Published by permission of Burns, Oates & ne, London, England THREE DAUGHTERS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM

TWO

BY MRS. INNES BROWNE

CHAPTER XVI.

Christmas Eve at last! The greater part of the afternoon and ening people from the neighboring villages had been trooping up in odd numbers; for it was a custom of long standing at the Court, that d the Catholics from the outlying districts desire it, food and accom modation should both be provided for them, that thus they might be better auabled to assist at the midnight service. There were tottering old men and women, who had weathered all storms, and rarely ever since childhood missed their midnight Mass; young men and middle-aged ones; fresh faced young girls, with their rosy, cheerful matrons—all bent and intent upon joining heartily in the spirit of the Church, and spending that one night at least

in deep prayer and praise. During the atternoon and evening all had approached the Sacrament of Penance; the last to do so was Lady Beatrice. She withdrew apart from every one, apparently desirous to hide from observation, and those who knew her best, guessing her wishes, left the girl to the bent of her own desires. Two there were, though, whose eyes followed lovingly her every movement, and noted the attitude of her graceful humble girlish figure; the lowly bend of the proud young head, and the look of contrite sorrow on her lovely face. It seemed to the Earl an his youngest son that they loved her better than anything on earth ; that none to them could ever be so fair or beautiful in their eyes; and the heart of Parcy was moved with pity. and yearned unepeakably towards her. as by an interior light he seemed to see the struggles of her heart laid bare before him, and his own bled with desire to lead and show her the way to peace and rest. The silvery tones of the sacristy

clock chimed the midnight hour, and Mass began, Lord Reginald serving as Percy took his place at the organ ; whilst Beatrice stood at his ide, her hands folded in front of her, her face brightened and flushed by a look of earnest sincerity, whilst the a necklace of the same precious "far away" look of old lingered in the stones from her mother, and bracedepths of her violet eyes. Ere long, lets to match from her elder brother in full rich tones, the organ sounded forth, and the strong young voices of brother and sister blended in sweetest harmony as they sang in tones of exultant joy the Church's choicest and gentle forms of some half dozen Gloria in Excelsis Deo. Sisters of Charity moved silently hymn. Well and secretly had they practised and helpfully amongst them, tenderly the air of it together, hoping that it and lovingly ministering to all their would prove a pleasant surprise to their little friend, and recall to her alone, the picture was of great merit, mind memories of days gone by. And Marie, as she sat and listened. recognized in an instant poor dean it. Madge's favorite "Gloria :" and as the hymn proceeded the tears forced themselves to her eves and trickled slowly down her face, for surely Bertie had think so. caught somewhat of the dear Scotch girl's tone and pathos, or was it only that the old familiar strains carried everything else old and valued with for and joyfully responded to. The health of the "United Kingdom" them ? Marie knew not : but she knelt afterwards as one entranced,

until disturbed by the movement of the Earl and Countess-for she to by many a kindly word and knelt between them—as they rose and led the way to the Communion thought. rails. Marie never forgot that night. Often and often, as the years followed began to fill with guests and assume each other, and Christmas came a lively and gala appearance. Marie round with its accustomed regular

and pleased at the praise she state of flutter and alarm. bestowed upon him. will my father's health endure all By no means ; there is far too

this excitement, do you think, Marie ?" she asked, as the two girls much work for you to do in the world. I meant to say you looked so stood arm-in-arm in their little very much in earnest, as if your boudoir. whole heart and soul were in your Don't look so troubled and prayers.' anxious, darling. Your face must be

They were, Marie. God knows they were ;" and the young lord took wreathed in smiles tonight ; not one cloud must be seen upon it. Is it with respect and deep feeling the little hand which rested so lightly not all for your sake that this page-ant and show is taking place? upon his arm, and pressed it firmly Gratify him then, dear Bertie, by within his own as he continued letting him see how very much you Oh! I have prayed lately as I enjoy and appreciate it all. Have you forgotten how often you have have never prayed before, and it is all owing to your influence.'

longed for a continued life of such gainty as this?" "I am so glad, for it gives me great joy to know and feel that I have been of the least little service my gentle Marie. Were he well it to you. But you must release my would be so different. Should this excitement upset him, how I shall hand, please," she said, somewhat frightensd by the new and flerce detest the very sight of it all." light which shone in his eyes. "otherwise I shall be obliged to call ered you at last," said the Countess, you Lord Reginald again."

"You only threaten, I feel con Louise, who bore in her hands the daintiest of ball dresses. "Knowing vinced. Marie, and would never inflict eo severe a punishment for so slight an offence," he replied, striving hard that your aunt has somewhat re stricted your wardrobe, I have vento force a smile. "But believe me, that never on this side of the grave tured upon having a dress made for you, in the hope that you will accept will you or can you know all that

it and wear it tonight to please me. you have been and are to me, Marie. "I can refuse you nothing," answered the girl, blushing deeply ; he added, Nay, more," with earnestness that startled her - the but indeed, indeed, it is far too little hand being still retained prisoner — "God knows it is true, grand, too elegant for me! my poplin would have been sufficient and I care not who hears me say for me it either. Would that I dare say Well, such is not my idea child and I see no reason why you should

more !' Marie gently but effectually re-leased her hand from his warm not be as well dressed as any other young lady. So I borrowed a bodice grasp, and continued her walk in of yours as a pattern, and trust that the dress will fit, also that you will silence.

What have I done ?" she queried like it." inwardly, whilst a new and undefined sensation crept over her. " Why to whose bewildered gaze Louise was unfolding the robe, which conshould it cause me feelings of pleas. ure to hear him tell me all this ?" sisted of a rich white brocaded silk and then her pulses beat more over which, most elegantly draped. quickly as she recalled the strange hung a bright, glimmering, glitterlook of yearning tenderness that but ing material, which shone like bril moment since had lit up his liant stars. fine dark ever, and a sensation of Don't you think it will suit her? guiltiness, she knew not wherefore, inquired her ladyship, turning to overcame her. Arriving at Bertie's her daughter. boudoir, she withdrew her arm from

his somewhat hastily and rushed star of the night, mother dear. My into her own room. little guiding star she ever was, even n days long gone by, when even I was a good little girl. Ah me, how Numerous and costly were the presents given and received that

long ago it all seems ! ' happy Christmas day, and Marie was Well, so soon as you are dressed, remembered in a substantial manner children, the Earl and I request a by all her friends. Beatrice received private peep at your toilets ere you a rich diamond tiara from her father, descend to the drawing-room Most certainly you shall have it.

mother ; but," laughed the girl, do believe that Marie is afraid of From Percy she received a beautiful looking too nice. Observe her look oil painting representing the ward of a hospital filled with soldiers of blank despair. Come, dear, you may as well submit with a good wounded and dying ; whilst the sweet

grace, since you cannot help it Poor Marie's brow was puckered with an expression of alarm, as she continued to gaze at the gorgeous fabric before her; then she raised wants. Regarded as a work of art both her hands helplessly and exclaimed slowly, "Alas ! I ask again, and, in spite of herself, Beatrice could what am I coming to ?" not restrain her eyes from studying If Miss Blake was appalled by the She knew well that in her heart

brilliant appearance of her ball dress. of bearts she both admired and loved Norah, her maid, was very differently it the most of all her presents, and affected at the sight of it. Her eves yet how sincerely she strove not to sparkled with pleasure and admira-Much fun and many jokes were tion, and every feature of her good the order of the day, and toasts for absent friends were frequently called tempered face expressed genuine delight.

Indeed, miss, it's proud and pleased I'll be to place you within that splendid garment; faith-bar was merrily drunk ; the dear Scotch Lady Beatrice herself-the likes of it won't be seen this night ;" and Norah proceeded to examine more closely the shining silky fabric.

Then it was that, as the last day of the year drew near, the Court so costly or so grand. What would they say at the Convent." she con-

minute who never wore saythin

even so mane as this, and yet saved

Possibly," laughed the little lady

but let us hurry, as I promised to

assist Lady Beatrice with her toilet

this evening." So, amidst many a

laugh and disapproving shake of her

pretty head, and many an exclama

tion of admiration from her maid

worldly costume ?"

her sowl!"

The heart of Beatrice was in a looked from one to the other, and " How

observed with pretended gravity: "If I mistake not, there will be terrible havoc wrought this night." Then, more seriously, he continued God bless you, my children ; how very sweet and lovely you look !" And he spoke truly.

Beatrice wore a dress of the richest ossible pearly white satin; so rich silent, but after we had walked two flounce nor frill to enhance its The skirt thereof was perbeauty. plain, but around the shoulders and bust, forming a "bertha" to the beautifully fitting and slightly pointed bodice, hung some very costly lace. Her gold brown hair

was so tastefully coiled that it did Not at the expense of his health. not destroy the contour of the shapely little head, upon which glittered tiara ; whilst her white throat and O Marie, my child. I have discov of the precious Christmas gifts to

match. From her waist hung a white than I. She was the eldest and I the as she entered the room, followed by pearly fan of rich Oriental design, and upon her email white satin shoes sparkled two diamond buckles. Beatrice had but to confort anyone of the many mirrors which hung around to assure herself that beauty was almost matchless ; but, to

do her justice, vanity was not one of her many faults, and for that very reason was her beauty all the more conspicuous. Surely Why, Marie, you are destitute of a

single oranment !" exclaimed the Countess in dismay. "Come here, child, and let me see what I can do for you." She pushed back the heavy door of

small iron safe, which was skilfully let into the wall, and, after turning over various articles of valuable jewellery, opened at last a large

It is simply lovely," said Marie, case, which contained a magnificent necklace of immense and costly pearls. She held it for an instant in both hands, and appeared to hesitate; then, with a fixed look of determination on her handsome face, her voice assumed a tone of authority as she said, "You must wear this, my child ; I desire it."

A look as of mingled surprise and displeasure crossed the Earl's count-She will be the little shining enance as he heard these words and saw his wife clasp the necklace on Marie's | its name long ago.' unresisting neck. But he spoke not a word, only watched his wife stand aside, as though to take in and Why admire the effect of her act. should she not wear them ?" she remarked to berself. "Noonseverdonred them yet whom they better suited.aloud, "your escorts await you below. Of course you will not enter the ball-room until your father and I join

> It is not my intention to linger long over a description of the famous ball that took place that night at Baron Court. I will only remark that it was one of the greatest splen. dour; that wherever Lady Beatrice appeared, murmurs of applause, even from the ladies, were heard on all sides, and, before the third dance was over, her programme for the evening was filled. With great pride did the Earl lead her forth, and, by walking through a quadrille, open the ball with her, whilst standing vis a-vis to them were Lord Reginald and Miss Blake. Many were the envious looks cast upon the pretty Irish girl; and I fear, disparaging were some of the remit's passed about her, as it became calpable that

the eyes of young Lord Reginald followed so constantly every movement of his little guest. It was close upon the hour of mid.

night, the music and dancing were at "But, Norah," argued her gentle mistress, "I did not need anything couples were joking, and pronosing stead did not defend herself, but was plans as to how best to see the old silent until we reached the door of ar out and the new year ir, when the church. tinued, with a look of dismay, "could Marie, glancing down at her card, they see me attred in such a very perceived with joy that she had entered. the next dance at liberty. Being Say, miss ?-why, what could seated near a door, she rose quietly | kept, and for some minutes we stood they say, save how becoming it was and glided softly out. to you. Sure, isn's these many a blessed saint in heaven this very

"As soon as you're certain that left her pew and passed between the the people at the garage understand the car, do go to the hotel, John, and rest and smoke until we get back, Mrs. Olmstead counseled her husband, and then we set forth down

surny street which, to my weary eyes, seemed to have no turning. At first Mrs. Olmstead was almost

indeed was it, that it needed neither or three squares she laid a little jeweled hand on my arm, and said feelingly, "It was a kind Providence that made us break down here. I was born and grew up in this dear old place, and, until I saw it sgain, half an hour ago, I had forgotten how much I love it. I was poor when I lived here, as poor as a church mouse. My father was a country doctor, with ly little head, upon which glittered a wearying, poor-paying pfactice. and shone brilliantly the diamond He died when I was nine years old, and my mother so long before him wrists were encircled with the rest that I cannot remember her at all. I had one sister, many years older

> youngest of a family of ten; all the other children had died when they were babes.' "I thought you had been rich all

your life," I commented, when Mrs. Olmstead paused, feeling annoyed that I could think of nothing better to say. "Rich! I was almost shabby and

almost hungry, and my sister was

ends meet at all is more than I can and prosy." imagine. I took everything for and prosy." "Mr, Olmstead and you and I are since-well, the years have been so to go to her house for supper, and full of pleasure that-that I am afraid I had almost torgotten her, I am ashamed, but it is the truth." Again I made an insane remark. I thought you a real New Yorker,

I said. No; I went to New York when I was twenty years old, to teach school. We had rich relatives, living in Madison Avenue, and they took fancy to me and often invited me to their house, and it was there that I met Mr. Olmstead. He doesn't like

to hear of my school teaching, or of the years of poverty here, so I never mention them. Evidently he does not even remember that this is my town, although he must have known

As she talked I was thinking of the elder sister who had pinched and ity the hope is forever florescent contrived for the younger. I wondered what had become of her, and waited my chance to ask. Mrs. Olmstead pointed out the school which she had attended-a small Now go, dear children," she said shabby place, and the corner where her father's office had stood, and we were approaching the church before I put my question.

My sister Mary? Ob, she is dead-she must be. She was always frail, and she would be almost seventy years old," Mrs. Olmstead replied, flushing painfully. "I-until today I never fully realized how shabbily I treated her. It almost broke her heart to see me go to New York, but I was not satisfied here. For a year or two I wrote regularly—or almost regularly— although I always hated letter writing; but-well, to tell the truth, atter I was happily married I let months and years slip by without writing, and then, when I did write to the old address, I got no answer. She may have moved, or she may have died long, long ago. Of course, she did not know our address when I did not write, for we have lived everywhere-in London. Florence and California. And-and she was so good to me. I have been rich and

happy, and I had forgotten." I was glad that she was ashamed.

sanctuary gates and was standing at her shoulder.

Mary! Oh Mary!" she whispered, with her whole heart in the words. For a moment the old lady looked up at her, startled and almost afraid. before the light of such ecstatic happiness as I have never known flashed over her weary, old face. My little one!" whispered. she holding out both hands. There was no reproach in her voice, no ques-

tioning; nothing but love. Noiselessly I stole out of the church and waited on the steps for Mrs. Olmstead, knowing that I was intruding on something too sacred for a stranger's eves; and as I stood there I understood, as I had never done before, that family love is all human things, the most wonder ful: glad to give all, to forgive all, and faithful, faithful to the end.

It was not long before they came out to me, hand in hand. There were tears on their cheeks, but their eyes were shining.

"Mary has quite forgiven me," Mrs. Olmstead said. "In fact I had a hard time to make her believe that there was anything to forgive.' The little old lady looked at

with twinkling eyes. "I'm afraid I am not even convinced yet. I said that I was just to keep peace. both many a time. How she made Why, dear, you were young, and ends meet at all is more than I can gay, and I have always been so dull

> she has promised to come to New York for a good, long visit,' Mrs Olmstead said happily, after she

had kissed her sister once more. And turning away her head. Mary furtively dried a few last tears .-

Florence Gilmore in St. Anthony's Messenger.

> THE SEASON OF PREPARATION

The student of history is struck by one characteristic that is common to all peoples. In every generation and under every civilization mankind is forever looking forward to something better. In antiquity and in modern that reform will be brought about that will improve the condition of mankind. But the ancient and the modern interpretation of this hope differ fundamentally. In our times, influenced by materialistic, philo ophy, man takes it for granted that this reform must be wrought by him. self. In ancient times man thought that it would be accomplished by some higher power than himsel In Greece we see traces of this hope

in such stories as that Prometheus who stole fire from Heaven to succor mankind and was nailed to a rock for his crime. In Rome the same hope adumbrated in the occasional outbursts of their poets that sometime the new ers, 'the Golden Age would be granted.

Bat pre-eminently is this true of the Jewish people, who for a thousand years were a nation apart from the world. They had their faith in God, a standard of morality, laws, and ideals built upon the single idea of an age that was to come, of a Person who was to dominate it, who would be the Ruler, Teacher, and Saviour of mankind, and initiate the new era of reform which they expectantly awaited.

Their Bible, a collection of books is an imperishable record of their race, but it is distinguished by one connecting thread that binds it into one single whole. This was the belief in "Him who was to come."

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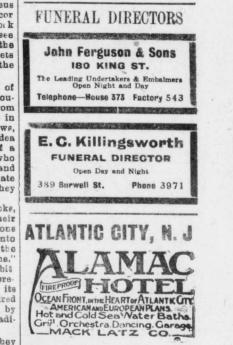
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THE CATHOLIC RECORD

ity, the heart of Marie would fly back to this her first Christmas Eve at the Court. But only to her faithful us, and in our hearts there is a not one in all that gay assembly vacuum left—a void, an empty space, whose form or face could compare which none can ever fill again.

The service concluded, a good breaktast awaited the villagers, and those who wished to rest at the Court lingered longer over it. Marie seized an opportunity and stole softly away to wish her country friends a joyous Christmas, and some of the poorer ones pressed closely around her, the older women even kissed her hand. reminded the girl foreibly of her own dear warm hearted Irish at home. Hare she was discovered by Lord Reginald, who was not long ere he missed her, and knowing her ways, guessed easily where to search for her. He addressed some words of kind and courteous greeting to his people, then, offsring the young lady his arm, led her gently costly back to her friends.

"And have you no good wishes for me tonight, Marie ?" he asked, bending his tall figure so as to avoid some wreaths of holly which were festoned along the passage.

'Oh, many," was the hearty reply; "but," smiling sweetly, "it would and talked in merry groups along flatter you too much did I tell you all the corridors and passages; sweet

"Nay, it would not. Tell me but Young men and maidens studied e of them as a Christmas treat — together their evening programmes, one of them as a Christmas treat the one you prayed for the most; do and many dances were promised ere please, my little tormentor!" yet a note of music was struck. "I cannot, I dare not; but this I will tell you, for, you deserve it." ous knights and dames which hung

which were socken with great fervor satisfaction, as though they longed and feeling "You did serve Mass so to snare in and the busy devening drew devoutly. I love to see you in your once more. As the evening drew to be the busy maids flew from room to cassock and cotta, and thought I had near, busy maids flew from room to never seen you look so nice before." room, each intent upon showing off

"Do you think I would make a to the best advantage her own skill good priest, then ?" he inquired, as displayed in her mistress's many much amused, but highly gratified charms.

ed so much gran deur and state before. There is neither time nor space to enumerate the guests here; but mind could she conjure up the scene youth and beauty, buoyed up as as it was then enacted. Never it should be with life and hops, met again would all the loved forms and and mingled gracefully with old age, faces be grouped together as now. whilst luxury, taste, and refinement Alas ! our friends depart and leave attended upon them. Yet was there

or compete in beauty and grace with that of the lovely young mistress

of the Court, the Lady Beatrice ; nor was there one who bore on her countenance indelibly stamped the sweet impress of innocence and purity as did the gentle face of little Marie Blake.

Miss Blake's dressing was speedily accomplished, and sha stood arrayed The all-important evening of the a very queen of purity and simple ball arrived at last. Within the beauty. Court all was commotion and stir. " The Lord love you, miss !" spoke Every window was brilliantly lit up, the maid emphatically, "but it's right down proud I am to see you dre sed as you should be, and not a and shot forth rays of light into the terraces beyond. Rare and costly hothouse flowers and plants were arranged in luxuriant profusion make up about you either. Sure, it's few maids will be able to say that around. Tall palms and magnificent ferns leant against the rich hangings same of their mistresses this night! Just stand a-back, miss, till I get a of the walls, and these, with the better look at you-do, please.' furniture and numberless

through many a lengthy mirror, have on a pretty dress?" which appeared to double and treble The lovely, rich, silky material, their number.

Everyone and everything bore an the Irish girl, and displayed to adair of festivity. Bright faces met vantage her plump white neck; but there is a good hotel in the town." he and talked in merry groups along no ornament adorned the dark brown said. "It's only half a mile from but, sinting sweet, it would the corridors and passages; sweet hair, nor clasped ber throat and fair here—up this main street. You, crossed the sanctuary and came for you tonight."

modesty lit up the sweet grey eyes, some tea or a lunch. and gave a natural beauty to her To me the plan so paint could ever bestow.

Earl, as half-an hour afterwards the two girls stood before him for inspection in Lady de Woodville's private apartment ; whereupon Bertie instantly flew to his arms. My own baautiful one!" he ex-

TO BE CONTINUED

A VOTIVE LIGHT

Mr. and Mrs. Olmstead invited me to take a trip with them in their Peerless, and we started westward from New York a warm afternoon in June. We had been on our way for three days when something went wrong with our engine, just as we reached a pretty, quaint old town called East Chester. Mrs. Olmstead laughed when the accident happened. and laughed again when she heard " but it's that it would take all day to repair the car, but she seemed startled when her husband casually mentioned the

name of the town in which we were marconsd. Mr. Olmstead heard both gay little

laughs and frowned slightly. "I don't see anything funny about candelabra, with their countless "Oh fle, Norah! Would you try serious trouble with onr engine," waxen lights, were reflected back and make me vain just because I he said rather crossly; but after a few moments is surface way and habitually good-natured way and few moments he smiled in his fitted softly round the shoulders of began to plan for our comfort. fellow from the garage tells me that

To me the plan sounded enticing, back, out of his way, and knelt in face, which no amount of powder or for I was tired and hot, and I love tea; but to my surprise Mrs. Olm-stead objected at once, and proposed opened again, very softly this time, "Come hither, little debutante, and give me the first kiss," oried the that we should take a long walk and a sweet faced, frail old lady came instead-she who never walks any toward the Blessed Virgin's altar where and is always more than will

ing to be lazy! As soon as she suggested it I knew statue and went back to the sacristy that the walk was inevitable, for to reappear a minute atterward with Mrs. Olmstead is one of those persons, a white votive light in her hand. to reappear a minute afterward with claimed, fondly and tenderly press. ing her to him and kissing the lovely these held up towards him. Then walk would be lovely," I agreed in a one, and would have gone back to

I made my First Considering the Bible as an indubit sacred character as the inspired It was a pretty church, exquisitely

Word of God, we can trace step by step the development of the tradiat the back, looking about us admir tion of Him who was to come.

ingly; but after a little Mrs. Olm-stead whispered, "My father gave the statue on the Blassed Virgin's Great men arose among them, they were types of some striking character altar. He had great devotion to the listic that He was to possess. Surik Blessed Virgin. Let's go close ing events in their history were enough to see it;" and as we passed up the aisle, she added softly, "You and as foreshadowings of their don't know how homelike this church Redemption. Little by is to me-how full of memories. My thing connected with His birth, life sister had care of the altars, and the and death were forstold, until a true day I made my First Communion she history of His life could be placed placed a white votive light at the together from the fragmentary feet of our statue, that it might revelations of those who lived before plead there for giddy me. Mary Him. Never before or since has replaced it every afternoon. 'It such a strange thing occurred in will keep you faithful, she used to say, in her dear, earnest way. And should be known long years before

perhaps it has, for I have been faith He was born. ful for all my worldliness." Yet, stranger still is the seque We genuflected before the taber-

Though so much was known of Him side altar. The statue of the Blessed was not recognized. Hs was rejected

Virgin, which Mrs. Olmstead's father had given, was unusually pretty, but can we explain such an enigma? The rejection of Christ is not so I hardly glanced at it. What caught my eve at once was the white votive difficult to understand. In spite light that burned at our Lady's feet. Mrs. Olmstead noticed it, too, and their knowledge, the Jewish people latd a trembling band on my arm had lost the ability to interpret facts. 'Do you think-?" she whispered.

For religious pride has entered in, than which nothing is harden At that moment the door of the break. Formaliem had robbed sanctuary opened and a stiff jointed religion of its interior life, and punctilious Pharisees, studious old man-probably the janitor-Scribes, ascetic Essenes and opportunist Sadducees killed the truth of tradition by spreading their own

false ideals. the third pew. We were still waiting When Christ came, He was not to the liking of the Jews. He made a claim for which they had no explana tion, and accordingly they declared "We have a law, and according to that law He ought to die because He with a vase of flowers in each hand. She placed one on either side of the made Himself the Son of God." In the holy season of Advent the Church is commemorating the period of waiting for the coming Messiah. Its four weeks are symbolic of the four thousand years that the chosen the sacristy, but Mrs. Olmstead had people spent in anticipation of His





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