

JUNE 9, 1900.

SPARED!

A Mother's "Deo Gratias."

I remember the first time I went to the convent. It was one of the opening days in June; the air was full of sunshine and the perfume of new mown hay. In the distance you could hear the shrill voices of the children as they played on the green terraces and in the cut meadow grass. All down Rosary walk the roses grew in wild profusion, crimson and pink, and clusters of pots creamy white, brushing their green-trellised palling taking the golden sunshine into their perfumed velvet hearts.

A year and three months later I sent my little daughter there. It was our first parting. She was an impetuous, lovable child, very strong in her likes and dislikes, and I wondered how she would get on with her Superiors in her new life. Would she find them all kind? or would some of them not understand the thoughtless, warm-hearted child? I called again at the convent six weeks later, on my way back from abroad, and when I asked her the question ever uppermost in my mind, she replied without hesitation, "I love them all, mother; they are all good to me." I wondered at her answer then; I no longer wonder now.

Christmas came quickly, and she came, too, looking the picture of health and happiness, with a curious new tenderness for her baby brother and sisters; very full of her studies, very full of ambition, having well spent those four past months; when we parted again I had no longer any doubts as to the choice I had made in sending her to the convent.

It was a bright spring morning when a letter arrived, telling me my dear little daughter had got the measles. I cannot say I minded it much. Of course, I felt sorry the child should be so ill, but still it would be as well if she got it over her now, when she was young, especially as the attack going was of a mild type. But, of course, I eagerly watched for the post next morning, tearing open the envelope rapidly to read the news. It was no longer the mild case first described; my little darling was sick, very sick, and even as I read, the maid entered with a telegram. "Erna seriously ill." How the words seemed to stand out on the pink paper as it trembled in my hands! For a moment I could see nothing else. I remember crying out aloud in my agony, "Oh my God, leave her to me! leave her to me!" I could not pray; only that wild appeal for mercy passed my lips. My heart was full of rebellion. I could not live without the child!

Then came the hurried preparation, the long, weary hours in the railway carriage, flying through the green country. Would I never reach my journey's end? And all along the journey of a Protestant friend of mine kept ringing in my ears, "See your self the child is well looked after, Mrs. L.—as I don't believe in nuns." Locking back on it now, I smile at those groundless fears; for very soon I knew that in her own home she could not have got more loving care, more watchful nursing.

I arrived at the convent about 6 o'clock in the evening. The reverend Mother told me that the child had been aointed some hours before, and that already her breathing seemed easier and she was sleeping. But her words of hope gave me no comfort. I thought the child was going to die. Why mine of all others? Surely there were plenty of other children on God's fair earth, plenty already in His father Heaven, without His taking the one child that was all the world to me? And so I grieved and grieved without the comfort of prayer and the days passed with their laden hours, and the sweet frail life still hung in the balance.

"Give my love to mother when you are writing." But, oh! how hard it was to stand at the threshold and go no further, how hard to exercise that daily act of self-control! My only comfort was to say over and over, "It is for the child's good." And even when saying the words, my heart would beat with a passionate longing to get one glimpse of the dear bonnie face, to hold the soft warm hand in mine, to look into the blue eyes, and kiss the round red mouth! What joy this would have been to me, only God who created that mother-heart within me knew.

Once, as I was sitting in my accustomed place in the church, a little girl entered clinging to her mother. Evidently the mother had come to visit the little one. The child had her arm round the mother's waist, and as they stood there admiring the beautiful sculptured angels on either side of the altar, I looked at them with jealous eyes. Why should that child be well, and mine lie in the clutches of that cruel pneumonia? It never occurred to me that God might say to me, as I said of my sick child when I could not see her, "It is for your good."

Everybody around was so kind. Everywhere I met marks of quiet sympathy. What struck me most was how every nun in that convent, from the sweet Mother Superior, with her air of gentle dignity and face of quiet strength, down to the youngest novices, all seemed to feel for the child and me. If she had a good night, I would not need to get the news early. I would see it in the smiling faces of the nuns as they met me with the glad news on their lips: "You had good news of Erna this morning." Even the little children hurrying along the waxen corridors, carrying their tiny violets, would stop a moment and lifting their shy eyes would ask me how their little companion was. It was loving sympathy everywhere.

I remember one evening entering the church at the twilight hour. There was no light in the nave except from the lamp of the sanctuary, which hung before the altar. Its crimson rays fell on the bowed heads of five little children who were kneeling there, such tiny little ones! As I crept softly into my place, I wondered how they were praying for. One little girl I noticed especially; she seemed about seven years of age, and as I looked at the rapt flower like face, I could see the baby lips moving in the intensity of her fervor. That same evening, some hours later, I found out that these little ones had gone together to the church to pray for Erna's recovery.

Another day I went into town to get some violets for the little inmates of the infirmary. When I entered the florist's, I asked for eight little bouquets (there were eight little children down in the measles) and as the assistant looked around to see if she had the number, "Must they be all the same size?" she asked. "Yes," I replied, "they must be all the same size; I require them for eight little children who are sick, but perhaps you would put a tiny piece of white hyacinth in the bunch for my little girl, just to make it slightly different from the rest." As with deft fingers she made up the purple bouquets, she asked me was my little girl very ill? "Yes, very, very ill." She heard the weary voice and looked up. I suppose the dumb agony in my face must have touched her, for, when I looked again, tears of sympathy overflowed her eyes. I remember her following me out to the door and saying in her quiet voice, which yet had a sob in it, "May God spare you your little daughter!"

Next day there was a procession ending in Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. The church is cruciform and opens out on a corridor hung with Stations of the Cross. The doors were all wide open as the procession slowly passed along. I could see them all from the bench where I was kneeling first, the children with their bright faces and sunny hair, then the white-veiled novices, and lastly the nuns, all with their tapers lighting. The air was full of music and the fragrance of the tall white lilies that covered the altar. But my thoughts were with the sick child. Oh! if she could but know I was so near her! Could she think I was forgetting? Could I ever doubt like that? And as I thought, like a lightning flash, the memory of the last few days answered back. Yes, I, too, had doubted.

The perfume of the incense came nearer and nearer. I could hear the deep voices of the priests chanting as I left my place and came down the church, down to the open door, and there knelt humbly waiting for Him to pass. Jesus of Nazareth, the same today as nineteen hundred years ago; the same always! He was coming, the same Jesus Who once walked the streets of Jerusalem and preached with mild face and sad eyes ("eyes sad with our sinning!") by the shining sea of Galilee. He came, and with the unbidden tears falling soft as a summer shower, I asked Him if it were His will to leave me the child I loved better than my life. He Himself had wept Divine tears over the tomb of Lazarus, and had known what human sorrow was. Yes, He would know and understand! He had heard the prayer of the Rabbi so long ago, nearly nineteen hundred years ago, and given him back his little maid. He would leave me my child now.

And He gave me my heart's desire! My little girl grew rapidly well—so well that in four days I was able to return home with my mind at rest. But, before I left, kneeling in the hush of that quiet church, the prejudice of years broke down, and there with my spring sunshine resting on its walls I

asked God to speak some day to one of my little daughters as he spoke once before in those far away golden years to Mary of Bethania.

My last visit was to the cemetery. As I followed the nun under the narrow gray arch that leads into "God's Acre" and looked at the carefully tended graves of the nuns and children (for six little ones are buried here) my heart was full of a great thankfulness. The same sunshine that streamed into the church fell also on the green graves in the quiet cemetery, and lingered lovingly on the ivy that covered its brown walls. There had been a slight shower a few hours previously, and the grass shone now in the sun's rays like drops of crystal. A bird was singing to its mate from an old tree close by, filling the air with melody. The place was ablaze with sweet spring flowers—crocuses with their golden chalcids, tender violets and trembling snowdrops. The bright faces of the sun told me these had suddenly sprung into blossom with the late sunshine. As I turned away I felt that something else had blossomed in my heart, in the love and sympathy of the last few days—something that I would never quite lose again.—A. L. in the Irish Monthly.

THE MISSION BELL.

English Missionary's Unique Method of Bringing Neglected Catholics to Their Duty.

Something of a sensation, according to English exchanges, has been caused by the unique method adopted by Very Rev. Martin Byrne, a well-known English Missionary, to bring some neglected Catholics in the town of Carmarthen to a sense of their duty. Father Martin was giving a mission in the church at Carmarthen, and was meeting with great success, the participants being wrought to a high pitch of religious fervor. But, unfortunately, there are in Carmarthen a few nominal Catholics who are not members of the congregation, who never enter the church, who did not attend the mission, and who never comply with the precept of the Council of Lateran—which is to the effect that those who do not so comply should be debarred entrance into the church during life and deprived of Christian burial after death—and who therefore expose themselves to the incurring of this penalty by excommunication. Father Martin determined to make an effort to bring them in.

The missionary's first move was to ask those who were attending the mission to tell the neglectful ones the law of the Church, and to invite them to come and hear the Word of God. When they declined Father Martin sent them other messengers to say that if they would not come they would hear in their homes, or in the haunts of their sin, the bell tolling for the death of their souls as it tolls for the death of the body, while the congregation would pray for their conversion. They still declined to come. Then a most impressive scene was witnessed. The great bell in the steeple was solemnly tolled and as its first deep note floated out on the night air the congregation, at the word of the missionary, knelt and prayed fervently for the conversion of the sinners.

IRISH HUMOR DURING THE QUEEN'S VISIT.

"Drive me to a good hotel, jarvey." "Well, sir, which d'ye want?" "Any will do so long as I can get a room." "Then, axin' yer leave, sir, y'd better go across an' throw stones at a peeler."

"Why?" "Y'd get locked up thin, sir, an' it's the only way to get a room in Dublin this night, sir, heavn's praised!" "One of the Dublin evening papers came out on Thursday evening with out any reference to the Queen's visit save some brief extracts from the leaders in the London papers. This was noticed by a Saxon journalist, who had purchased a copy from an elderly dame in Grafton street. He stood under a lamp post, glancing over the paper with a keen journalistic eye, and then he came back to the news vendor. "Look here," he said, "this paper has nothing in it about the Queen's visit; it is a fraud." "Lor, save ye, sur," she replied in a second's time. "Lor, bless ye, there's the shootin' of the Prince o' Wales in it. How much does yer honor want for a hapenny?"

Near Northumberland road, which may be regarded as the entrance to Dublin proper, an old woman bustled herself selling oranges. For an hour she had a gratifying sale, but as the crowd grew denser she could not move about to entice her patrons, and she lamented the fact openly. As the procession drew near she contrived to push a little nearer the barrier. "Stand back, you wid the basket," shouted the policeman. "Arrah, he rephuted the old body at once, "mebbe her reverence 'd like an orange—chaps here one all for nothin'." "Stand back, her one all for nothin'." "Stand back, will ye? Her Majesty doesn't want will ye? Her Majesty knows"—the policeman fell back on his imagination—"everybody knows she hates oranges." "Then glory be to God, 'tis the color of thim she hates; she's a tidy soul, after all. I wish I had some—green oranges."

A dying man was asked what should be put on his tomb. He answered, "Let this be the inscription: Here lies a fool who went out into the world without learning why he came into it."

NAPOLION ON THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST.

The Ave Maria presents in its issue of May 5 an admirable article in response to a request for arguments for the Divinity of Christ for one who rejects the Bible.

Our esteemed contemporary takes Our Lord as a character of history, to be judged by His life, His words, His works and the love which He still inspires in His followers. Finally it presents Napoleon's remarkable words. Says the Ave Maria: "This striking testimony was first cited, we believe, by Pere Lacordaire in one of his famous conferences at Notre Dame, and is referred to by Cardinal Newman in his 'Grammar of Assent,' and by innumerable other Christian apologists."

After quoting from Rousseau a sentence in which that infidel philosopher wrote, for once, as a theologian—"If the life and death of Socrates were those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus Christ are those of a God,"—the eloquent Dominican went on to tell of the conversations on religious subjects which Napoleon sometimes held with one of his Generals during his exile at St. Helena, recorded by the Chevalier de Beaupierre. On one occasion the conversation turned on the essential difference between Christianity and other religious systems, and on the divinity of its Founder. Napoleon spoke with deep impressiveness, his emotion rendering him eloquent in the highest degree. These were his words:

"I know men, General, and I can tell you that Jesus Christ is not a man. Superficial minds see a resemblance between Christ and the founders of empires, the conquerors and the gods of other religions. The resemblance does not exist; the distance between Christianity and any other religion is infinite. Any one who has a true knowledge of things and experience of men will not short the question as I do. Who among us, General, looking at the worship of different nations, is not able to say to the different authors of those religions, 'No, you are neither gods nor the agents of the Deity. You have no mission from Heaven. You are formed of the same slime as other mortals. Your own lives are entirely one with all the passions and all the vices which are inseparable from humanity. Your temples and your priests themselves proclaim your origin? Abominations, fables, and rotten wood! Are these religions and gods which can at all be compared with Christianity? I say no!"

"In Lycurgus, Numa, Confucius, and Mahomet I see lawgivers, but nothing which reveals the Deity. They themselves did not raise their pretensions so high. They surpassed others in their times, as I have done in mine. There is nothing about them which announces divine beings; on the contrary, I see much likeness between them and myself. I can testify to common resemblances, weaknesses and errors, which bring them near to me and to human nature."

"It is not so with Christ. Everything in Him amazes me. His mind is beyond me and His will confounds me. There is no possible term of comparison between Him and anything of this world. He is being apart. His birth, His life, His death, the profundity of His doctrine, which reaches the height of difficulty, and which is yet its most admirable solution; the singularity of this mysterious Being, His empire, His course across ages and kingdoms—all is a prodigy, a mystery too deep, too sacred, and which plunges me into reveries from which I can find no escape; a mystery which is here, under my eyes, which I cannot deny and neither can I explain."

"Here I see nothing of man. You speak of Caesar and of Alexander; of their conquests, and of the enthusiasm which they were able to awaken in the hearts of their soldiers, and thus draw them with them on adventurous expeditions. But this only shows us the price of the soldier's affection, the ascendancy of the genius of victory, the natural effect of military discipline, and the result of able command. But how many years did the empire of Caesar endure? How long was the enthusiasm of the soldiers of Alexander maintained? Their prestige lasted but a day—the time of their command,—and followed the chances of war. If victory had deserted them, do you doubt whether they have ceased? I ask you, yes or no? Did the military influence of Caesar and Alexander end with their life? Was it prolonged beyond the tomb?"

"Imagine one making conquests with a faithful army, devoted to his memory, after his death! Imagine a phantom, who has soldiers without pay, without hopes for this world, and who inspires them to submit to all kinds of privations. Tarenne was still warm when his army broke up before Montecuculi. And as to myself, my army forget me while I still live, as the Carthaginian army forgot Hannibal. Such is the power of my great men! A battle lost casts us down and carries away our friends. How many a Judas have I seen around me!"

"In short—and this is my last argument—there is not a God in Heaven if any man could conceive and execute with full success the gigantic design of seizing upon the supreme worship by usurping the name of God. Jesus is the only One Who dared to do this. He is the only One Who has said, affirmed imperturbably, Himself of Himself, 'I am God'—which is quite different from the affirmation, 'I am a god. History mentions no other individual who qualified himself with the

title of God in the absolute sense. How, then, should a Jew to whose exaltation there is more testimony than to that of any of His contemporaries—He alone, the Son of a carpenter—give Himself out as God Himself, for the self-existent Being, for the Creator of all beings? He claims every kind of adoration; He builds His worship with His own hands—not with stones, but with men. And how was it that, by a prodigy surpassing all prodigies He willed the love of men—that which it is most difficult in the world to obtain—and immediately succeeded? From this I conclude His divinity. Alexander, Caesar, Hannibal—all failed. They conquered the world, but they were not able to obtain a friend. I am perhaps the only person of the present time who has any love for Hannibal, Caesar or Alexander. It is true we love our children; but how many children are ungrateful! Do your children love you general? You love them, but you are not sure of a return. Christ speaks, and from that time generations are His by ties more strict, more intimate than those of blood; by a union more sacred, more imperative than any other could be. All those who sincerely believe in Him feel that superior love, of which Time, the great destroyer, can neither exhaust the strength nor limit the duration. I, Napoleon, admire this the more that I have so very often thought of it; and it proves to me absolutely the divinity of Christ."

"I have inspired multitudes to die for me. God forbid that I should form any comparison between the enthusiasm of my soldiers and Christian charity; they are as different as their charity; the electricity of my look, my voice, a word from me, and the sacred fire was kindled in all hearts. I certainly possess the secret of that magic power which carries away other people's minds, yet I could never communicate it to others. Not one of my generals ever received it from me or guessed at it; neither have I the power to eternalize my name and my love in the heart."

"Now that I am at St. Helena—now that I am alone, unaided to this rock—who fights and conquers empires for me? What courtiers have I in my misfortune? Does any one think of me? Does any one in Europe move for me? Who has remained faithful? Where now are my friends? Yes, you two or three, whose fidelity immortalizes you, share my exile." (Here, it is said, Napoleon's voice assumed a peculiar tone of melancholy, irony and deep sadness.) "Yes, our existence has shone with all the brilliancy of the diadem and of sovereignty; and yours, General, reflected this splendor, as the dome of the Invalides reflects the rays of the sun. But reverses have come. By degrees the golden hues are effaced; the floods of misfortune and the outrages to which I am subjected carry away the last tints. Only the lead remains, General, and soon I shall be dust."

"Such is the destiny of great men—of Caesar and of Alexander. We are forgotten, and the name of a conqueror, like that of an emperor, is but the subject of a college theme. Our exploits come under the fertile of a pedant, who either praises or insults us. A few months and this will be my fate. What will happen to myself? Assassinated by the English oligarchy."

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Street Incident. "My Dear Sir," exclaimed Lawyer Bartholomew Livingstone, meeting the Rev. Dr. Archibald Wincham on the village street. "What does this mean? I thought you were laid up with all sorts of bad diseases?" "So I was," replied the reverend gentleman, "I had an attack of indigestion from that time on my whole system has been in a disordered condition until I began taking Hood's Sarsaparilla which has put me on my feet and cured all my stomach troubles."

"I don't doubt it," said the lawyer. "This same medicine cured my wife of rheumatism and my little girl of scrofula. When they say it's the best medicine money can buy, they only tell the truth."

"Yes, yes, so they do," replied the minister, and the two passed on.

THEY ARE NOT VIOLENT IN ACTION.—Some persons, when they wish to cleanse the stomach, resort to Epsom and other purgative salts. These are speedily in their action, but serve no permanent good. Their use produces ineffectual chills, and if persisted in they injure the stomach. Nor do they act upon the intestines in a beneficial way. Parson's Vegetable Pills answer all purposes in this respect, and have no superior.

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archy, I die prematurely, and my body will be returned to the earth to become pasture for worms. This is the destiny, now very near, of 'the great Napoleon.' What a gulf between my misery and the eternal reign of Christ, preached, praised, loved, adored, living in the whole universe! Is this to die? Is it not rather to live? Such is the death of Christ—such the death of God."

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