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SCOTT & BOWNE, Chemists, Toronto.

THE VIRGIN-MOTHER.

BY N. H. O.

Are Maria! Oh, what vision blist Thy name unveils before the adoring eye! Thou whom, alone of Eve's fallen progeny, Sin might not harm nor Satan's power molest; Whose peerless glory Gabriel's lips confessed; The Spirit's bride, the Incarnate Son's abode, Daughter of earth and Mother of thy God, Since in thy womb the Eternal deigned to rest; Mother and Maiden! with intense year Thy path still kindled towards the perfect day, Till He arose, the dayspring from on high, To crown the gifts of unrestricted grace— The love divine, the virgin purity— That made thy bosom His chosen resting place.

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Hood's Pills cure cancer, sick headache, biliousness, indigestion. Price 25 cents.

РАТНОГО ЧО ВЪАТЯ.

TRANSLATED BY REV. L. AUG. REIDNER (Sacred Heart Revue.)

CHAPTER I.—(Continued.)

Sister Rose was about to tell her what we had seen, when I imposed silence on her by a sign. "I would not be surprised," Mrs. Weston continued, "if her husband had done it. If he has, he must be brought to justice. Prison would be too good for him; he should be treated like a murderer."

Then the sick woman opened her lips, and the anxious look directed itself to me. She drew me tenderly to her and whispered: "Tell her she should not speak thus. Nothing must happen to my husband."

Weak and exhausted she fell back, and I feared for a moment her death might be hastened by the incautious words of her neighbor. We sent Mrs. Weston home and passed the night with the sick woman in her lonely room. Often we thought she was dead.

I noticed that every time when her sufferings seemed to be more acute, she took the small medal and pressed it to her lips. "Poor Sister Rose laid her head on the chair and fell asleep, exhausted as she was from the day's exertions. I sat there listening to the falling rain and to the moans of the poor sufferer. Although she lived in the greatest poverty, yet it was beyond doubt true that she had been a lady of social standing. Her lean hands, which she now and then folded spasmodically, were small and almost transparent. The long raven black hair was soft and glossy, and betrayed the careful attention it had formerly received. There was something unusually attractive in her speech and countenance. Moreover she had won my heart by the noble seal with which she tried to hide the cause of her fall, and the way she endeavored to shield her husband, whom I was obliged to accuse as the perpetrator of the deplorable deed. This not only bespoke a true love for her deprived husband, but was also proof that true Christian teaching was deeply rooted in his heart. And the look of bloodless hair which she carried on her bosom—whose presence and why she carried it I did not then know, but it told a tale of love and sorrow."

The rain ceased at last and a dense fog enveloped the city. Sister Rose awoke and the sufferer fell into a deep sleep. An hour later two of our Sisters came to relieve us, and we returned to our convent. I always liked to pray in our little chapel, but it seemed to have never been as pretty as it was during the short visit which I made before retiring that morning. The sun lit up the altar, the sanctuary was aglow with golden rays of light. Oh how quiet, how peaceful it was! No low voice of sin or scandal. There was no human passion, no human misery. Everything was light, warm and peace. The surroundings touched my heart and relieved the depression caused by the terrible sight of wrong and suffering. But in the short sleep that followed, I was haunted by the sweet face which had just left, and now and then heard that terrible cry of anguish,

CHAPTER II.

After a few hours of rest returned to the sick woman. The Mother, having heard my report of the case, left her in my care. I found her somewhat better and able to talk. She took hold of my hands and said in a weak voice:—"Sister, were you the one who was so kind to me last night?" "Yes, dearest, and I am pleased to find you somewhat better."

"Thank you, very much; I feel as if I am very sick, that I must soon die. Will you please call the priest?" "Yes, at once; but you must not talk any more, or else you will be too tired when the priest comes."

"I want to ask another question, Sister, only one," she replied, taking hold of my dress. "Are we alone?" "Yes, dear, all alone."

"I know you will never betray me. Tell me, Sister, did you not pass through this street last night? It seemed to me two Sisters went by me, one of whom gave me a friendly, pitying look. Was it so or was I dreaming?" "It was so, but do not excite yourself."

"But you did not say anything? Oh! for the dear Lord's sake, never tell any one about it! Promise me, Sister."

"I promise you. I understand you, and will help you to keep your secret."

"She could speak no further, but a sweet smile lighted up her pale countenance. After some time she continued:—"Sister Mary Grace" (I had told her my name), "something has happened to my hand. I can scarcely move it."

"I looked. It was the left hand. A dark blue ugly spot was visible on the fourth finger, as if some one had bruised that finger by wrenching something from it. Her wedding ring was gone."

"Have you lost your ring?" I asked. "My ring!" she replied hastily, "no!" Then followed a painful moan, and a look full of agony and bitter recollection. "Oh! yes," she continued, "I remember now, I have it no longer." She hid her hand under the cover and remained silent.

Soon afterwards the priest came, and I left him with the sick woman. I went upstairs. The rooms were dark, cold and empty; not even a chair could be found. It was a sad picture of the most oppressive poverty.

When her confession was finished, Father Thomas called me and said, "Sister, the poor woman seems to be very weak and sick. I think I had better prepare her for death and give her all the sacraments."

"Has she expressed this wish to you, Father?" "Yes. She is ready for heaven. The bitterest of all which a woman can drink has been her portion here on earth. I have known her here for a few years, and consider her one of my most sincere penitents."

"Do you know anything of her past life, Father Thomas?" "No, not much, for she never complained. I know that her existence for the last few years has been nothing but a martyrdom, which she has endured with truly angelic fortitude."

We entered the sick-room, and the same sweet, contented smile, which I had seen that morning, welcomed us. I hastily prepared a small altar, and kneeling near her I supported her during the reception of the Viaticum and Extreme Unction. Her intense devotion I can not picture. But when she had received my Lord, such a heavenly trace of holy calm and peace rested on her face as is usual only with a soul prepared for heaven.

However, she did not die. Her condition improved daily, contrary to all expectation. During the long days and nights which I spent at her bedside, she told me the following sad story of her life; not at once, but piecemeal, with long interruptions:—"It is not necessary, Sister, to tell you where I was born. My home was very happy. I was the only child of the [?] of my parents. My wishes were commands, and I was mistress of the house and everything in it. Fortunately nature had endowed me with a mild disposition and a good character, and so I did not become tyrannical or selfish. I had private teachers and governesses, and at the age of eighteen I was introduced into society."

"I was, of course, sole heiress of my father's immense wealth. I had, as I said, the happiest of homes and the best of parents! Sorrow and care were unknown to me. I remember, and have often thought of it, that one evening, shortly after Christmas, I was in the sitting-room, papa and mamma had gone out, and I was reading a book till it grew dark. The heavy curtains were drawn, and a bright fire was burning in the fire-place. The room was no lighted, because I did not wish it. I loved the sombre light that shone from the fire-place and that was so inviting to my poverty. It was a golden time and a golden hour. I rested in a rocker, when suddenly the words of a poet, whom I had lately read, came to my mind: I

could remember the last half of a stanza clearly:—"Life's undivided pleasure 'Tis not for mortals here to share."

"Not true, thought I—for I am perfectly happy. I have no care, no sorrow. Life is so pleasant, so beautiful. The words of the poet are not true. I myself can give him the lie. What is wanting to my happiness? And I repeated with a proud heart: 'Yes, I am happy.'"

"In my wretched life of poverty and labor, I have often, with bitter pang, thought of that hour when my girlish imagination boasted of a happiness so soon to be blasted. During dark, sorrowful nights, when too weary to sleep, I have often had that picture before my eyes. The luxuriant apartments, the ferocious tongues of fire, the fantastic shadows on the wall, and my own voice mockingly resounding in my ears. Truly the Lord has His own ways to bring us to Him. I was a good Catholic according to common estimation. I attended Mass on Sundays, went to confession now and then, but that was the extent of my religion. I had never tasted of that bitter and almost mysterious elixir called human suffering, which often ennobles life and gives it a higher aim. I had never pondered over the words of our divine Savior: 'He who does not take the cross and follow Me, is not worthy of Me. I had never carried the cross; its burden was unknown to me. Ah! it was later on, in the bloom of my life, weighed heavy on me, and the Lord be praised for it.'"

"At last the time of my debut came. I was naturally longing for that event. If more happiness were to be had than I already possessed, then it must be sought in the brilliant circles of society. My mother arranged a ball. The fête was to be one of the most brilliant of the season. Long consultations took place about my toilette. 'No diamonds,' said my father, 'Anne shall wear nothing but flowers.' Dear Good Father! I have often remembered how tenderly and proudly he kissed me that evening when he arranged the rosettes in my hair. The ballroom was a scene of splendor. I was presented to different gentlemen, none of whom interested me especially. After dancing, I grew tired and sat down next to my mother. However, some one approached and introduced Mr. Leyton to me. He at once asked me for the next dance, and I granted his request."

"I fancied I saw a look of concern on my mother's face, but gave it no further thought, since my partner had aroused my entire attention. I tarry long over this, dear Sister, and perhaps am tiring you, but every word, every action of that evening is deeply rooted in my memory. It was the most fatal hour of my life. Mr. Leyton, or Charles, as his friends called him, was the very man who could captivate a young girl who was without experience. He was handsome, amiable, obliging, and highly educated. When the dance was over, he led me through the ballroom to look for my mother. But she had gone. "We sat down to watch the quadrille just forming. It seemed to me to be more pleasant to sit and talk with Mr. Leyton than to dance or do anything else. When he left me all joy seemed to have gone. I found the music melancholy and sad. When he returned, everything changed. My mother, who as it appeared, did not like our tete-a-tete, approached and remarked that I looked pale and tired; he bowed politely and wished us good night. It was as though all light had died out. The very thought of love was yet far away from me. When my father asked me next morning at the breakfast table, 'Well, Lady Anne, this was his pet name for me, which one of your dancers did you like best?' I answered without a moment's hesitation, 'I liked Mr. Leyton better than the rest, papa.' It seemed for a moment as though a light shadow were passing over my father's face. 'Oh yes, I know him; but I have heard that he is a gambler.'"

"The following day I saw Mr. Leyton again, and at last our relations to each other became an established fact. One day my father said to me:—"Lady Anne, would you like to take a short trip to Paris?" "Yes, very much, papa."

"I shall start tomorrow, on account of very pressing business; pack your trunk, you and mamma may accompany me."

Suddenly I remembered that I had made an engagement with some lady friends for an excursion that was to have taken place the next day, and I said, therefore: "If you have no objection, I shall notify Miss Leslie of our departure."

"Do not do it," my father replied curtly; "I wish that you speak to no one about this trip. Remember this well."

"I was silent because of father's brusqueness. Then I remembered that I would not be able to see Mr. Leyton either. I had some books, partly hidden from view behind a large palm tree, I heard my father say to mother, as he stepped into the sitting-room, 'She took much easier than we thought she would. I have no good reason for hope. She is young and has had so little experience that she does not know herself how she clings to him. A change of air, new impressions and faces, will soon make her forget him.'"

"May the Lord grant it!" my mother replied, with a sigh. (To be continued.)

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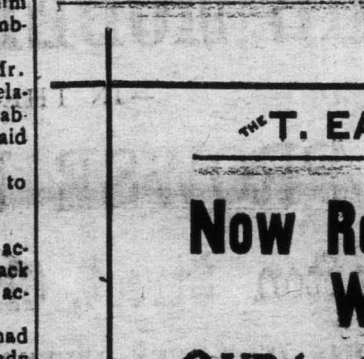
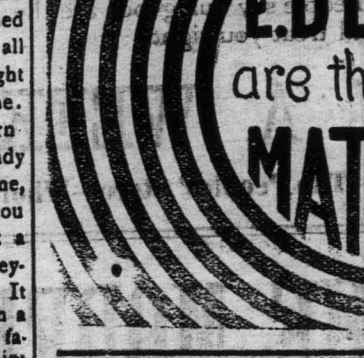
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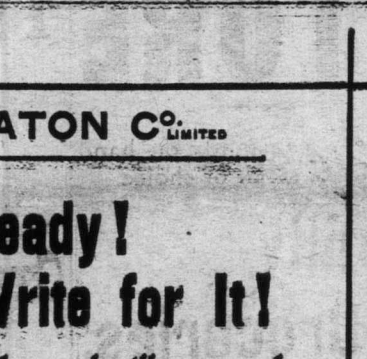
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