ANNA HANSON DORSEY, **TANGLED PATHS," "FLEMMINGS,"
"TANGLED PATHS," "MAY
BROOKE," ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XVI.-CONTINUED.

On every side her love for the child, who from its birth had been to her as of her own flesh and blood, was cast back upon her; a wall of separation, as transparent as air but as impassable as adamant, had risen between them; she felt that in all the strange things that had so lately happened, and the many changes they had brought about, she was no longer necessary to the one only human being that she loved—and her proud, faithful heart was breaking. But she relaxed no tender service she could render; her vigilance was almost sleepless, lest the danger she dreaded might come without word or warning And, because she loved to hold Claudia near her, and see her bright, beautiful face dimpled with smiles, she cut out and helped to make garments for her "beggars;" and because—perhaps this was the primary reason—the child would be exposed to less danger of infection if the miserable wretches were clad in fresh, clean raiment, she redoubled her efforts to substitute such for the soiled tatters that in some cases scarcely d their nakedness.

In the meantime the "mill of the gods' had gone on grinding the fine wheat of the Lord; at the Temple of Mars, in e Flavian Amphitheatre, at the emple of the Earth, in the dungeons outside the gates and elsewhere in and outside the gates and eisewhere in and about Rome, the work went on, as it had been going on year after year, until more than a lustrum had passed, without a sign that it was near the end. was monotonous, and the spectacle It was monotonous, and the spectacte of a martyrdom was too commonplace now to excite much curiosity or interest, except when something more extraordinary than usual attended it. Besides, the Roman people liked extremes; if they had horrors, they wanted an even balance of pleasure and amusement; and, somehow, it happened that just at that time there was more of the former and less of the latter than seemed to them either agreeable or necessary

Something was at hand, however that would not only break the present monotony, but give Rome a laugh— under the breath, be it understood—at the expense of Valerian Imperator. It was rumored on a certain day that the Emperor was going to the Temple of Mars, to receive from Laurence the Deacon—the same who had been in chains in the dungeons of Hippolytus ever since his arrest, and had there exercised those powers attributed by the pagans to magic—the key of the Christian Treasury, which contained, it was asserted, an enormous amount of

gold, silver and jewels.

In his rich imperial robes, seated in his curule chair, surrounded by lictors and guards, Valerian awaited his anticipated triumph; for was not he the first of the Emperors who had been able wrest their concealed treasures from the Christians! And was it not a sign that their cause was weakening and near its end? He was in the best of spirits, and conversed affably ertain of his satellites whom he in-

vited to attend him.

Opposite to him was the catasta. ed by a few steps above the floor of the Prætorium, upon which the criminal asnally stood, in view of all present. The Procurator, in official robes, occupied his place; here were the consiliarii, there the notaries, ready to take down questions and depositions. On one side appeared lictors, the keen edge of the axe bound up with their fasces, turned outward; while against the wall a group of savage-looking men, naked to torture, ready at a word to spring to their bloody work.

of a hall of justice, but Valerian Imperpresided. There would be no formal trial; he was there to receive, from one prejudged by his own acts, the concealed treasures forfeited by his crimes to the State, and to deal as the laws of the Empire demanded against conspirators and blasphemers of the gods; but for the sake of appearances well for the officials of the lay

Outside, a scene was progressing that baffles description. Rome seemed to have vomited forth all her beggars halt, blind, diseased,—a hollowed eyed, want-stricken, tattered army of men, women, and children, that, despite the esistance of the guards, around th Temple, pressing upon one another, and overflowing the great portice and pillared vestibule. The hum of their voices, the angry orders of the soldiers, the sound of blows, followed by shrill outeries, reached the ears of Valerian, like the confused roar of a tumult, and pallid hue stole over his bloated visage. Was there a revolt?—were assassin at hand, who would presently rush a and slay him where he sat? His esh trembled, his brutal heart grew faint; but suddenly there was silence,

and he breathed more freely.

At that moment Laurence, accom panied by Hippolytus and surrounded by guards, was ascending the Temple steps, and when about half way he turned for an instant, confronting terrified assemblage below, and, lifting his manacled hand, made the Sign of Redemption, and breathed for his blessing like a heavenly dew upon them then the guards, recovered from their surprise, more roughly than before urged his advance.

Ithough under suspicion of sharing with his family and slaves the delusion arising from the singular events that had so recently occurred in the dungcons of his house, Hippolytus had not been interfered with, but still had Laurence, as it was be-Meved that through his persuasions, the latter would be induced to give up the treasures he had in charge This supposition was confirmed by the fact

"almost persuaded," so far, he had had no time to weigh the matter. And now what use Laurence expected to make of the mob that, with his co-operation, he had summoned to meet him 9th day of August, 258, he was at a loss to understand; but supposing that these poor wretches were connected in som with the question of the secret treasures, he gave the holy deacon his own way, thinking that, even should the means seem foolish, the result would prove satisfactory. Accordingly he whispered an order to the captain of the guards as the prisoner entered the vestibule, and those who had been driven back by blows a few moments before were allowed to pour in, until all the available space in the Prætorium

Valerian had been promptly informed of the harmlessness of the uproar that had so startled him, and quite regained his self-possession when he saw the Christian deacon standing on the cawhen he saw the tasta, calmly awaiting his pleasure. The dignified, composed air of Laurence, his serene fearless countenance, in whose presence he secretly felt his own ignoble inferiority, stung the tyrant, who, however, resolved to conrol himself until the coveted treasures were in his possession; then—let the Furies dance, and Cerberus whet his fangs!

"Thou knowest why thou art here Deliver up the key of thy treasury, and designate its location; then, if thou wilt cast a grain of incense in yonder brazier in honor of Jupiter, life and liberty are thine," said Valerian, in tones which were intended to sound conciliatory, but their coarse rumbling quite the contrary effect.
'Had I a thousand lives instead of

one. I would not cast a grain of incense in honor of thy gods, which are of stone and metal, without sense or feeling, was the clear, ringing answer, that penetrated every ear in the vast hall. "I have but one life, and that belongs to Jesus Christ, the only True and Liv ing God, Whom I serve and adore, and for the love of Whom I am ready to suffer death. As to the treasury of the Church, behold it, tyrant! in the poor and miserable congregated here and around this Temple, who have been brought hither by my summons, that thou mightest see and know that the Church of Christ hoards neither gold nor silver nor precious things, but dis-tributes all to the poor." The rage of Valerian at an answer

that demolished with one blow his avaricious schemes took from him the power of articulate speech, and for a ment or two he roared like an infuri ated bull, while every heart quailed before him, not knowing what form his vengeance would take, or on how many t might fall-every heart except that of Laurence, which, uplifted above all tempests of human wrath, had a fore-taste of those eternal consolations which yould soon reward him in their com-

At last from the chaos of the tyrant's fury words shaped themselves.

Seize him, lictors, and scourge him the liar! the deceiver! the blas-phemer of the gods! And disperse yonder rabble! hunt them down! yonder rabble! hunt them trample them in the dust!"

While the "rabble," weeping for the eacher who had led them into the way of salvation, and been their provide and consoler, were dispersed, and, with obedient fidelity, "trampled in the dust"—while the lictors were laying bare to his loins the tender flesh of Laurence, Valerian suddenly remen bered that it was due to his own dignit to assume an indifferent and impartial air, as of a stern judge intent only on the punishment of an offender against the State; for had he not been publicly duped, and would not all Rome make st and comedy of his discomfiture jest and comedy of his discomitate. He knew the Roman spirit too well not he waist, waited with implements of britised body but for the supernatural to feel assured that its satirical wit strength divinely given, which enabled him to ascend the catasta once again, to confront his cruel judge with under the presence of a hall of justice, but Valerian Impersion of the supernatural to would be a sweet nut for the teeth of every vagation. bond in the streets, and be laughed over equally in the low drinking slums of the city, as (on the sly) even in the porticii of the academies and libraries.

Aye! he knew the laugh was against concealing the tears which he sought im, and that there was no love for him to keep it back; but woe betide the audacious Christian who had humiliated him!

Aye! woe indeed, so far as he had power over the body. With demoniacal malice he looked on, while the lictors with dexterous blows bruised the flesh of their unresisting victim with their rods—while the scorpion whips of the executioners tore and mangled it, expecting, hoping every moment that he would cry out or moan with excess of pain. But this satisfaction was of pain. But this satisfaction was denied him; for Laurence stood with folded arms and closed eyes, turning nimself this way and that, as he was bidden; the edges of his keen sufferings dulled by the contemplation of Jesus in the Hall of Pilate, counting every blow endured for the love of Hin

precious beyond all price.
Still more enraged by this heavenly composure, which he looked on as defiance, but which the devils who instigated him understood, the cruel Empere now caused Laurence to be laid upon the rack, and hot plates of iron applied to his bleeding, quivering sides; but the firmness of the saintly victim remained unshaken, his constancy un-moved, and no sound escaped his lips, except the holy Name of Him for the

sake of Whom he suffered. A soldier named Romanus, who had been regulating the tension of the rack, the heroic endurance of the tortured Christian, and touched with an emotion of pity by his sufferings, turned from his screws and pulleys to cast a glance upon him, when his aston ished eyes beheld an angel anointing his mangled flesh with (It is so recorded in the Acts of the martyrs.) And as he gazed upon the heavenly visitant—by all others unseen-the inspirations of divine grace illuminated his mind. To loosen the handle of the rack, lift the sufferer from he had consented to yield his bed of torture, throw himself on his knees at his side and beg for baptism, Hippolytus was not yet openly a was the work of a moment; then, before Christian. Although grace had touched his heart, and—like Festus—he was terfere, he ran out, returning quickly

with a copper vessel of water, with which Laurence, rejoicing in the midst of his tribulation, baptized him.

Faith and courage now filled the soul of Romanus; he desired only to suffer the same torments he had inflicted on Laurence; and standing forth and raising his hand to secure attention, in a loud voice he declared himself a Chris-(All that is related tian. martyrdom of St. Laurence, and of the conversion and martyrdom of the soldier

conversion and martyrdom of the soldier Romanus, has been gleaned from the "Acts of St. Laurence.")
"Scourge the cur within an inch of his life!" roared Valerian from his curule chair; "then may the furies of hell devour him!"

Venting his rage on Romanus until wearied by his invincible constancy, the gentle Imperator wiping his frothing lips, refreshed himself with a draught of cooled wine, then ordered his new victim to be taken outside the gates and executed. And Romanus, who had consoled himself through it all by repeating the Holy Name he had learned from the lips of Laurence, was learned from the lips of Laurence, was led away, outside the Porta Salara, to his death, which, by faith, baptism, and the shedding of his blood for Christ, filled up the measure of his merits, and in a brief space won for him the crown and palm of martyrdom.

and palm of martyrdom.

By this time Valerian was fatigued, overheated, and—hungry. The supper hour was approaching, and his pampered, luxurious appetite craved its wonted indulgence. He would go to the Baths of Sallust, refresh himself, and return to finish the work so well begun. Having left his instructions with the officials he went away with his attendants. his attendants.

The holy Deacon Lawrence, without a sound spot in his flesh, was removed (stilled accompanied by Hippolytus) to another apartment, which opened upon the grove of palms that surrounded the Temple of Mars. Here he was visited and consoled by many of his friends, among them a priest sent by the Pontiff Stephen, from whom at an opportune moment he received the Eucharistic Bread—the Holy Viaticum, which left him nothing more to wish for on earth.

Hippolytus no longer wavered. Drawn nearer and nearer to Laurence whose noble virtues and sanctity of life while in his custody had already won the admiration of his honest heart, his conversion was confirmed by the glor-ious example of his sufferings. Divine love, like a flery glow, animated his soul : life was nothing—he only wished to declare himself a Christian at what ever cost. But he was restrained by a whisper from Laurence, who saw that his time had not yet come.

Lower sank the sun towards the bright, restless sea; the filmy vapors that draped the sapphire vault above, drifting and wavering in the soft air-cur-rents, were tinted with palest hues of rose and purple ; while an iridescent, remulous golden shimmer, nowhere so pervaded Roman skies, bright as in space. The birds sang on the wing; there was music and laughter and the there was music and laughter and the hum of glad voices in the air, and other telling that life was not all bitterness.

Valerian Imperator had refreshed himself with a perfumed bath, put on fresh apparel of purple and fine linen, had his locks anointed with sweet ungu ents and crowned with laurel; then, having piously offered the customary libations to the gods, he surfeited him-self with rich food, and drank his fill of the rich, mellow wines of Greece, uttering and listening to coarse, lewd jests in the intervals of feasting, until, feeling himself invigorated and in prime condition, he and his satellites went back to the Temple of Mars.

As soon as he was seated, and found breath to speak, he summoned Laurence to his presence. The holy sufferer could not have moved his lacerated, bruised body but for the supernatural shadows around his eyes betrayed the tus stood near, the shadow of a pillar ot to check.

so, cast aside the wiskedness of magic, and tell us thy history," hoarsely stammered Valerian, his brain heavy with drunken fumes.
"I am a Spaniard by birth, educated at Rome in every holy and divine law,

"Has reason returned to thee? If

was the calm reply.
"Sacrifice, then, to the gods. If
thou refusest, this night shall be spent

n torturing thee," roared the Emperor.

" Ah! my night hath no darkness: everything shines in brightness," responded the holy Deacon, with a smile untenance. Heard he rradiating his co the heavenly antiphon:

' Night shall be my light, But darkness shall not be dark to thee?" " Beat his sacrilegious mouth with

The executioner obeyed. The notaries scribbled faster, for the light was fading. Hippolytus drew his toga

over his face. Now was at hand the crowning point Now was at hand the crowning point of Valerian's infernal malice—his "feast for the gods," which he had boasted to Nemesius that he had in reserve; but for Laurence, the refining ordeal, the triumph, which, like a beacon light pointing heavenward, would shine through the night-shadows of time, un til lost in the bright dawn of eternal

The Emperor made a sign to the half naked Numidian savages, who stood awaiting his orders; they left the hall and brought a frame work of iron about a foot high, with iron bars across, upor which the unresisting victim was ex tended and secured; they then bor him on his rough couch outside Temple, and placed it over a pit of glowing coals, which cast a lurid glare upon the scene and the grim face gathered around-falling with softer light through the shadows on a group o Christians, who stood among the specta tors, waiting, praying and silently weeping until the end should come.

TO BE CONTINUED.

HOW THE ANGEL BECAME HAPPY. BY REV. P. A. SHEEHAN, D. D.

The angel's name was Astrael. He The angel's name was Astraet. He was not one of the great Archangels that stand close before the throne of God, nor did he belong to any of the seven orders of spirits, but his place was far down in the lower choirs but directly facing the great White Throne of the Lamb. He was one of the faithful few that smote and hurled from the battlements of heaven the fallen angel when St. Michael raised his battle-cry, Who is like unto God?" and fro that time he had many chosen and delicate duties appointed him, all of which he discharged most faithfully for the ove of his great King. For the first thousand years after angels, he was charged with the care of a great beautiful star that was quenched when the angels fell, for you just know that every star in heaven is called after its angel, and the stars that belonged to the rebel angels were suddenly extinguished when God drove these unfaithful servants from heaven. Then they were relighted. So every night our angel had to fly through the fields of pace and lit up this beautiful star and hold it aloft in his great right hand, whilst he himself fronted the Almighty. Hence he took his name Astrael, that is, angel of the star. But after a thousand years his duties

were changed. And for a thousand more he was charged with the duty of watching a great white lily, that budded and expanded from spring to summer, and was finally gathered and placed before the Blessed Sacrament. every springtime he came upon earth and drew up the tiny green shoot from brown mould, and every day made stronger, until at last white t stronger, until at last the white betals would peep out from the green sheath. And then as it grew and proadened, and the white velvet leaves ynanded he had to keep it very pure and unstained, and ever and an shook his wings over it, and a beautiful perfume fell on the lily, and was wafted over the garden. At last it was tenderly cut and placed in a beautiful vase, and our angel came with it into the silent chapel, and bent over it and uched the leaves with his lips to keep hem fresh, and then bent very low be ore the tabernacle and flew back to his place in heaven.

Now, our angel was not very happy

out there amongst the great lonely stars; and though he was much happier amongst his lilies, there was always pain at his heart—a sad, melancholy feeling that he could not put aside. Because he saw day after day in the courts of heaven a strange thing takes place. Several of his companions would eturn to their places, after many years' absence and many would return very sad, and he could see their eyes red from weeping and notice that they always kept their wings closed, yet they tears would drop on the bright shining floor. But some verturn their faces full of joy, and ne would and again they would bring with them another beautiful spirit, not an angel, yet very like an angel, and Astrael was quite jealous to see the deep love and affection which his companions had for these souls. And he heard them called the "children of the angels," and the angels were called their guardians And he was hoping and praying every day that the great King would call hi and send him to earth, and give him such a precious charge; but thousands of years rolled by and Astrael was un-It was the eve of the Assumption of

our Blessed Lady; and there was great joy in heaven. They were all prepar-ing to celebrate the feast of God's Holy Mother in a worthy manner: but Astrael noticed that there was the greatest eagerness to do honor to the great Queen amongst the children of the angels. Suddenly a bright thought struck him. He would ask the Blessed Virgin to grant him the great desire of his heart. He prayed for the favor. But he had no need of asking. For our Blessed Lady read his thoughts and the morning had scarcely dawned when he heard his name, "Astrael! As-trael!" shouted through the courts of heaven. He looked up in amaze. All eyes turned to him. Suddenly there eyes turned to him. Suddenly there came flashing along the great choirs who bent humbly before him, a mighty Archangel, his broad wings extended, his hair flying like a cloud behind him and he stood over Astrael and said:
"Follow me!" And Astrael rose and followed him far up among the Cheru-bim and Seraphim, until at last a great light shone upon him, like the light of thousand suns, and he covered his face with his hands, for he was blinded and found himself standing face to face with the Queen of Heaven. Gabriel stood beside him. And his Queen spoke thus, and her voice was soft and gentle: "Astrael, I know the prayer of your heart. To day it is granted to you. For to-day there is born on earth a child whom I place under your protection. She shall be granted to under Bring her safe here to the foot of my throne to bless you and me forever!"

Astrael thought he should have died from joy at this mark of favor from the great Queen. He could not speak, so he bowed very low; and, accompanied by Gabriel, shot down like an arroy from heaven, and passed out amongst the stars.

TT. A dark and narrow lane in a crowded city, a tall house, black and begrimed from smoke, windows broken and patched with paper, a rickety staircase ed with paper, a rickety staircase that led up and up ever so high to an attie, where the rafters, festooned with cobwebs, were plainly visible, and under the rafters a wooden box filled with a little straw, and on the straw a little babe just born—here is what Astrael saw when he had swept the bright skies and fluttered to the earth. It was a tiny habe and very been filled.

It was a tiny babe and very beautiful, with blue eyes that blinked at the light and a little rosebud of a mouth and pink fingers that opened and shut and found nothing. And Astrael bent over the cradle lovingly, and fanned the babe with his great wings and felt

baptismal font, saw the white robe baptismal font, saw the white robe of innocence placed round the infant and heard it called by the sweet name of "Mary." Then he rested for seven years, gathering all his strength for the struggle which he knew was coming. Now and again he would sweep down to the earth and whisper the work and then some things to the mother, and then she would clasp her child closer, and pray that Almighty God would save her child from sin. And then, when Mary could walk, and was beginning to know the names of things, Astrael would teach her the names of Jesus and His Mother and put little pic-tures in her way, and lead her sometimes into the quiet church, where she would sit for hours the angel by her side, looking up and wondering at the pictures in the stain-glass window, at the statues of the Sacred Heart and the Madonna, and, above all, at the great crueifix that stood by the pulpit with the white figure upon it, and the red marks in the hands and feet and side. Somehow, she could scarcely tear herself away from the study of this crucifix. She would sit, her hands folded in her lap, her blue eyes wide open and sorrowi the sad face and drooping gazing at figure, the wreath of thorns nead, the black nails, the red blood. But, above all, the sad eyes of the Figure haunted her. She thought they were looking straight into her own and once or twice she thought she saw the lips parting, and heard the voice speak-ing, and she was going up to the crucifix when her mother lifted her

said she was a strange child. Now, the seven years went by, and the struggle commenced. One day, that Astrael, full of joy, had entered the little room, he saw sitting close by Mary a dark spirit in whose eyes there was a baleful fire, but who spoke so softly, so sweetly, that Astrael was deceived until he saw on the forehead of the spirit the red mark that denoted eternal reprobation, the forehead of He was face to face, the first time for several thousand years, with a fallen spirit. He trembled, but recovered imself and took his usual place by Mary's side.

from the bench, and took her home and

But, when he looked on the child he he was frightened. The sweet look of peace had died away from the blue eyes, which were now troubled, face was hot and flushed and the hands that had lain so peacefully together were clenched and moistened. Some dark thought was in the mind of the child. It was the first temptation.

The dark spirit spoke and the face became more clouded. He brought up before the mind of the child some hard words that had passed in school be-tween the children that day, and he touched with his dark finger a red burning spot where a little girl had He struck Mary's cheek in her anger. He prompted her to revenge, told her how sweet it would be to strike back again and how her companions would applaud her. The child's face grew darker and darker ; the crimson in her cheek grew brighter and brighter.

Astrael was in despair, and in despair he cried aloud to his Queen to assist him. That moment the mother entered. bonnet She had on her shawl and had returned from market, and thought she would pay a visit to the church. She called to Mary to come ; but Mary did not heed her. She came over and shook the child and then, seeing her burning face and her eyes bloodshot, she cried out with a great cry, fearing that her child was sick. And, snatching her up hastily, she fled to the church, flung herself at the feet f the crucifix and cried to God with all her heart to save her child.

Now the child was saved; but not, as the mother thought, from death, but from sin. For no sooner had Mary seen the crucifix and looked into the sorrowful eyes that seemed ever so sad to-day, and recollected all that she mother and wept bitterly.

III. Now months and years rolled by and everything seemed to go smoothly with Mary, but it was a terrible and anxiwith ous time for her angel. If he never left her side, even for an instant, neither did the dark spirit. And no one can suspect what an awful conflict was being waged around the soul of that little child. Daily she went to school, her face shining, her yellow curls tossed over her shoulders, her blue eyes looking before her, "fearing no danger, and above her, and within her was raging the conflict of sin and grace, of darkness and light. How watchful all the time her good angel was! How carefully he removed from her snares that were laid for her by the enemy; how often he laid his finger softly over her eyes lest they should stray from curiosity into danger; how often he closed her lips when she was tempted to utter angry words; and how tenderly he put her hands together and guarded the wandering mind when she knelt at prayer, and gave up her soul to God These last were happy times for Astrael.
They were the only moments of relief he enjoyed during the day.

When the mother took Mary to morn

ing Mass or to evening Benediction Astrael could go inside into some pri-vate chapel and join his brother angels and gradually she faded away. The in the canticle of triumph that goes up everlastingly from the choirs of angels, both in heaven and upon earth.

But these were brief moments. nstant church the angel's charge commenced nothing to tire herself. again and lasted through the day and even into the watches of the night. For even when darkness was upon the ace of nature, darkness unbroken save by the silver lamps which the angels cough, that shook her and made nung out in heaven and when the rest-ess eyes of the world were closed and Mary amongst other children of humanbreathed peacefully in her little wings closed and himself motionless except for the night wind that lifted now and again his long hair from his her work. After a few days he stood beside the shoulders. It was a beautiful sight— And now Mary the angel and the child. Mary peace- ing for solitude. shoulders.

fully breathing in the calm sleep of of childhood, her yellow hair tossed over the pillow, like threads of gold, and her face calm and beautiful. angel looking at her intently, dreaming of the time when she would be a saint in heaven, and he would claim her as his child and now and again turning from her to look up into the eyes of th stars and thinking of the bright courts bove them.

In childhood time passes quickly, because it is a period of enjoyment. The days flew by rapidly, and whenever her birthday came round, Mary wondered

how a year could seem so short.

At last one morning she awoke, and her mother kissed her and some little friend sent her a pretty book, and on friend sent her a pretty book, and on the inner page was written: "To Mary on her, eleventh birthday." "Eleven! Can it be possible?" thought Mary. "Why, I am quite an thought Mary. "Why, I am quite an old woman," and she ran rapidly to the looking glass; but there was not a single gray hair in her yellow plaits not a single wrinkle in the pink cheeks; but, all the same, Mary looked very grave, for she felt life was comm in earnest, and when she knelt down that morning she said with double fervor that beautiful prayer to her guard-"O Angel of care I am committed," etc. But there was something else that made our child very grave, yet very happy this morn ing. For the great event of her child-hood, her First Communion, had been deferred until her eleventh year.

Mary was one of the quickest in her She was not only studious, but class. She was not only studious, but God had given her great gifts and she had not only mastered her Catechism, but she knew the meaning of every word, and could sometimes give a little lecture of her own on the mysteries of our holy faith. But better to wait until she was a little more grown, that she might have more time to prepare carefully for the great day of First Communion. But now that she was eleven, there was no further obstacle in the way, and hence was she very grave, very serious, but very happy on this birthday morning.

The next few months flew rapidly by. It was midsummer and one morning when the sun was shining ever so warn ly on the earth, and the air was full of the incense which the flowers sent up heaven, sixty children towards sembled in their parochial church to make their First Communion. There were a vast number of people the mothers and sisters of the children. and what they saw was this: Six rows of children all dressed in white with blue sashes, with veils over their heads, and flowers and candles in their hands; and they looked so serious, yet so happy, that many aged persons felt themselves deeply touched and sometimes tear would gather and steal down the furrowed cheeks of some who refurrowed membered their own First Communion of long ago, and thought of the many things that had happened since then.

But I saw something more than the people. For I saw amongst the ranks of the children many bright spirits that stood motionless and silent, each watching his precious charge, and amongst them I recognized Astrael, looking ever so happy and so bright, as he bent over Mary's golden hair and whispered to her many beautiful things of God and the Blessed the Holy Mother. Not a trace was there of the dark spirits this morning. They dared not come into so holy place; and as the angels hovered over their precious charge, I could not see a trace of anxiety on their ed as happy as the children. Well, the Mass went on. The children had approached the altar rails, and had now returned to their places, when I saw Astrael arise and leave Mary side, and hovering in the air an instant. I saw him kneeling before a statue of the Virg Child that was placed in Virgin and sau to-day, and recollected all that she had heard of the sufferings of her Saviour, than her heart was broken with sorrow, and she felt a great lump in her threat, and she leaved on the suffering she was motionless. He then passed his hand slowly across his forehead as if he were thinking whether he was going to made up his mind, and, with his hands lasped, and his eyes fixed on the statue of his Queen, he prayed ever so earnestly-that Mary might die. terrible thing, you will say, but nevertheless it is true. He prayed that Mary might die in her perfect inno-cence. He thought of the past, of the first temptations, of the risks that Mary ran, of the narrow escape from sin she had had; he thought of heaven, and how certain now Mary was to be admitted there; he thought of the angels whom he had sometimes seen returning and whose hot tears fell on the shining floors of the heavenly city, and he shuddered and trembled to think that this might possibly be his own fate if Mary should live, and he prayed ever so earnestly that his Queen would now take her child to heaven in her innocence; and, strange to say, his prayer was heard, for he saw distinctly the statue bend its head towards him; and, full of joy, he flew back and once more took his place at the side of Mary.

There were a few days of rejoicing, of intense piety and happiness and then Mary felt a strange languor creep over her. The hand of the great dark angel her. The hand of the great dark ange-called Death, and was laid upon her. She struggled against it, became more gay and playful than ever for a while, roses disappeared from her cheeks, her quick elastic step became slow and heavy, her breathing became very diffi-Mary set foot outside the down and rest, though she had done

Her mother, for a while, shut her eyes to Mary's illness, but one day, whilst the child was bending over the fire, there came upon her a sharp, dry tremble all over; and the mother started from her seat and then resumed her work but a great lump gathered in her slowly filled and ot, Astrael stood watching, his broad fell upon her hand. But when Mary, asked: "What is the matter, mamma?" she said nothing, but proceeded with

And now Mary felt a strange long-

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