

OUÏSE.

A French Canadian Christmas Story.

BY DR. L. FRIEHEITTE

A few years ago, some peculiar circumstances had led to Nicolet—a pleasant little city situated on the banks of the Nicolet river—a family of five persons, neither rich nor poor, of neither humble nor brilliant condition, but in whose home the angel of happiness had always his corner at the hearth and his place at the table.

At the time of my story, the youngest of the three children—a delicate fair haired little maid, with dark eyes—was just four years; but her pretty face and her winning ways had already made her friends with the whole neighborhood.

Most of the time she spoke of herself in the third person, and this peculiarity contributed to make her name of Louise—which she pronounced "Ouïse"—familiar to every one, from old Boivent's ferry to the Bishop's Palace.

When she leaned over the railing of the balcony, or when, light as a lark, she wandered in the alleys of the garden, her provoking little head emerging here and there among the rose bushes and honey-suckle, the old priests who passed by on their way to the Bishop's, the students who turned the corner of the college avenue, the gentlemen and the ladies who followed the sidewalk of the main street, never failed to say:

"Bonne nuit, Louise." "To which a fresh and laughing baby voice invariably answered: "Bonne nuit!"

The carters, the lumbermen who returned from the sawmills after their days work, smiled to her with a pleasant word: "Bonne nuit, Maman Louise!"

And the little one answered in her clear ringing voice like a bird's call: "Bonne nuit monsieur!"

Often she stopped the coachmen with a sign of her duplet finger, and when they came nearer to ask what she wanted: "A drive!" she whispered with a whole regiment of lurking smiles nestling at the corners of her eyes and mouth.

"Cre million!" she said; "hold on a bit, you scoundrel; I'll hang you by the ears on the handle of the door!"

"What is it?" asked Louise. "What is it?" asked Louise. "What is it?" asked Louise.

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trade against the teachings and practices of the Church. A well informed Catholic will recognize in this ridicule only a sign of ignorance or malice, but an impressionable and imperfectly instructed young man almost instinctively begins to apologize meekly for being a member of a Church of which such things may be said; and instead of seeking information to offset them from proper source, he allows himself to be assailed by doubts; and already the thought suggests itself that perhaps, after all, the Church is wrong, and this shallow-paced carper beside him is right.

But before a Catholic begins to doubt the faith wherein he was baptized and reared, there is generally a preliminary stage. And that is unfortunately the defilement of the mind which comes from contact with evil.

The language of ordinary intercourse has become so corrupted with obscenity and blasphemy that there are few occupations wherein one's ears are not assailed almost continually with vile expressions; even the schoolboys on our streets are often heard using the most disgusting language. And this has the effect of an ever present evil suggestion which in too many cases succeeds in deadening the mind and conscience to all good influences.

And the child told, in her baby language, with hesitation and stammering efforts at the long words, how she had put her shoes in the chimney before going to bed; how Santa Claus had come during the night and brought her a big doll with a nice new dress; how she then thought of the infant Jesus all alone in His manger in the big cold church; and, at last, how she had taken off the doll's dress to bring it to the poor little Jesus.

"But now your doll is going to be cold, too," said he. "Oh! no, she's wrapped up in Ouïse's shawl."

"Well, then, come away!" said the good prelate, stealthily passing the end of his finger in the corner of his eye. "I shall take you back to your papa; and you will dress up your doll again; and as to the little Jesus, don't be anxious about Him! I shall have His manager warmed so that He will be quite comfortable."

"Surely!" "Surely!" You shall see to it, won't you, Theresa?" Theresa was wiping her eyes with the corner of her apron.

"Cre million! my lord," she said. "I'm ready to heat Him until He melts!"

PROTESTANT HISTORIANS AND THE TRUTH ABOUT THE REFORMATION.

"The adherents of the Church of Rome have never failed to cast two reproaches on those who left them: one that the reform was brought about by intemperate and calumnious abuse, by outrages of an excited populace, or by the tyranny of princes; the other that after stimulating the most ignorant to reject the authority of the Church, it instantly withdrew that liberty of judgment, and devoted all who presumed to sever from the line drawn by law, to virulent obloquy or sometimes to bonds and death. These reproaches, it may be a shame for us to own, can be uttered and cannot be refuted."

"It is true enough that each party abused the other and that many keen, severe, false and malicious things were put forth by the Romish party; but for senseless eviling and scurrilous railing and roared, and for the most offensive personalities for the reckless imputation of the worst motives and most odious vices; in short, for all that was calculated to render an opponent hateful in the eyes of those who were no judges of the matter in dispute, some of the Puritan party went far beyond their adversaries. I do not want to defend the Romish writers."

Walter Von Vogelweide, the famous romantic poet of the Middle Ages, had an especial fondness for the feathered creation, and left a legacy to the monks of Witzburg on condition that each day some of their number should go to his grave, call as many birds as possible there, and feed them all the grain they would eat.

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How near we sometimes are to God's mysterious works without knowing it!—Father Ryan.

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