

AN EASTER OFFERING

BY SARA TRAINER SMITH.

THE prison wall is not unsightly from without. It rises high and smooth, of a dark, mottled gray stone, with narrow buttresses at regular intervals, and a square battlemented tower at each corner.

The street is a fine one, wide and smooth. The opposite neighbors assume the care of this triangle of sweets, this strip of garden to which the sinners within have no claim.

It has another side, however. It is very, very thick and massive, counted by feet instead of inches, but if it were a thousand miles of land and sea, of forest and farm, of mountain and valley, it could not more effectively divide the opposite neighbors from the inmates.

At sunset on Good Friday, the heavens were all aglow. It had been an April day of alternate shower and sun, but had cleared gloriously at night-fall.

The poor creatures on the other side of the wall! What was this holy night to them? Would they remember? Did they even know?

She started. Against the pale yellow of the sky was darkly silhouetted a sudden change of outline. A small, curiously huddled mass rose slowly on the broad coping. Then a bullet-shaped head was lifted and cautiously (she was sure of it) protruded.

Miss Leonard knew what had happened. A prisoner had escaped. One star had, perhaps, breathed—the next, she had decided. Before she could have told her purpose she was softly opening the front door.

Except for the cook, who was deep in the mysteries of a fast-day dinner she was alone in the house, and her light step was noiseless on the stairs. Practically, she was answerable to no one for anything she might choose to do, and there were no witnesses she feared within or without, unless the guardians of the peace were there who had never yet encountered them—within sight, she paused on the top step and looked across the way.

The lower part of the wall was already black as night, but the upper leaves of the heavy ivy were shaken and low-rued, and there was a dry, sharp rustle at irregular intervals, to a listening ear. Miss Leonard ran swiftly across the street, and leaned against the terrace wall.

"I saw you," she said very low, but clearly and deliberately. "You had better come home with me, whoever you are. I want to help you, and—there is no one else who will."

There was a moment's silence. Then, with a faint, scrambling sound, the ivy shook to its very roots, and out from its falling leaves and branches stepped slowly a small, small man, oddly dressed (or undressed) in a mottled garb.

He came down across the smooth damp grass with an uncertain tread, and stood hovering on the edge of the wall. Miss Leonard put up a resolute hand and drew him to the pavement beside her. Then she turned instantly, preceded him across the street, up the steps, and into the hall, where she waited for him. He came so limply stumbling over the steps and on the rug, that she thought he was hurt.

"Are you lame? Did your fall do that?" she asked. He looked at her dumbly, and shook his head.

"Can't you speak? Are you a mute?" "Yes, I can speak still. No, I can talk. I can say I thank you—for what? Will you give me up?"

It was such a curious voice—more like the voice of one who comes from the grave, as we would fancy it. His back, too, as it bent, had something in it she had never seen before, a deadness that was not death, and a calmness that was not peace. Her warm heart was stirred to a sympathy unlike anything she had ever felt before.

"Give you up? Why, no, why should I do that? If you can get away—how long have you been there?" He hesitated. "It was the year eight, six—sixty—I don't remember."

Miss Leonard turned pale. Under the hall gas it was easily seen, and the dull eyes noticed it. "So long as that!" she exclaimed. "Why, that is a longer time than I can remember. Was it murders. She asked the question sharply, notwithstanding the hesitation between the last word and the other, and the answer was given as sharply.

"No, never! It was—stealing." The door he rang close beside them, startling both. They looked at each other, a long, steady look. "Come up stairs," said Miss Leonard, softly, "I want to hear—and I will hear."

She led the way, and he followed as quickly and as silently as he could. There was no pause on the second floor, but on the third, in the back hall, she opened the door of a small, dim room. The sound of voices at the door floated up as he passed in.

"Listen!" she motioned, and stood with a hand on the lock, the door half-

closed. There was an altercation, a denial, an insistence, and the door slammed.

"Somewhere will be here in a moment," she said. "But you have only to keep still. The room is mine. Sit there."

She had struck a light, and he saw that she had pointed to a large, soft-upholstered chair over which was carelessly thrown a large, silken coverlet. As he sank into its sheltering arms, she threw the coverlet lightly over him. "Come in!" she answered the knock at the door which came on the instant, and turned with apparent unconcern from the dark near her.

"There is a man at the door, Miss Leonard, and he says there was an escaped convict out here, and he thinks he can find this house." "It was a most indignant tone, and evidently pitched to convey some intelligence to the 'man at the door.'"

"Well, Ellen, tell the man that I came in but this instant. I went across the street to pick up something. He has been dreaming."

"An' didn't I tell him that!" was the triumphant conclusion of the conversation. Miss Leonard listened as the steps descended, and spoke the first instant of silence.

"I am accountable to no living being for what I do, and I trust in God I am doing no wrong in this act. I saw you get over the wall. I don't know who you are or where you are from, or what you are expiating, but I pity you—oh, I pity you! This is Good Friday. I have been in church all day. I have been taught pity and love and mercy. I cannot—I cannot let you go without a word of sympathy and cheer, I don't care who you are!"

The silken cover had been swept aside when she began to speak. A very pale face looked up at her, still with that strange deadness that was not death upon it, but also with a gleam of light from some far off star of hope. Its owner spread out a pair of thin, worn, wrinkled hands, strangely helpless and in-bleat looking.

"You are doing no harm," he said feebly. "I am an old man. I have not long to live anywhere. I thought I would like to die—somewhere else."

He pressed his hands together and looked slowly and curiously around. "This is a pretty room," he said. "It is not like any room I ever saw. But I see it to have read of things I see here. Are there men—is this the way people live now?"

"Some people, I have my own taste. So have others."

She was studying him carefully. He must have been a handsome man, with a delicate bright tinted beauty that suited his diminutive stature. He looked well finished, too, although his hands were slightly stained, and showed some traces of labor. But in that degrading dress in that altogether unlovely guise, who could judge of a man as he looked free, upright, fearless before God and man? The prison taint was on him, was in him, was of him. No human being could ever see him as God made him while time endured for him. The poor poor soul!

"How are you to leave here?" asked his hostess suddenly, breaking in on his survey of his surroundings. "Where are you going? Whom have you to go to?"

He did not answer. He had risen and stood facing one corner of the room. There was a table there, with a picture or two over it and on it, a statue on a bracket on either side of it, and a kneeling stool before it. The centre of the beautiful and costly group was an ivory crucifix—a magnificent, an exquisite portrait of the Divine Redeemer in the supreme moment of divine love.

"I know that," he explained. "I have seen that. Where did you get it?" "It was my father's," said Miss Leonard simply. "It came to me on my mother's death. It is a work of art, and it is most beautiful, most wonderful. I have never seen anything as beautiful of our Lord."

He was seated again, and looking at her steadily. Something in his eyes moved her strangely.

"I do not know who you are," he said presently. "You will tell me?" "Surely. I am Marie Elizabeth Leonard. I live here with friends."

"And you are rich?" "I am rich. I am very rich. I can help you, and you need not hesitate to allow it, for I shall be very glad to do it."

In his gaze softened. "They have not spoiled you. Riches have not harmed you. If you help me you will never regret it. It will be difficult, I must wait. May I—can I wait here?"

Miss Leonard flushed redly. What had she done? What could she do? She was her own mistress, to be sure, in an almost unheard-of manner, but this—this was a most unheard-of charity. Or what? What would come of it?

"The door of this room is always locked. You can stay here until it is safe for you to leave. And I will do what I can."

"Miss Leonard, the mistress says will you please come to the library now. There are some ladies wishing to see you. Miss Anthony is one of them."

It was a pleasant voice without the door. Miss Leonard answered it pleasantly, that she would be down in a minute, and rose to go.

"Stay!" said her strange guest, rising also. "One thing. If you find you must give me up—and do not hesitate if any trouble threatens you—come and tell me yourself. I promise you I will go without resistance. But I would like to know it from you."

A change had come to him since he entered the room. He had another manner, another voice, another air altogether. It puzzled Miss Leonard, yet it seemed more real and natural than the awful calm that had been his at first. She half understood this brushing away of prison cobwebs. She promised him to do as asked, pointed out the comforts of the tiny room, half studio, half morn-

ing room—her own particular den—and then went away, carefully locking the door.

The escaped convict—still a prisoner—sat a long time in the great chair with his hands before his face. He was indeed an old man: the white hair, the wrinkled hands, the bowed shoulders, the lean and shrunken frame, proved it. But he would have been ten years younger had his days been passed among men and in honorable pursuits. When at last he uncovered his face and looked about him; there were tears in his eyes, and their traces on his poor face. The gas flared up in the room across the narrow strip of yard, and out of its darkness sprang into being for the looker on a merry group of children around their nurse.

"She has forgotten the curtains," he said with a faint and tender smile. "She is not such a schemer, after all." With trembling fingers he turned down the flame in the globe beside him, and then carefully shaded the windows, although he lingered over the unfamiliar and joyous sight of the light-hearted little ones getting ready for bed. Then he slowly, almost timidly, crossed the room and stood before the carved crucifix. He bent low before the beautiful, divinely patient face; he scanned closely the pierced hands and feet. Then, with one heart-broken groan, he sank on his knees before it.

"O Thou, my Lord! Do Thou forgive! These hands that wrought Thine image are helpless now—these feet that once followed Thee afar off have gone astray—this heart—!" There was a long silence. The poor head sank lower and lower, the thin hands clasped convulsively the foot of the cross. A struggle began in that still hour between heaven and hell.

It was late when Miss Leonard came softly in, with a gentle warning sound. The light was dim, but when she turned it up her guest was sleeping beneath its rays in the great chair. He awoke with a start, and a bewildered look at her, and, too, with a broken murmured phrase, strangely like her name as her mother spoke it. It was her mother's name also.

"I could not return before this," she said, taking no notice of his bewildered look. "We have had guests to dine—strangers in the city. I am sorry I can not provide you with better fare than wine and bread and fruit. But I fear to cause remark and inquiry. I have been thinking of you all the time."

He smiled, but said nothing. She rapidly set before him such refreshments as a tiny cupboard in the room supplied. "I am often hospitable to my own special friends," she explained. "And the children are fond of me. To-morrow you will have better cheer, I hope. I have planned your escape from here."

"Have you, indeed? That is very good of you. And have you a disguise for me?" "There was almost amusement in his question."

"That is the most difficult thing of all," she said. "I have an immensely long ulster that was my uncle's. He was about your size. Have you far to go when you leave here?"

"No, I don't want to know—I had better not know. Ours—will it be far?" "Not very far."

"Then it will be dark—as dark as it ever is—all the way, for you must go before the first dawn. I cannot get you out of the house otherwise, for everyone will be going to church."

He was strangely indifferent, she thought. He was eating very little, and there was "no heart," as her old nurse would have said, in anything he did. He looked at her now for a long time, holding his glass of wine before him on the table.

"You are not married?" he asked, not abruptly.

"No," Miss Leonard felt herself blush as she answered. He sighed as he watched the color rise. But he said no more, and soon after she left him, to return at three o'clock.

It was not wonderful that he did not sleep at all that night. When the house became still with the stillness of sleep, he went softly to and fro in the room, touching tenderly—as with reverence—the dainty and beautiful things that adorned it. Once or twice, he bent and softly kissed trifles distinctively the girl's own. But he came back at last to the foot of the crucifix, and knelt there, manfully and penitently.

"Lord, as Thou wilt!" he broke forth. "I have sinned. But Thou hast suffered innocent. I will go back. Thou hast been better than a father to my child—I know it now—I have seen it. I will go back. I offer Thee all that I am. It is all I have. Lord, it was not freed and I wanted! It was to sit clothed and in my right mind" at Thy feet. I will go back.

When Miss Leonard came in, he was waiting, wakeful and serene. She could not but notice that he spoke and stood and moved a different man, and her sympathies were stirred to greater interest, thinking of the value men set on liberty, since the mere prospect arouses long dormant faculties. In his new life, he would become a different man, and, in part at least, it would be her doing.

She had brought with herself such clothing as would serve for a disguise until daylight came, and he hastily assumed it. Together they stole down the dark stairs softly, she unlocked the door, and peering and listening, stood before him on the threshold.

"There is no one within sight," she whispered. "Take this—and oh, I wish you a happy Easter! God bless you!" She put out her hand with a half-hesitating, half superior air, yet it was winsome and pretty. He took it in both of his—for a second only.

"God bless you!" he echoed faintly, and added, tremulously and tenderly, "my—child!"

She was startled. But he was gone in an instant, melting away into the future as suddenly, as noiselessly as he had come out of the past.

He went back. He was there at the great iron studded door on the south when morning dawned and he could be seen. He had cast aside his disguise, and stood shivering in the cold, raw air of April daybreak. Where he had been, or what he had done, he never told. "I have come back," was his only answer to question, command or taunt. From

that time forth, he went his way within its narrow, sunless limits, patiently, silently, peacefully.

It was not long. Before the papers had quite forgotten to repeat the episode, before Miss Leonard had gathered courage to tell the man she was to marry of her daring charity, before the Easter lilies had all faded, he was free.

And the offering he made—is it not among the fadeless blossoms of the lilies of Eternal Life?"

THE IRISH BRIGADE

Was the Theme of an Eloquent Lecture by Dr. Conan Doyle,

Before the Members of the Irish Literary Society in Dublin.

(Dublin Freeman.)

On Saturday Dr. A. Conan Doyle delivered a most interesting lecture on "The Irish Brigade" before the members of the Irish Literary Society at the Society of Arts Rooms, John Street, Adelphi. Mr. R. Barry O'Brien, B.L., presided, and there was a large attendance of prominent Irishmen in London.

Dr. Conan Doyle, who was most warmly applauded, said he was acquainted with few more interesting incidents in history than those which led to the formation and the existence for a hundred years of the Irish Brigade in the service of France. That so large a body of men should engage under the colors of a foreign nation, that they should fight mainly against the Government which claimed their allegiance, and that they should be able for a period which exceeded three generations to keep them selves well officered by Irish gentlemen of the best Catholic families, and their ranks filled with the best fighting material of Ireland, was certainly

A MOST EXTRAORDINARY PHENOMENON.

The existence of a military organization of this unnatural sort for so long a period was unique, he thought, in the world's history, and told more than words could do of the abominable misgovernment of Ireland by Great Britain in the 18th century. During a century the history of the Irish Brigades was entwined with the military history of France. Their lives were spent in fighting against Great Britain or the allies of Great Britain. He found in his notes 89 engagements in which they had burned powder. They helped the French to victory. They covered the French retreat in three continents. They fought against their persecutors. Again and again their presence turned defeat into victory for their adopted country.

The cases of Cremona and of Fontenoy were admitted on all hands. And then at last milder laws prevailed in Ireland. Some limited measure of justice was due to the native population, and instantly the Brigades in France began to dwindle and disappear. After the raising of the Siege of Limerick in 1691, which terminated the Jacobite war in Ireland, 24,000 men, all good, trained soldiers, of great endurance and hardihood, with an experience of several campaigns, passed out of Ireland—out of Ireland but not out of history—for they went only from a small territory to a larger one, and exchanged the obscure warfare of their lovely island for a service which filled the eyes of Europe and which had made their names

FAMOUS IN THE HISTORY OF THE LAST CENTURY.

The War Minister of Louis the 14th, the French monarch, seized upon the body of men with avidity, and proceeded to break them up into 12 regiments to fit them into the French military establishment. This was very hard upon the officers of the old Irish regiments, who found themselves deprived of their commands, or very often, at any rate, reduced to a lower rank. It was interesting to look over the names of the original officers of the Irish Brigade. There were, for example, the Prndergasts, Butlers, and Leaxes; but the vast majority were O'Carrolls, O'Haras, Murphys, Burkes, McCarrolls, Powers, O'Neills, McMahons, and Mahonys. The waste of the men of the Brigade during the great campaigns at the end of the 17th and at the opening of the 18th centuries was made up by having special recruiting agents in Ireland, who were liable to be hanged if detected by the Government, but who were well paid for their work. There had always been a great smuggling industry carried on between the indented coast of the West of Ireland and the ports of France.

THE ARBITRARY INTERFERENCE BY ENGLAND

with Irish woolen trade had increased this industry, numbers of boats were engaged in carrying wool to France. Few of these ever sailed without having on board four or five strong lads who were ready to fight under the lilies of France. These boats brought back claret and brandy, lace and silks. It was on those occasions when the stout young peasant was missing and the big sail of the smuggler was seen in the morning upon the Southern horizon that word was passed round that the "Wild Goose" had flown. As to the language of the Brigade, it was usually Gaelic. So common was it in the ranks that those officers who knew nothing of it were compelled to learn it. The older language had always been the one bond of union between the Irish sept, and they were passionately attached to it. The uniform of the Irish regiments was a red coat with different colored facings and white knee breeches. This red coat occasionally deceived their English enemies and occasionally their French friends. He (the lecturer) only knew two occasions where armies composed mainly of

BRITISH TROOPS WERE DEFEATED

upon the continent last century—they were Almanza in 1707 and Fontenoy in 1745—and on each of those occasions Irish troops helped to turn the fight against them. Sin would be punished in this world, and if they sowed penal laws in Ireland they would reap humiliations abroad (applause). The British Government of the day showed what they thought of the value of the Irish soldier

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in the service of France by at once passing severe laws by which any recruit leaving Ireland should lose all civil rights and be liable to death if he returned. George the Second was reported to have cried out when the news of the battle of Fontenoy reached him, "Accursed be the laws which deprived me of such subjects." In 1813, when the French king was restored to the throne of his ancestors, the surviving officers of the Irish Brigade assembled around him. The Duke of Fitzjames, in presenting them, said:—"Sire, I have the honour of presenting to your majesty the survivors of the old Irish Brigade, these gentlemen only ask for a sword and the privilege of dying at the foot of your throne." An attempt was then made to reconstruct the Brigade, but it must have failed, for the conditions which produced the Brigade had happily and finally passed away. With Catholic emancipation the struggle between Britain and Ireland passed from the camp to the Senate House, and a long succession of successful attacks upon bigotry and prejudice had at last opened some prospect of an enduring and natural bond between them (applause).

THE ELECTIONS IN AUSTRIA

The Struggle Between the Church and Secularists.

The London Monitor says: There can be no doubt that, taking the good with the bad, the Austrian elections have resulted in a marvellous victory for the Church. The Reichsrath contains a great number of Catholics. And these are all earnest and determined men. They have stood on the hustings as defenders of the Church; they have borne the burden of abuse and scorn which the Secularists bestow in plenty upon their professed enemies; they would be foolish as well as criminal to go back upon their pledges, to attempt to alter their policy. They are absolutely and irrevocably committed to the task of bettering the condition of the Church in regard to the law. All this is good, and, on the face of it, promises an improvement in the making and administration of the laws. Then again, the return of

MANY DEFENDERS OF THE CHURCH,

is good not only in itself, but also, and more especially, as a sign of the sentiment of the great bulk of the people. The elections were fought on an extended franchise; quite a new class of the people have recently been admitted to the polling booths. This class—the poorest, hitherto enjoying few of the rights of citizenship—has long been claimed by the secularist party as belonging to them and hostile to the Church. For years no class has been spared to instill the holy hatred of the priest into their minds: "indel publications, godless education, the raising of local anti-clerical leaders, every one of the traditional methods of secularist propaganda has been employed unceasingly—and ineffectually. Counting on these people to elect them as soon as they exercised the suffrage, the anti-Christian party has been cruelly—and most happily deceived. The newcomers

HAVE PROVED THEMSELVES CHRISTIAN,

and have routed the anti-Christian battalions. But amid all that is hopeful in the results, there comes always the great doubt; will the new and numerically strong Catholic party prove to be a party, pulling together with that unity which alone can enable them to accomplish the work of reform that is to their hands, and to stay the progress of anti-Christian legislation. Or will they rather prove to be merely a haphazard collection of politicians—leaving Catholicism in faith, but none the less, in purpose and pursuit? Here lies the danger. Probably no other European Legislature deals

WITH SO DIVERSIFIED A POPULATION

as does the Austrian Reichsrath. Czechs, Poles, Germans, Slavonians, Ruthenians, Croats, Roumanians—are all represented, and all are mutually jealous, striving after all sorts of incompatible ends. Only the late Premier, Count Taaffe, who juggled with all, and was in the end juggled out of power as the direct issue of his efforts, only he could fully describe the immense centrifugal force which is likely to be displayed by the new Catholic party. It is much to be feared that there will be no unity of action, no combination among the Catholic representatives of these various races and populations.

AUBREY BEARDSLEY, THE ARTIST,

RECEIVED INTO THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

LONDON, April 12.—Aubrey Beardsley, the artist, has been formally received into the Catholic Church.

Mr. Beardsley is still quite a young man. He was born in 1874, the son of a widow, whom he helped to support cu-

of his slender wages as a clerk. He began drawing for his own amusement, and his style was so grotesque that it attracted attention. Finally a few friends induced him to study art, and took him to Burne-Jones, a famous painter. This artist encouraged young Beardsley, and told him to study even if he had to starve. This advice was taken, and the ambitious youngster took lessons in an art school. The first work that he offered for sale was a success. His next achievement was an artistic oddity called "The Yellow Book," published by Lane, the London bookman.

Fortune then began to smile upon him, and his income from illustrations, executed in the same weird manner that characterized his early drawings, was reported to exceed \$20,000 a year.

HORRIBLE ACCIDENT.

SEAMAN ON THE U. S. STEAMSHIP YANTIC BLOWN TO PIECES.

NEW YORK, April 15.—The Herald, this morning, prints the following from its correspondent at Montevideo, Uruguay, under date of March 9:—

While the United States steamship Yantic was at stationary target practice at Chico Bank, La Plata River, about seventy-five miles northwest from Montevideo, a sickening accident occurred. The three required shots had been fired from the sixty-pounder rifle on the forecastle and the eight inch rifle forward. Three shots had been fired from the nine-inch smooth bore muzzle-loader, and only one more shot was required from this last gun to complete a very successful target practice. The nine-inch gun was then run in to be loaded. On account of the narrowness of the Yantic and the smallness of the gunports it is necessary for the man loading the gun to lean out of the port, clasping one arm about the chase of the gun, and working the sponge and the rammer with the other arm, partly exposing his body in front of the muzzle. The bore had been sponged out with the sponge, freshly dampened at the division tub in the rear of the gun, and the charge of eleven pounds of black powder had been rammed home by Patrick Murphy, a seaman, assisted by O. Germanen, another seaman, on the other side. C. Hayden, the coxswain, was holding his thumb on the vent, in order to prevent the air from reaching any lighted fragments of the previously exploded cartridge that might have remained in the chamber. Apparently none of the precautions extinguished the burning bits of cloth, for the cartridge exploded while Murphy was withdrawing the rammer, and he was blown overboard. No trace of him was found although the boats were instantly lowered and search was made. Germanen lost one eye and the other man was seriously injured, one arm being broken. Hayden's hand was badly lacerated by the vent and the upper half of his was shattered. After the accident the Yantic returned to Montevideo.

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PROVINCE OF QUEBEC, DISTRICT OF MONTREAL, SUPERIOR COURT

No. 205.

Dame Charlotte Campbell, of the City and District of Montreal, wife of Michael McGrail, of the same place, Gentlemen, duly authorized a *decurator* justice, Plaintiff, vs. Michael McGrail aforesaid, Defendant. An action in separation as to property has been this day instituted in this cause.

Montreal, 15th March, 1897.

D. R. MURPHY,

Attorney for Plaintiff.

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