

"That was one of the nuns; has she not a beautiful voice?"

"Beautiful, indeed," assented Mary. "I should like to learn that, but here we are at our door. Good night, and thank you all."

"Good morning, rather," broke in Harry.

"And Merry Christmas, Mary."

"Merry Christmas, Harry," sang out Mary as she disappeared.

A year had quickly rolled away. Christmas Eve had come around again; people were assembling for Midnight Mass in the Church attached to the Ursuline Convent. The bench-occupied by our friends last year has been secured by them again. Mr. and Mrs. Wilson are there, Kate looking tearfully happy, Harry looking grave but evidently well pleased; and who is this maiden all in white enveloped in a cloudy veil? Can this be our Mary? Even so, this is Mary; no looking around now, no wondering what it all meant, no question, no doubt; nothing but joy—calm, sweet, heavenly joy.

It looks as though the little church would be taxed to its utmost to-night, for all Quebec has heard that pretty, merry Mary Dawson was received into the Church that morning by Pere Le Moine, and is to receive her First Holy Communion at Midnight Mass.

It is not our intention to enter upon any controversy in this short relation, nor to give Mary Dawson's reasons for the step she took. Suffice it to say that she set about to seek the truth; above all she prayed; and God, who hears every earnest prayer, set her upon the right path, which she followed faithfully. Six months before she implored Father Le Moine to give her conditional Baptism; but he, usually so mild and gentle, was inexorable; she could not obtain her mother's consent, therefore she must wait until she would be of age. The probation would do her good, he maintained; it would strengthen her character, and show whether she was possessed of perseverance.

Mrs. Dawson, naturally enough, felt what she considered her daughter's defection keenly; she could not give her consent to the step Mary desired to take, but she did not treat her harshly. Her sorrow was trial enough for Mary, who suffered as a warm-hearted girl cannot but suffer when she knows her duty to God clashes with the tender love she bears her parents; but when God calls we must obey, no matter at what cost. Mary came of age on the 8th December, but her Baptism was deferred until Christmas Eve. Pere Le Moine performed the ceremony in the morning

about 10 o'clock in the little Ursuline church. None were present but Mr. and Mrs. Wilson, who were the sponsors, Katie shedding floods of happy tears, and Harry, who looked happy and very serious.

She was to receive her First Holy Communion at Midnight Mass; fervently she prayed for the grace of a good Communion, and as the sweet voice of last year sang out "*Gloria in excelsis Deo*," a heavenly smile lit up her lovely countenance, while she thanked God for the gift she had received since last she heard that glorious hymn. At the Elevation she bowed her head to adore the God who had revealed Himself to her. At the Holy Communion—but we must draw a veil over her feelings at that sacred moment; we may only hear her murmur in her joy and gratitude to God resting upon her heart: "I am all Thine, my Jesus; do with me as Thou wilt; I give myself to Thee."

For a third time we must visit the little church of the Ursulines on Christmas Eve for Midnight Mass. It looks as usual; one would think it was last year or the year before, so little has anything changed. Shall we find the Wilsons where we are accustomed to see them? Yes; here are Mr. and Mrs. Wilson with Katie and Harry, but where is Mary Dawson? We miss her, she is not with them, she is not in the little church. Pere Le Moine, as before, is the celebrant and Mass is in progress.

"*Gloria in excelsis Deo!*" rings out from the cloistered choir. The soloist is not the sweet-voiced nun we heard before; we thought her voice sweet and lovely; so it was, but this is different, it is richer, fuller, more melodious, more of heaven, if we may so speak "*Gloria in excelsis Deo!*" The singer seems to be singing her heart right up to God.

Katie, as the notes burst out, puts up her handkerchief to stifle a little sob. A look of pain passes over Harry's face, and he turns pale; he buries his face in his hands and prays earnestly, fervently until he is calm and resigned. Mr. and Mrs. Wilson turn a little uneasily and settle themselves to pray with increased devotion. They all recognize the voice of their dear little friend Mary Dawson. She has now consecrated that voice and all her talents to the service of God. On the 8th December she received the habit of an Ursuline novice after three months' probation as postulante. She is known now as Mother Mary of the Immaculate Conception.

M. H.