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AILEY MOORE;

A TALE OF THE TIMES.

CHAPTER XX—THE DREADFUL STORY CECILY HAD TO TELL. (Continued.)

Emma detailed the first appearance of the rat as Cecily had narrated it, and then continued— 'All the world was flying from me, sir,' she said, addressing Gerald. 'I could get no employment, and scarcely a lodging—while every day for a week my terrible curse appeared to me, and attacked me. I had only one friend—and he always trusted me, sharing with me the little he could obtain from his calling. 'A young man,' interrupted Emily. 'My confessor, Miss Tyrrell,' answered the unhappy girl. 'He has been to me the angel of God—long since, I fear, I should have died by my own hand, but for him, 'His name?' asked Gerald. 'Rev. William Clones. 'I know him; he is at present at—' 'Oh!' cried Emma, falling again upon her knees. 'Wherever he is, may the light of heaven be in his heart, and on his head. He has been father, mother, brother, friend, and all to me. What would have become of me only for him?' Cecily was affected, and deeply interested;—every 'Catholic child' thought she 'has one friend.' 'Well, sir,' continued Emma, 'I presented myself to him time after time, all bloody, and nearly mad. Oh! the agony that came with the night time! and the doom that came in the shadows! Every gust of wind—every noise above or below me—sometimes the beating of my own heart—and my breathing, my very breathing frightened me, and I looked into space until my eyes got dim. I could not—dare—not lie down. And then my blood would freeze—and the room would rock—and while I yet looked—oh! God!—oh! Virgin Mother—he stood before me on the floor, and lay down just as I saw him, the first terrible day, before he flew at my throat, and tore me. Emma shuddered. 'One kind brave young girl,' stayed with me for a month; she tied me down each night, in my wretched bed—and thus I did not roll out on the floor in the hysterics, which always followed the attack. 'You went to your confessor, regularly?' demanded Gerald. 'Yes, oh yes! I should have died but for that. He reminded me of Christ's sufferings from the Evil One; he pointed out the life of Job, and of our dear Lady; and he made me live on, 'under the hand of God.' 'Well?' 'Well, sir, he, my confessor, gave me his small means, and endeavored to obtain work for me, and obtained for me many prayers from the charitable—but I lived in continued excitement; and my brain used to burn, and, in fits of desperation—crazed from the memory of the night to come, I have gone to drown myself.' 'Poor Emma!' cried Cecily, while a tear rolled down her face. 'It was then, sir—' and she paused and looked at Cecily; 'it was then Miss Tyrrell came to my first relief. 'Relief?' 'Yes, miss; the poor people were beginning to be frightened at my approach, and the little children that used to play with me, and love me, flew shrieking away when I came near. The shopkeepers prayed I wouldn't come to their places, and the tradespeople were 'not home' for me; every thing and every one became my enemy, and my heart was blackening against the world. 'Alas!' 'Yes, Miss Tyrrell. The world was an enemy—only him; and I saw the tears in his eyes when he relieved me, and the warm love of God came to my cold heart when he spoke.' 'He believed you from the monster?' 'He believed in me. Oh, may God bless him, he—did; only for that I would now be in hell; he believed in me, and it struck him to obtain leave for me to lie on the boards in the sacristy, looking at the light that hung before our Saviour.' Cecily started. Emma smiled faintly, but sweetly. 'Miss Cecily,' she continued; 'God is near us, and my good father brought me into his protection. How happy I was there! For over four months I have lain on the sacristy floor at night, and worked there during the day, and for four months my soul was heaven. To live and die there before my God would have been Paradise.' 'You were not allowed to stay?' 'The parish clergyman, merciful and good, was cautious. He said, 'However true she is, she cannot remain always here, and whatever

is to be done last, may as well be done first.' 'And then—' 'Then, sir, the same kind priest borrowed the money to send me to London, as I have had a good education, and can earn my bread.' 'An excellent education,' said Cecily;— 'and it grieves me to part with you—grieves me deeply.' 'Alas! for three days I made up my mind that I had left the demon beyond the sea! but oh! God! thy will—last night I knelt to pray, and I prayed for you, miss—indeed I did; and I prayed for the pale, sad-looking face that passed me by upstairs, and you with her, miss, and my heart was light and joyful. Mother of God! having risen from my knees, I sat on a chair by my handsome bedside, and I said, 'How fortunate I am at last! The creature stood there before me; the same malignant eye was on me, and the bloody teeth were bare.' 'Poor Emma was obliged to yield to the master-hand of excitement. She fell down, and was carried to her room in a state of insensibility. Cecily accompanied her with a beating heart, and many a novel feeling. She felt herself more in the world supernatural than ever she had felt before, and the impression was anything but disagreeable. Gerald had a full half-hour to his own reflections before she returned. At length she came, so pale and majestic, and melancholy; but yet she looked 'in light.' 'Gerald,' she said, sitting down quite beside him; 'Gerald, I must get close to the God—the God who made this world of mystery—oh, Ailey!' She continued: 'Gerald,' she said, taking him by the hand, 'if I were that girl—poor Emma, I would rejoice; oh, to be in practical contact with the unseen.' 'Cecily, surely, surely, it would not add anything to your knowledge or convictions.' 'Knowledge! I have an abundance; conviction! why, yes; I know all things as they are stated to be—I never doubted. I go to church, attend family prayers, and I read Dante. 'Udor mi parve un mormurare di fiume Che scende chiaro giù di pietra in pietra.' 'I seem to hear the murmuring call Of sunlit waters in their fall From rock to rock.' But the cascade of the poet and the truths of religion have been to my mind too much alike;—I must touch reality. Oh, Gerald, the supernatural world is so glorious. 'Faith will move mountains.' 'Yes. Emma has faith; Ailey has faith; the old priest has faith.' 'Poor Father Mick!' 'Poor! Is not the world God's dwelling for him? Are not angels his companions and comforters? Is he not shielded from himself—and all things else by the present eternity; he walks before God, and is perfect; never say poor, dear Gerald, 'tis such a happy thing to realise the unseen! Oh! I could sacrifice everything; and she paused, 'I could, Gerald,' she repeated, energetically, 'every thing to interweave my thoughts and aspirations with the world of spirits as you do, and to rely upon it in child-like confidence, like Ailey—like Ailey when she kneels before the Virgin.' Gerald smiled. 'The difference between stage life—between mere playing a part—and real, real life,' she went on, 'is between you and me.' 'Oh! Cecily!' 'Dear Gerald, yes, and between the masses of our people and—' She was interrupted by a knock. The servant announced that Baron St. John would wait upon her in a quarter of an hour. 'Gerald,' she resumed, 'I will and must find why all your people make religion a fact,—a fact like every fact they witness and perform—like the stars, and the sea, and the city; and why, even the best of them, all their lives seem waiting to make it a fact.' 'I would advise you, Cecily,' he said, 'to send home Emma forthwith.' Cecily almost laughed outright at the quiet suspension of her own topic; yet she honored the calm soul of Moore. She made no remark, but, by a playful look, she said she had understood him. 'Her confessor,' Gerald continued, 'will 'exorcise' her.' 'How? What mean you?' 'The fact of the minister's presence here, proves the girl to be 'obsessed,' as it is called, and a man like her confessor will do his duty.' 'Banish the evil thing.' 'Certainly.' Gerald spoke in an agonised tone of one who had seen the thing accomplished, rather than like one giving an opinion. 'You believe that?' 'As firmly as my existence. Of course all clergymen have power over evil spirits.—They will cast out devils in my name.' 'I shall go to see it,' said Cecily vehemently.

'Introduce her to Ailey, and I will write to her confessor. Let Ailey be your correspondent.' 'Always wise,' she said, looking into his face, as a woman looks who views the controller of her destiny; 'always wise,' she repeated. 'I must depart, Cecily,' he now continued; 'I have much to do, and the events of the day have engaged us long.' 'Go!' cried the young woman. 'Yes, Cecily, I must go.' 'But, Gerald, you must see my uncle, and I have not had any conversation, really.' Gerald smiled, as she sometimes remarked him smile when a thing was vainly said or vainly done. 'You will leave me! leave me here with all those burning thoughts and undirected wishes; leave me to this dark, insipid—' 'Cecily, what am I to understand? what do you wish? what do you need? is there on earth an exertion or a sacrifice which you would command? Speak!' For a moment the brow flushed and the eye lit; Cecily then got deadly pale. 'Gerald, dear Gerald,' she cried, 'I am rich, but what is wealth? I am pursued by selfish idiots and heartless knaves; will you—?' 'Really, Cecily,' said Baron St. John, entering the room, 'you hear nothing and nobody since Mr. Moore came to town. Mr. Moore,' he said, addressing himself to Gerald, 'if my niece were much less of a philosopher, I should not fear the company of a man like you; I have given up all hope, however, of bringing my nephew to common sense on the subject of 'Our own Ailey Moore.' 'Hurra!' said the parrot, 'A-i-i-ley Moo-o-o-re!' 'There! listen there!' said the baron. CHAPTER XXI. 'Throth, then, sir, that's it, just,' said a young fellow, about fourteen, addressing a gentleman in fashionable morning costume, who stood by a huge round stone at the corner of a narrow street, and 'at the foot of the bridge,' which crosses the Shannon from Thomond gate to the old town of Limerick. 'Throth, then, sir, that's it, just,' said he. 'And why is it called the 'Treaty Stone?' asked the gentleman. 'Why, sir, becase Sarchfield signed the treaty on it.' 'What treaty?' 'What treaty, sir? O murder!' cried the boy, laughing at the gentleman's ignorance, 'the treaty of Limerick.' 'Well,' pursued the gentleman, evidently sounding the depths of his companion's knowledge, 'well, and what was the 'Treaty of Limerick?' 'Why, sir, when the English was beaten, and the Irish wasn't going to beat them again, Sarchfield signed the treaty and the English broke it,' said the little fellow, looking round with the exultation of youthful patriotism. 'Is that true?' asked the gentleman, speaking to a little girl, whom curiosity had brought to the spot. She had a clean cheek picalore, fair hair, and blue eyes, like most of the children about that quarter of the south. 'Yes, sir.' 'When did this take place?' 'In the year 1691, sir,' answered the child, very mildly. 'Can you read and write?' 'Yes, sir.' 'And who taught you?' 'Mother Mary Vincent, sir.' 'Who is that?' The little girl looked up in surprise. 'Mother Mary Vincent, sir,' she half exclaimed; and then she looked at the little boy, and both smiled meaningly. They thought what kind of a human being it could be that did not know Mother Mary Vincent. 'She's one of the Nuns of Mercy, sir,' said a man bearing on his back a little mahogany case, which was hung from a broad leather strap that crossed his breast like a soldier's belt. 'Any good razors to-day, sir.' 'No.' 'Pencil-cases?' 'No.' 'Good brown Windsor?' 'No, thank you, I—' 'Some fine clasp knives, scissors, shirt buttons, racks, combs, hair-brushes, shoe-laces, Jew's-harps?' 'Why, my good—' 'Clever children, these, sir. The girl is from the convent school.' 'What kind of convent?' 'The Mercy Convent, sir; 2,000 girls are educated by them, and many of the girls are fed.' 'Who are the ladies?' 'The nuns.' 'Are they French?' 'Oh nae, sir, they're the ladies of Limerick,

and they left their fathers' hooms and their play-sant friends to live in the cellars and garrets, an' among the childher of the poor.' 'Why was that?' 'For why is't. Bless you, 'tas becase the' want to be parfit as the heavenly father is parfit, and all-a-ways tae goo about a doing of good, lek our Saviour.' 'And this is their life.' 'Aye, is't. Oh, if you seen 'em, sir, weth the' gentle face and heavenly smile, a stoopin' o'er the rags of the poor mon's bed when a' the waurld's left em in sorrow; and ho' the' sooth the poor heart and settle the aching head, and tache em tae look oop out o' the dark and to thank o' heaven; and ho' the' waurk around his wee room, an' be's to 'im as service maids. Ah, sir, these ladies do for him what they would nae do for a' the crown o' the Queen.' 'Certainly, they would not bend to that for earthly reward.' 'Airtly reward! Nae, nae, sir, they do fra' God and charity what the goold o' the south wad nae buy.' The gentleman thought for a moment, and the man with the case continued— 'Id requires faith en earnest, sir, to lade a life like you; and something mair than the resolution of a woe-man.' 'What more?' 'Why, the grace of God, to be found in the Church.' 'The grace of God!' said the gentleman, looking steadfastly at the pedlar; 'the grace of God,' he repeated, slowly and softly. 'Why, yis,' answered the case man, 'and more be token, they never can be fooned out of the church fra' want o' the grace, and the rale faith; pon my waurd!' he continued, looking towards the city, 'pon my waurd, here's twa of them!' The gentleman looked in the same direction as the pedlar, and saw two ladies approaching. They were dressed entirely in black, except a neat white linen collar; and on stealing a look under the deep black bonnet you could see that the forehead was bound with linen, while a covering of the same material from the temples over the ears and under the chin left no portion of the features unnecessarily exposed. Each carried a heavy basket, which contained refreshments and simple medicines for the sick. 'Sister Mary Monica,' whispered the child getting behind the pedlar, 'and sister Mary Patrick,' she added. The pedlar took off his hat, and bowed low to the ground; and the strange gentleman followed his example, only he did not bow so very low. 'Glory be to God!' said the pedlar, piously, 'these are two ladies that left their carriages at the convent door, and their friends vainly lamenting behind 'em, to become the lowest of servants to the poor.' 'Where do they go now?' asked the gentleman, still looking after them. 'They are going to Mrs. Benn's sir,' said the little girl. 'Mrs. Benn's,' repeated the gentleman. 'There's an old gentleman sick there, his name is Mr. Moore, sir,' said the pedlar. 'He has a daughter,' asked the strange gentleman. 'Aye, has he,' said the pedlar, 'Miss Ailey Moore.' 'Oh, the darling Miss Ailey!' cried the child, clapping her hands. 'Why, you know her,' said the gentleman. 'Oh, yes, yes, sir,' said the little girl, 'she teaches catechism at the chapel on Sunday, and she goes to see grandmother—grandmother is sick and old.' The young gentleman placed a crown-piece in the hands of the child, who had no sooner seen the large gift she had received, and made her 'courtesy,' than she scampered away. 'Can you show me the way to Mrs. Benn's,' said the gentleman, addressing the pedlar, and apparently surprised at the sudden departure of his younger acquaintance. 'That I can, sir, I have a pair of new spectacles fra Mrs. Benn, sir, tho' I did nae know the sisters were going that way.' 'Then you can accompany me.' 'Aye, sir, can I.' The pedlar and the stranger commenced a movement westward, and every movement seemed to augment the interest of the latter in every thing he saw and heard. The children were poorly clad—but they were all educated; the people walked slowly and talked freely and good humoredly, but they were every one polite and attentive. The pedlar rather surprised his new friend by assuring him that 'only sixty years afore the people, whom he met were 'not allowed to go to school: and a priest, caught where they then were, 'wad bae ended his life at a lamp-post. In fact,' said the pedlar, 'our fathers, sir, had nae learning, and 'no taste fra learning, and we had very leetle money either;

but we are coming an. Gie us twenty years an' we'll waurk our way.' The Sisters of Mercy were really going to Mrs. Benn's, and had been for some days visiting our poor friend Mr. Moore, of Moorfield.— Their presence seemed to soothe him, and he prayed with them fervently; indeed, he never neglected to pray even in his greatest aberrations of mind,—but he prayed most collectedly with them. In fact, they made him happy, and that was a more than sufficient inducement for the Sisters of Mercy. They, the sisters, found Mr. Moore in high spirits to-day. He was introduced to them for the seventh or eighth time, and he told them he was exceedingly happy to see them. 'Gerald,' he said, 'was talking to me a little while ago, and he told me all was nearly prepared for our return to Moorfield immediately—quite immediately; for,' said he, 'we have been a month away now, eh, Ailey—Where is that bold girl—har'nt ve.' 'Yes, sir.' 'So I thought, child—so I thought, I sometimes fear my memory is going; but you see I am not so bad! Oh, well, dear Moorfield, I shall get better there—shall I not, Ailey.' 'Yes, sir.' 'To be sure I shall. Ah, dear Moorfield—Ailey!' 'Sir?' 'Come here!' He caught both her hands, and looked into her face. 'Ailey!' he said. 'Sir—well papa!' 'Won't I be buried alongside mamma, Ailey! Sure I shall not be buried away from her!' and the tears ran down the old cheeks. 'Oh, sir,' said Sister Mary Monica, 'You are not going to die yet. We must pray with you many, many times before you die.' 'Ah, yes—oh, yes! Ailey's mamma was always praying. My Mary!' he said, looking up to heaven; and the old man shook like an aspen. 'Go away, you baggage,' he said, throwing off Ailey. 'Go now, go.' She retired a few paces. 'Sister,' he said, 'Ailey is like her mamma. You are not going to take Ailey.' 'Oh sir,' said Mary Monica. 'Oh, ho, ho, ho!' cried the old man: and he wept. 'Oh, ho, ho, ho!' he repeated, 'Oh, oh, oh!' 'Well, we'll pray for your Mary now, sir,' said Mary Monica. 'Yes, yes, yes!—For Mary. Oh, yes! and the old man struggled to get upon his knees. 'No, no, sir,' said the good nun, 'but we'll kneel down beside you, and you will join us in the prayer.' 'For Mary!—oh, yes, yes!' he said, 'for Mary!' The Sisters knelt beside the good old man—one at each side rather; and he raised his trembling hands to heaven, and his eyes were fixed upon his 'home above,' and he prayed for her the love for whom warmed the cold current of his chill old age; and his Mary was once more beside him, as he used to see her with the eye of youthful fancy. For she now came to him fresh and fragrant, from the company of angels. Ailey knelt a little distance from the group, and joined her prayers and tears with those of her father. And then the good nuns spoke of what a changing thing the world is, and how we are made to leave it—not to live in it; and old Mr. Moore said often Father Mick had told him the same. And then he would ask them whether they knew Father Mick; and he would tell them of his fine silvery hair, and large fond eyes, and that he came every day to see him, because Father Mick loved Gerald. He said Gerald was a brave young fellow, but he was out just then—he was to be in very shortly; in fact, immediately; he hoped they knew Gerald; and Gerald would thank them for him, he added, because Gerald was fond of his father. And then old Mr. Moore would join them in 'forgiving all who had offended or injured him,' although there was something very heavy on his heart that was done to Gerald, and which he could not remember; but he forgave it, and every one and he prayed for the forgiveness of every one whom he had injured. And then he would ask them, 'Wasn't it time for them to pray for poor Mary,' and 'if they only had known Mary—See was such an angel.' 'Ailey,' cried Mr. Moore. 'Sir.' 'Sing mamma's song.' 'Yes, sir.' 'And get the harp, Ailey; dear harp of my country!' cried the old man. Ailey looked astonished, and the nuns looked not less surprised. 'You must get the harp, Ailey—Mary, that is mamma, was fond of the harp, you know.'