to her, and in the course of conversation her mind turned instinctively towards heavenly things. Once, she saw some flowers thrown away which had scarcely lost their freshness, "God," she said, "worked to create those flowers for you, and you do not even take the trouble to keep them alive." Another time, she stood for some time silently watching a freshly opened rosebud sparkling in the dew, then turned away quickly exclaiming: "How beautiful it is, yet it is nothing compared to Thee my God!" In 1856 she visited the convent of Riedenburg. Looking out upon the beautiful expanse of lake and mountain scenery which stretched around her, "How beautiful it all is!" she exclaimed, "how can you help becoming contemplative souls living as you do in the midst of such loveliness! It raises the soul to God."

Speaking to some of the young religious who were about to make their profession she made use of the following simile. "See," she explained, "wherever sunflowers are grown, they always turn to the sun. God is the sun of our life, our minds and hearts must ever be turned towards Him." Such was Blessed Madeleine Sophie Barat's own constant practice, in her person was realised the portrait that she herself drew of an interior soul: "One whose faculties are concentrated on her Beloved. God is her life, her treasure, her all."

BLESSED MADELEINE SOPHIE BARAT'S APOSTLESHIP.—Father Varin in a letter to Blessed Madeleine Sophie Barat once wrote, "a soul who is to win others or to train them not to be little or narrow, but great and wide. St. Francis Xavier undertook to convert the world because his soul was greater than the world." This greatness of soul was truly hers, her constant union with God gave her a keeness for God's interests and a zeal for souls, which never for an instant forsook her. Those who are very near to God are allowed a special understanding of the value of a human soul, "I would willingly have worked in the founding of the Society to save the soul of a single child," Mother Barat would say, yet dear to her as were the souls of the children, she looked upon the sanctification of her religious as her first duty. She knew that the souls of the perfect give most glory to the Heart of Jesus and that in training them, she was training apostles.

The noviceship was the object of her special solicitude, she recognized it as the time during which the foundations of religious life were laid, and she thought that two years spent in prayer and preparation, apart from the stir of active life, were needed as an apprenticeship. From the journal of the first novitiate at Poitiers we learn Mother Barat's methods of training. "God has great plans for you to carry out," she said to the novices on the eve of the feast of St. Teresa, 1806, "let the thought that you are to be saints take root in your hearts, draw from prayer and recollection the means of working with fruit for the sanctification of souls.

There must be no half measures, now is the time to begin work in real earnest, give yourselves over entirely to the love of our Lord, strive to acquire humility, interior mortification and detachment from creatures."

The studies which the novices began during the second year of their noviceship were to be undertaken in the same spirit, "study" Mother Barat would say, *because* it is God's will, *according* to God's will and for His sake;" and again, "the children whose education will be entrusted to you are God's children, He confides them to us, in order to gain their hearts we must come down to their level without losing anything of our religious dignity or letting go of authority, so as to win their respect and their love. Let us be saints, Sisters, for our vocation is the same as that of the Saints."

An incomplete, imperfect religious was an anomaly in Mother Barat's eyes; she did not refuse to admit persons with great difficulties of character and she followed up the work of spiritual transformation throughout long years, but she said that cowardly slothful souls should find no place in the Society that coldness and selfishness were incompatible with the whole-hearted devotedness required of a religious of the Sacred Heart.

Lack of fortune was never a hindrance to the admission of a postulant, "money, money," Mother Barat would exclaim indignantly, "let there be no question of refusing anyone admission on this account, I have never refused a postulant for want of a dowry and God has always blessed the Society in consequence."

Blessed Madeleine Sophie's direction was strong and practical. She once found a novice sweeping a room carelessly, "you do not know how to set about your work, my child," she said quietly and taking the broom herself she finished the work with that perfection which marked her most ordinary actions. She was careful to develop in each of her daughters the measure of grace which God had bestowed; at first she showed great indulgence towards their weakness, but as years went on she exacted from them the maturity of true religious. She encouraged souls called like Mother Duchesne or Aloysia Jouva to a very high degree of union with God, to tread in the royal road of the Cross. Mother Duchesne, eager for holy vigils and austerities of every kind, found her self-will opposed at every turn; twelve long years of waiting were to precede her departure for the American missions while Mother Barat playfully reminded her of the story of a Jesuit who having asked for years to be sent to the missions was sent at last, baptised an old Indian shortly after he landed on heathen shores and died on the very threshold of apostolic life. "Do not forget our motto," she said to Mother Duchesne, "'Love and endure,' be patient, remember that God's works are wrought silently and slowly."

TO BE CONTINUED.

## CONSIDERATIONS ON FREEMASONRY

We quote below from a discourse delivered some time ago in the Dominican Church Caracas by Doctor Nicholas Navarro Rector of the Metropolitan Seminary. The Doctor traces the origin of Freemasonry to the Albigenses. We give the translation.

Before giving his words we may say a few words on Freemasonry.

The system of the Freemasons is a secret society which professes by means of a symbolical language and certain ceremonies of initiation, to lay down a code of morality founded on the brotherhood of humanity alone.

Some writers apply the term Freemasonry not only to the Freemasons proper, but also to all secret organisations which seek to undermine Christianity, and the political and social institutions that have Christianity for their basis.

The origin of Freemasonry is disputed. Some writer trace it to heresies of Eastern origin that prevailed during the early and middle ages in certain parts of Europe, such as those of the Gnosties, Manicheans and Albigenses, some of whose mischievous tenets are no doubt apparent in the sect. The suppressed order of the Knights Templars too has been taken to have been the source of the sect.

But it seems more in consonance with many known historical facts to trace the sect to the mediaeval guide of stonemasons, who were popularly called by the very name of Free Masons. During the middle ages the various trades were formed, with the approbations of the Church, into guilds or close protective societies. In general no one was permitted to follow a trade for wages or profit, as apprentice, journeyman, or master, until he had been made free of the guide representing that trade. Each guilds had it patron saint and several guilds it is certain, had each it peculiar ritual, using its own tools and technical language in a symbolical way in the ceremonies of initiation and promotion that is to say, in entering an apprentice, and at the end of his time declaring him a worthy fellow journeyman or craftsman, &c. The guild of Free Masons was singular in this, that is was a migratory one, its members travelling under their masters in organised bodies through all parts of Europe, wherever their services were required in building. When first referred to they are found grouped about the monasteries, especially about those of the Benedictines. The earliest form of initiation used by the guild is said to have been suggested by the ritual for the reception of a Benedictine novice.

The south of France, where a large Jewish and Saracenic element remained, was a hotbed of heresies and that region was also a favourite one with the guild of Masons. It is asserted, too, that as far back as the twelfth century the lodges of the guild enjoyed the special protection of the Knights Templars. It is easy in this way to understand how the symbolical allusions to Solomon and his Temple might have passed from the Knights into the Masonic formulary. In this way, too, might be explained how, after the suppression of the order of the Temple, some of the recalcitrant Knights, maintaining their influence over the Free Masons, would be able to pervert what hitherto had been a harmless ceremony into an elaborate ritual that should impart some of the errors of the Templars to the initiated. A document was long ago publish which purports to be a charter granted to a lodge of Free Masons in England in the time of Henry VII., and it bears the marks in its religious indifference of a suspicious likeness between Freemasonry then and now. In Germany the guild was numerous, and was formally recognised by a diploma granted in 1489 by the Emperor Maximilian. But this sanc-


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