THE CATHOLIC RECORD

AMBITION'S CONTEST

TWO

BY CHRISTINE FABER

CHAPTER XXIII

THE TRIUMPH OF FAITH

Four years had elapsed since Howard Courtney had left Ashland Manor, and wearily and sadly they had passed with the devoted mother but the same faith and and sister ; patience which had supported them in the beginning of that dire suspense still animated each.

It was the summer time again, the season which Ellen Courtney loved, and which, despite the anxiety that gnawed at her heart, had never failed to convey its sweet and delightful impressions to her, as the summers had been wont to do years ago, in her American home. She rose one morn-ing with an unusual and unaccountable buoyancy of spirits. She could not understand the change in her feelings, and frequently, during the long, bright day, she found herself questioning what it could be which gave such a joyous spur to her actions

The simple evening meal was concluded. Ellen was arranging some garments for the poor, on which Anne Flanagan and herself had been employed during the afternoon, and Anne had just left the room on an errand which would take her to the kitchen. She had closed the door behind her, and Ellen heard her step in the hall, when suddenly there sounded a scream which could proceed from no other than Anne.

The young girl started up in affright. but ere she could hurry forth to ascertain the cause of the shriek, the door was flung violently open, and some one-her startled gaze was unable to perceive rightly who-dashed across the room. In a moment she was folded in an em brace so passionate and vet so tender. so long and yet so brief, for the expression of all it would convey She looked up as soon as she could partially disengage herself from the encircling arms, and beheld Howard.

The suspense of four long years so suddenly relieved - the longing of weary months so swiftly turned into blissful possession - was too much overcharged heart, and for a for her moment she grew faint and dizzy on his breast; but tears came to her relief, and with a joyfal burst she brokenly poured forth her welcome. Anne Flanagan - whose scream had been occasioned by suddenly encountering the young man in the finding the front door unfastened, had not waited to be admitted - now entered the room, the door of which Howard, in his eagerness, had left broadly open. He had not waited to greet Anne in the corridor, he had but asked in what room he should find his sister ; and in reply to the motion which Anne, too astounded to speak, had made, he had rushed into Ellen's presence.

Now she stood watching the em brace of the brother and sister with her own eyes rapidly filling, and when Howard, perceiving her, went forward — his arm still encircling Ellen—and held out his hand with warm words of greeting, the tears streamed down her cheeks.

I refrained from speaking to you in the hall, as I desired to," he said, because I wanted to greet my sister first ; but now, Anne, I can tell you glad "-his voice was tremulous from emotion-" I am to see you.

Dick Monahan, passing through the hall, saw and wondered at the little group in the apartment—the door of which was still open—till his to repair. But it was part of our How Then.

slight, and, though now somewhat flushed from excitement, his face had the thin and worn look of one who had been much confined. But the evidence that the time which had elapsed had brought some and no unimportant change in his appear. ance, was the manliness by which his whole bearing was characterizedmitted. every trace of the boy, of the youth, had vanished forever. The hour in which she was to hear

the tidings she wished, and yet feared to learn, had arrived. The repast, as well prepared as even solicitous Dick could wish, had been partaken of, and the brother and sister were in the room of the former. Still Ellen found pretexts of delay-her whole soul so feared the blighting of its newly · found happiness - Howard's eat was not so comfortably placed as it might be ; the lamp was not shaded rightly; the window admitted too great a draft—till he caught her at ast, and forced her into a chair beside him.

"How long do you think my patience is going to brook all these delays?" he asked playfully. "I assure you it has quite given out, and I cannot rest till I have told you my tale. Shall I begin at its begin ning, by imparting a confidence which I should have given before leaving ou, or shall I tell you at once why am here to night?

A shade crossed her countenance she felt that her fear was too well founded, that her happiness would soon be shivered ; but, still desiring to avert the approaching sorrow as long as she could, she answered faintly

'Begin at the beginning.'

He folded his arms and sat erect. When, eight years ago, I was won by your influence to enter the Propaganda. I found there in my own class a mind as misguided and as vainly ambitious as my own — that mind belonged to Bronson, the victim of our ill-fated Paris club. We became intimate associates, and instead of the sacred lore it was presumed we were imbibing, we were exchanging the inspirations of our own misguided souls. Our restless desires soon brought us into secret contact with persons equally as misguided, with out the college; and then we resolved on leaving the sacred walls and be ginning a course which should give full scope to our unholy ambition. Secret societies based on infidelity, and where it was not the latter, direct and intense opposition to the Vicar of Christ abounded. Their members asserted that their principles alone were in accordance with reason and moral law-that the implicit obedience which our faith demands was irrational and degrading-in a word, that while the *will* of man was so fettered his *intellect* could never rise. It was brilliant, showy reasoning; it captivated the too easily seduced minds of young Bronson and myself it flattered our vanity, and we will ingly embraced its senseless theories. Though admitted to the right of membership, we were accounted too young to participate in the deeper and more secret work of the society. and somewhat nettled, and imagining that we were as capable of great achievements as our older and more experienced companions, we formed a private league of our own. There vere but three beside myself; but these three had ample command of money; they were clever, as vainly ambitious as I was, and the novelty and even danger attached to the affair fascinated us.

"France was agitated-the people were seeking for power-and thither, as a field which would afford wide

secret and intimate associates in Paris, I had still gay companions in London — friends of Bronson and Denbigh—too light and unstable to be admitted to our secret league, but clever and unselfish enough to have a social circle of their own, and to which circle we had been freely ad-Their conviviality counter acted the effect of your influence and made me forget, even when I wished to remember, your words, which had so wrung my soul. "You wondered when you saw the

poverty of my room in Paris-the hard, poor lives to which we had pledged ourselves, was the We meant by that course of living to inspire confidence in those whom we intended to influence-to show them that it was no selfish, individual end we had in view-that we were of the poor, luxury debarred people.

Constantly some one of us secret. ly canvassed Paris. We discovered where agitation, where disloyalty, where love of freedom was most rife,

and we fed the blaze of tumult anew. We became known, and admission our circle was frequently sought. We demanded unusual qualifications; a love of liberty so burning and so intense that no principles of faith could bind it, and an unswerving obedience to the code of laws by which our lives were governed. Our club swelled; we grew bold; we dared to admit breathless audiences to hear the speeches which desire for fame, not pure love of liberty, dic-

tated ; and the public were talking of us. But our plans were so well and so carefully laid, that escape would always have been possible before the arm of authority could have grasped us, had it not been for the treachery of Taggart. That treachery was circumvented, as you know, by Malver ton Grosvenor."-Ellen flushed hotly but her face was in the shade—"He had heard of us-and heard that I was connected with the club-and, from his knowledge of political affairs he feared that I would soon be in trouble. Through his father he had powerful friends in the French Government, and determining to enlist their favor, in the event of the

worst happening, he repaired to Paris. A fortnight after his arrival Taggart's reachery did its work; but through Malverton all, except poor Bronson were saved, though each of us was compelled to immediate flight. I need not recount the trouble,

which caused my arrest here-the change in my feelings which, on my liberation from prison, your influ-ence accomplished. I determined to leave you secretly, because I dared not trust my new purpose. If I told you. I might only be raising hopes which would be again ruthlessly dashed. I made that cruel request to have you remain here, rather than return to mother, because I imagined that the knowledge of your being still away from home, waiting, hoping for good news of me, would be an incentive to spur me on in my new course. I sought a confessor in I poured out all to him; London. the penitence, the remorse for the past; the resolution, the hope for the future. He comforted and helped me; he procured me influence which should once more prove my passport to the American College in Rome Ellen started, but her brother rapid ly continued :- "And then I went to Malverton Grosvenor-I told him what I intended to do, obtaining his promise to keep my secret, and also to watch over you, should you, as I hoped, decide not to return home. It was a long and painful trial—many

a time the thought would come that mother and you might be sick, dying, and then it required my strongest nerve to refrain from sending some message; but I feared if I did, distrusting myself so strongly. that I

his ecstatic thoughts.

letters for nearly ten

the pleasure of being the first to acquaint my mother that her sonher prodigal, foolish son-has re-turned to all the teachings he ever learned from her dear lips; that won by a sister's influence, my blind and wretched ambition has been conquered, my intellect has ceased to var for the superiority it could never have attained, and my *faith* has triumphed. Tell her all this, dear Ellen, and send it by the morning post Then I will write-but we shall be with her almost as soon as she receives my letter, for immediate ly that your preparations can be ade we must start for home."

"Immediately?" she repeated through her happy tears. When, at length, the wild excess of feeling had somewhat subsided, the particulars regarding Howard's ordiation all told, and Ellen calm though still bearing traces of her nt happy agitation, sat in a quiet too blissful to be broken by her own speech, her brother said : You have not once spoken of the rapid tears.

friend to whom we both owe so much -Malverton Grosvenor-though you have heard from my lips that he in my secret, you have neither asked nor told me aught about him." She' did not answer, and she drooped her head, lest, even in the shade in which she sat, the color that rushed so madly into her face might be seen. He waited long for a reply -none came.

Ellen." he resumed at last. have heard a strange story from Malverton's lips-a story of you, which is so unlike your character, so utterly opposed to your whole nature—at least as I understand that nature that I refused to believe it ; for the first time since I have known Malverton I doubted his word. I even told him that he must have been mad or dreaming when he believed that my sister refused to speak to, or to see him. Was I right, Ellen ?

The reply came, low and tremulously spoken :

* All that he has told you is correct."

Howard started : then, bending towards her, he lifted her face, and held it so that the light shone fully on its painful blushes. She struggled to free herself, and at length closed her eyes as the only refuge from the gaze bent so keenly and so reproachfully into her own. slowly relinquished his grasp, and

permitted her to sink back into her seat, her head drooping as before. "Perhaps," he said, speaking quickly, and with a slight accent of sternness, " you do not understand Mal-

verton as I do : perhaps you have only imperfectly and incorrectly one of the noblest natures which has ever existed ; but listen to what l have to tell of him. When I gave him my confidence-when I told him that I was on my way to endeavor once more to fit myself for the sacred profession which I knew it was your ardent desire I should assume, his delight was well-nigh as unbounded as your own has been. He poured my ears his secret - the con into versation which had once passed between himself and you, the hope with which from that time he was so ardently inspired, the determination to search our faith, and if convinced of its truth, to enter our fold, and the impatience with which he looked forward to the time when he could press his suit in your own home. Need I say that all my wishes would second the success of that suit? I left him. happy to think that you had won the ponded. He mentioned you, but

was little, for the fortune in his own right was sufficient for him: he anticipated reproach and obloquy--they were nothing ; his Master had borne both before him. But there was one grief, from the bitterness of which his whole soul shrank—your apparent faithlessness. I forebore to speak of all this in the earlier part evening, for I would not, in the midst of our joy, seek an explanation which might substantiate all that Malverton so fully believes. I even thought not to intrude this subject till to morrow: but justice and gratitude to him who has so nobly proved his friendship, demand that I should at least hasten to endeavor to win the explanation which he himself has failed to obtain

Her feelings, too cruelly harrowed by an account which could only heighten the affection with which regarded Malverton, without she lessening the breach that separated them, could only find vent in her

Ask me not," she cried passion ately, starting to her feet and clasp-ing her hands in a manner which painfully showed her distress of mind. "I cannot tell you, Howard." She turned to leave the room. He sprang after her, and forced her to where the light again revealed her countenance.

Has your affection for him diminished? Is he less in your esteem, your friendship, your *love*, than he Presently he took her outside the house, desiring to show her the was when he was first led to believe charming nooks and places of interest on the convent grounds, and

at last, "Now I will show you the shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes," he earnestly.

Enough," he replied. "I will said. She followed him some dis-tance down a straight paved way. question you no more at present. Forgive me for the distress I have At the end was the shrine caused you, and now retire ; you need among rocks to represent the grotto rest." of Lourdes. Vaguely Mrs. Anderson

was aware that the surroundings as if he were loath to relintwice, themselves were beautiful. Tall forest trees murmured and whispered quish her, and, accompanying her to the door, bade her a tender "Good. in the background; from a field near night." by came the soft rustle of corn-

around her was the glory of a June Courtney, having arrived in her own day all perfect-and from the shrine above, the face of Mary looked down room, threw herself upon her knees, and lifted her still streaming eyes compassionate, kind, as if some poet Her and clasped hands to Heaven. sculptor had almost express first duty, her first prayer, even bedream of his heart of Our Lady of fore she permitted herself to think of Lourdes, Our Lady of Joy. Mrs. Anderson glanced at her son the last unhappy subject mentioned brother, was her thankswith deep devotion he was gazing at by her giving for the unexpected joy which had been vouchsafed her. Too full of loneliness came over the mother for words, she could only kneel, --what joy was this that had come silently looking upwards, as if her to her boy in which she could have voiceless gratitude would pierce, by its very intensity, the heights of no part? Her own beauty loving nature had been starved by stern Presbyterian doctrine ; was it strange vocal prayer. that this glad child of

chosen instead, the poetic beauty of the Catholic faith ? Yet might it not with sweet refreshment into her own be possible that it held more mere outward loveliness. Did the face of Mary the Mother answer, perhaps, to some deep and holy feeling, some innermost need of humanity's heart ? From the convent a bell sounded which on so many sides had sought and unhesitating the boy dropped on

her own life? "No, no, my God !" she murmured,

suffering is nothing-Thou hast saved him, and I am content." She rose to write the joyful tidings to her mother. She was too impatient to wait for the morning, and while the midnight hour chimed from

As never before, the scene of Nazar eth became real to her, and instead of her little angelic son kneeling ever been their lot to write. She innow before the Virgin's statue, she saw in spirit the stately angel Gabriel, kneeling to petition a lowly Hebrew maiden that she become the Great Mother. Over the Lily of roal

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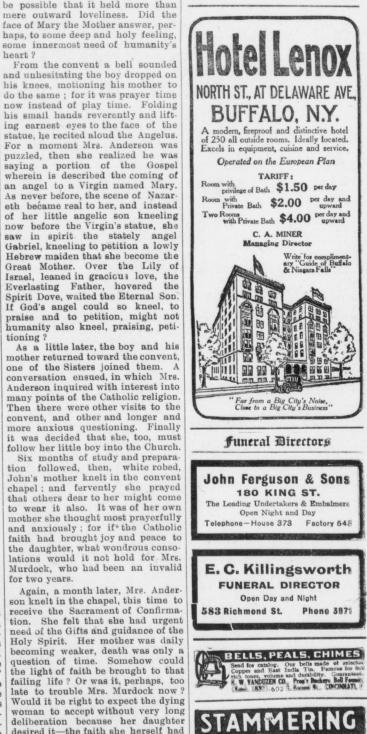
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mia answered, but smiling all to herself as she noticed the resolute set of the small chubby chin. "Do you

remember the story I told you about the saint and his marbles ? "Why, yes. He wasn't going to stop playing marbles, because just then it was play time, and Our Lord

would want him to play marbles in play time." 'That is right," Sister Euphemia approved, "Our Lord is glad for us to have a play time ; though we must

Thoughtfully, Mrs. Anderson lis-

arrange

the

hers had

be careful not to keep on playing after play time is over, when it may be prayer or study time, perhaps." "Yes, Sister, and maybe I'd better

hurry a little," so dutifully bound on making as much as possible of the present play time, the little feet hastened away. It was Saturday afternoon and

from the nearby city, Mrs. Anderson arrived for a visit to her son. Happy though John usually was, the mother noted that he seemed more joyous han ever today. He had much to tell her of the wonderful Sacrament Baptism which he had received

pleased with something new, appar ently beautiful ? Assure me of one thing," he said.

With passionate haste Ellen

He

Perchance the beneficent influence which she thus invoked descended

> oul, for even the anguish which the mention of Malverton Grosvenor had caused her abated in the fervor of her ecstatic prayer. Her brother was saved; that priceless gem, his soul, was rescued from the dangers

to ensnare it. What, then, was any trouble, any trial which might beset

when at length her voice had struggled through her emotion. "My

saying a portion of the Gospel wherein is described the coming of an angel to a Virgin named Mary. the clock on the mantel, her fingers penned the sweetest missive it had love of so noble a heart. We corres- tended to be careful, not to make her communication too abruptly; but her never more than to state that you eager thoughts refused to be rewere well and still a resident of Ashstrained; of themselves, as it were,

WHITE GARMENTS

A TRUE STORY

Great was the rejoicing in St. M-

Passing Sister Euphemia's school

room and seeing his beloved teacher there, the boy paused in the door-

way : "I s'pose you know I've been baptized," he announced with beam-

ing face, "I could go straight to Heaven this minute if I died. It's a

nice place, Heaven is, I wouldn't

"No indeed," Sister Euphemia re

prejudice in placing their only

was baptized.

Why, Ellen, have you acted in such nner ?

that morning ; it had made his soul white, and he meant to keep it white always, he boasted. tened to the boy's prattle ; did the "white garment" make all its wearers

equally happy, or was it that John was just a happy-hearted child,

that he might hope ?" "No, no, no !" she answered

He pressed her to him, kissed her

waiving his customary deference, he ventured to enter and approach Mr. Courtney with his welcome. Howard and returned the greeting received with all the warmth which the faith ful fellow could wish, and for the next few minutes there was an almost wildly happy quartette in the parlor of Ashland Manor.

Anne Flanagan soon repaired to the kitchen to furnish a tempting repast, and Dick followed, not certain but that in Miss Flanagan's present state of excitement, he might be able to assist her very materially - and the brother and sister were left alone.

his mother had been answered. Howard seemed eager to impart some special news. He drew Ellen to him to tell it with all tenderness, but she put her hand over his mouth.

Not one word now! When you have taken the refreshment you must you would shrink from the hearing certainly need, and when we are alone in always been kept in readiness for you, then you must tell me all; now I want to look at you-to be plans - a regime of life from which quite sure that it is yourself in the flesh who are sitting here, and not of strict, hard study - both, we some myth that will presently dis-

appear.

good to have you back again." She would not mention to him, she to Paris to select proper quarters for would not even permit herself to dwell on the horrible fear which, after the first wild joy of his return, sought to over-cast her rejoicingsfear that he had only returned, as he had promised in his note to do should his old passions resume their ambition's wild and sinful course. that painful announcement he was nence bring what dismay it might.

to let her gaze devour him, as it were, for me on the day of Lady Grosvenor's with its eagerness. He was still funeral. Though I had left my own

plan to return first to England private circumstances rendered such might after all disappoint the hopes a step necessary for each of us. Amid I would thus raise, and so it seemed all my wild, vain ambition, I re-tained my love for you. In the very better, despite the pain it cost us all to refrain till the end should be height of an excitement that someaccomplished. To the dear keeping times bordered on frenzy, one of Almighty God and His blessed thought, one desire, never lost their mother, I commended my dear ones, intensity - the thought of your and I felt that they would keep you. They have kept you safely, and I am affection for me, the desire to have you near me, with me, if I could. Even when my here to-night, a proof that your prayers have been heard, your sacriif I mother was well-nigh forgotten, fices have been accepted, your loving were remembered. In England, devotion has been rewarded. I am when you so readily divested your here, not only as a Catholic bowing self of your jewels that I might have in humble submission to every truth the money I craved, when I realized of your holy faith, but I am here a Roman Catholic Priest!" He stood When his anxious questions about the unselfishness of your devotion, I could more willingly have been forced

up, his eyes lifted, his face bearing to forego all my darling schemes than the wrapt look of one who beholds to be separated from you; and some Heavenly vision. could almost have poured the whole story of my intended work, my ambition in your ears, but I knew how

need, and when we are of our secret oaths-how your pure your own room, which has soul would be shocked at the turbulent passions in mine.

every luxury was to be debarred, and imagined, were requisite to fit us for You know it is almost too the work we intended to perform. One of our number was despatched

us; and a little before Lady Gros-venor's death, I followed with my two words. remaining companions. The object of my going then was to have a home ready for you. Stern objections were raised when I proposed to conrecovery of her voice; know? vert certain apartments to my sister's to her?' sway, in order to set out anew on use. My companions would not have a female, dwelling, as it were, on the She even fancied that it was to make very scene of their labors-and it was only by my threatening to withdraw so eager now to speak, and she had interrupted him to defer as long as That end achieved, I burried back to which must cause her to rejoice. she might tidings, which must turn | London to conduct you to our Paris her joy into mourning; she would home. Even then, fully committed not yet disturb the bliss which his as I was, and almost fairly started on whose years have had the bitter task of represence afforded, let an hour or two the course I intended to pursue, I could almost have given it all up He smilingly obeyed her, content when I saw your grief, your solicitude

-you to whom, under Almighty God, I owe my restoration to all that is

from

land Manor. I wondered a little at they hastened to be inscribed on the the brevity of his paragraphs conpaper, and almost before she was cerning you; but, trusting him so implicitly, I gave myself no anxiety. | told. Six months ago he came to Rome. I would not before succumb, overwas not even aware of his presence there till he himself sought me to

inform me that he was about to become a convert to our faith, and to request me to become his sponsor. gladly acceded to that wish, and Malverton Grosvenor, the son of one of England's bigoted peers became, by the grace of God.'a Roman Catholic -Rapid tears were coursing down Ellen's cheeks.-" Need I tell the interchange of thoughts, the sweet communion which took place between us after that ? But even then he did not tell me the sad misunderstanding-if misunderstanding it is-which

had arisen between you. He was Slowly, during the first part of his present at the ceremony of my ordispeech, was Ellen's fear taking its flight-swiftly, as he went on, was nation, and we left Rome together ; but not till we landed in England did hope taking its place; but when, at last, she found all she had desired I hear the tale of your inexplicable conduct - your seeming ingratitude. be left out of it for anything, would was granted-the wish, the hope, the He had refrained from writing to me passionate prayer of years accomabout it, from telling me of it while olished-her glad surprise, her wild I was in college, lest it should cause ov, her unbounded gratitude to me any anxiety which might inter-Heaven found vent in so joyful a cry fere with the attention I was seeking that it recalled the young priest to give my studies; and he had re-Once frained still, when, on our way from more he pressed her to him, once Rome, he had such ample opportun. nore there rained upon his breast tears, but tears which sprung from a joy too holy and too deep for was only on our last night together tears but tears which sprung from a joy too holy and too deep for that he unburdened himself-that he

told me the promise which he gave "Mother," she murmured, when her excessive emotion permitted the me to assume my place to you as nearly as he could, should you decide "does she Have you written the news not to return to mother, was not fulfilled because of your own inexplica

ble conduct : that the utmost he could "No, Ellen. The last and perhaps do was to learn of your health, and the hardest self-denial I practiced, your continued residence in Ashland was refraining from writing to my Manor, by inquiring from his friends mother, when at last, I had tidings who lived near you. I could not ly indifferent in all religious believe the tale, and when he reiter. matters? would not take from you the joy of ated it, with evidences of truth which making such a communication-you.

could not be gainsaid, I could only long listen, too astounded to reply.

"He was about to enter Grosvenor House, and openly avow himself a counting my unfaithfulness, my sins Catholic to his stern, bigoted father. truly good and noble, shall now have He expected to be disinherited. It

Everlasting Father, aware of it, the glad tidings were Spirit Dove, waited the Eternal Son. If God's angel could so kneel, to Then fatigue, to which she raise and to petition, might not powered her, and she hastened at humanity also kneel, praising, petilast to her happy repose. tioning ? As a little later, the boy and his TO BE CONTINUED

mother returned toward the convent, one of the Sisters joined them. A conversation ensued, in which Mrs. Anderson inquired with interest into many points of the Catholic religion. Then there were other visits to the convent, and other and longer and more anxious questioning. Finally Convent, when little John Anderson was decided that she, too,

leaned in gracious

hovered

follow her little boy into the Church. Six months of study and prepara tion followed, then, white robed John's mother knelt in the convent chanel : and fervently she praved that others dear to her might come to wear it also. It was of her own mother she thought most prayerfully and anxiously; for if the Catholic faith had brought joy and peace to the daughter, what wondrous conso lations would it not hold for Mrs Murdock, who had been an invalid

sponded emphatically, but a shadow of anxiety crossed her face. John was such a little, little child, would for two years. Again, a month later, Mrs. Ander he prove faithful to the religion he son knelt in the chapel, this time to had chosen for his own when withreceive the Sacrament of Confirma drawn from Catholic influence ? It tion. She felt that she had urgen need of the Gifts and guidance of the Holy Spirit. Her mother was daily becoming weaker, death was only child question of time. Somehow could when expediency demanded that he be sent to school, under the Sisters' the light of faith be brought to that failing life? Or was it, perhaps, too late to trouble Mrs. Murdock now? care. They had even allowed him to become a Catholic now, though some Would it be right to expect the dying time before he had expressed his desire to become one. Did they bewoman to accept without very long deliberation because her daughter desired it—the faith she herself had lieve in the right of Private Judgment, even for a smiling little person of seven years, or were they supremeembraced ? Mrs. Anderson recalled how that years ago her mother had occasionally gone with a Catholic friend to special services at the From the yard outside came Cathedral, and had read some Cathclamor of boy voices, "It's a ball game," John said delightedly; but olic books. She claimed to respect all creeds, but apparently it had never occurred to her to accept any

particular one of them. Would it see, I want to be very good now." "Surely, yes, child," Sister Euphebe well to trouble her now with the

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