

Parish and Home.

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IN PARADISE.

"To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise."—
St. Luke xxiii. 43.

How calm, how sweet, how strange it
seemed!

He opened not his eyes, but deemed
That he had slept, and still he dreamed.

Was he that wicked wretch forlorn,
Who left his prison cell that morn,
Cursing the hour that he was born?

A gentle air about him stirred,
And from the distance far he heard
A song more sweet than any bird.

At last he raised his wondering eyes;
How green the trees, how calm the skies,
How fair the fields of Paradise!

He looked around that lovely place—
Lo! bending over him a face
Of love and majesty and grace.

He, wondering, said, "Lord, can it be?"
"Why dost thou marvel?" Answered He,
"Said I not thou shouldst be with Me?"
—Lucy Ellen Guernsey, in *Parish Visitor*.

SNOW-BOUND.

Lily Armstrong was the only daughter of the richest man in town. Mary Dillon was the only daughter of the only Irishman in the district, and he was trackman on a four-mile section of the railroad. His wages were his only dependence, except a potato patch beside the track.

But if Lily was the lady, Mary was the beauty and the genius of the school. Yet neither of the girls appeared conscious of superiority. And best of all, they were particular friends, in the same Sabbath-school and members of the same church.

Dillon's cabin was by the track, midway of his four-mile beat, far from any road or path other than the railroad, Mary's route to school leading her more than a mile among the rough hills. Of course she could not attend school in winter. But last winter there was another reason for Mary's absence from the school-room—she began the winter with a cough, which grew worse as the weather became more bleak and cold. She longed for the happy company of the school, for the excitement of study and recitation, and perhaps more than all for the whispered intimacy with Lily. Often she said to her mother:

"Oh, how I wish I could go to school, even a day!"

And she was not forgotten by her summer mates. Frequently one or another spoke lovingly of her, and regretted the tempestuous weather that shut her away between the hills where the railway lay.

One day, at the beginning of a snow-storm, a beautiful white dove, unable to make its way against the blast, alighted on the narrow ledge of the window, within which poor Mary sat, and pecked the pane for admittance. A moment later it was taken in and nestled, cooing, in her neck, the girl exclaiming:

"Oh, mother, it's Lily's pet! I've often seen it there."

It seemed glad to find shelter and friends, perhaps mistaking Mary for its own mistress, and the sick girl soon added:

"It seems almost like Lily's spirit, come to keep me company while I'm so lonesome."

The storm was long, and for days the little creature was snow-bound in the Irish hovel, during which time it became so fond of Mary that when the weather cleared it did not care to go, but remained a part of the family, hovering about the sick girl as if it understood her heart.

At length Dillon became alarmed about his daughter and called a doctor.

"But Pat," the doctor said, "how am I to reach your house? I cannot drive within a mile of it, and I could not walk that mile through this snow."

"Niver ye mind for that, docthur;

I've got a han'car for ye, an' two men to run it down an' bring it back, an' we'll mak' ye coomferable ez ye please."

At the end of the doctor's call he told the sad parents at the outer door that the child would never be better. Within a few hours all the school had heard the sad fact, and on his next visit the doctor carried a loving letter from Lily to Mary which said, among other things:

"My spirit is with you though my body is absent; but I mean to bring my body to see you in a few days. And I shall not come alone."

And sure enough, the following Saturday a hand-car came clattering down the track with a flock of her school-mates aboard, and for more than two happy hours the little house was full with cheeriness and sympathy.

"Why," said Lily, "here's my lost dove. How in the world did it ever come here? And so at home, too, for it always was afraid of every-body but me!"

Then Mary told when and how it came and what a comfort it had been to her.

"And I told mother it seemed like Lily's spirit come to be company for me while I can't go out."

Lonely were the weeks to poor Mary, though several times Lily and other school-mates came to bring something dainty and sit with her a few hours. The invalid knew the fatal nature of her illness, but brought no fear to her heart. Often when Lily wept, Mary whispered:

"Don't cry for me, Lily! Heaven is so much happier than Earth, and Jesus so much better a friend than any earthly friend can be."

In April, as the flowers were budding and the young leaves unfolding the end came.

When her mother had placed the lifeless but beautiful form on her own bed, the dove came and hovered over it, and, lighting by the white, voiceless face, cooed and called. But when Mary gave no response the little thing flew to the open door, where broken-hearted Pat stood weeping his bitter tears, and passing out sped on swift wings over the hills and out of sight.

"Ah! ye purty bird," sobbed